



*Centre
for
Governance
Studies*

CGS Working Paper
CGS WP 2

A Tale of Two Wards: Political Participation and the Urban Poor in Dhaka City

Nicola Banks

Background Paper
for

The State of Governance in Bangladesh 2006

Produced in Collaboration
with

Research and Evaluation Division (RED) BRAC

**Centre for Governance Studies
BRAC University
Dhaka, Bangladesh**

www.cgs-bu.com

The Centre for Governance Studies at BRAC University seeks to foster a new generation of researchers, public administrators and citizens with critical and analytical perspectives on governance.

The Centre's State of Governance research project is devoted to providing empirical evidence and conceptual clarity about governance in Bangladesh. It seeks to demystify a contentious topic to further constructive discussion and debate.

Good governance is often viewed as a means of advancing the agendas of official and multilateral development institutions. The Centre believes, however, that there is a large domestic constituency for good governance; and that governance is properly deliberated between citizens and their state rather than by the state and external institutions. The Centre's working papers are a means of stimulating domestic discourse on governance in Bangladesh. They bring to the public domain the insights and analyses of the new generation of researchers.

The initial working papers were originally developed as contributions and background papers for The State of Governance in Bangladesh 2006, the Centre's first annual report.

David Skully
Editor, CGS Working Paper Series
Visiting Professor CGS-BRAC University and Fulbright Scholar

Center for Governance Studies Working Paper Series

CGS WP 1 Ferdous Jahan: Public Administration in Bangladesh
CGS WP 2 Nicola Banks: A Tale of Two Wards
CGS WP 3 Irum Shehreen Ali: Governance and the Media

Research and Evaluation Division (RED) of BRAC was set up in 1975 as an independent entity within the framework of BRAC. The main mission of RED is to provide research, evaluation and analytical support to BRAC's development programmes. RED also carries out research on issues of national development importance, often in partnership with other national and international institutions and networks. The State of Governance in Bangladesh 2006 is yet another research partnership that RED is proud to be involved with in partnership with BRAC University's Center for Governance Studies.

All research outputs of RED are available in its website www.bracresearch.org and in hard copies from Ayesha Abed Library, BRAC University, Aarong House, 65 Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh

**CGS Working Paper Series
CGS WP 2**

**A Tale of Two Wards:
Political Participation and the Urban Poor in
Dhaka City**

Nicola Banks

Centre for Government Studies (CGS), BRAC University

and

Research and Evaluation Division (RED), BRAC

Dhaka, Bangladesh

nicolabanks@gmail.com

December 2006

This paper is based on research conducted by a research team including Ashrafuzzamn Khan, Omar Faruq Siddiki and Md. Bayazid Hasan of RED, BRAC. The author is grateful to Professor Nazrul Islam of Centre for Urban Studies and Mostafa Quaium Khan and Md. Mostafa Kamal of Coalition for the Urban Poor for their assistance in research and for facilitating discussions with members of BOSC Committees. The views represented here are the author's, and in no way represent the institutions that have supported this research.

[Photographs of Ward A and Ward B and a map of BOSC Activities in Dhaka City are available on the CGS website.]

Summary of Key Findings

This paper presents findings from a case study of slumdweller in two Wards of Dhaka City. The research was designed to determine the extent of political participation of the urban poor. The main objective was to gain an understanding of the following question: although constituting the majority of the electorate, what constraints prevent the interests of the urban poor from being reflected in the policy agenda? In the face of this relative neglect, with whom do slumdweller interact to solve their social problems or advance their interests? In addition, the research aimed to analyse efforts made in the mobilisation of slumdweller, through the *Basti Basheer Odhikar Surikha Committee* (BOSC) Programme run by Coalition for the Urban Poor. This aimed to illustrate the possibilities for the incorporation of slumdweller into urban governance.

The analysis of research findings is tentative and cautious. This paper portrays the results from a limited and small-scale research, and the author does not aim to draw city-wide conclusions from these findings.

Key findings include:

- Slumdweller identify several actors whom they look to for assistance in the face of limited political channels, including slum leaders, landlords and NGOs.
- The importance of the right to vote as it allows slumdweller to evaluate elected officials and Government with regards to the impact that policy and performance has had on their lives.
- In addition, regardless of the performance of elected officials, voting is hugely important as it is the only time when slumdweller feel that they hold the power and are no longer in a subordinate position.
- Slumdweller equate their lack of social and political recognition with a lack of money, in a society where power and access is dictated by wealth.
- Slumdweller are politically aware, and tend to vote with regards to the performance of Government or Ward Commissioners rather than rhetoric. Beyond the voting process however, the depth of political participation amongst slumdweller differs.
- In face of increased awareness, the mobilisation of slumdweller is possible. Membership of BOSC has meant that for some slumdweller, democracy has led to much greater participation and expectations of elected officials, with slumdweller able to press demands on elected officials. Through such channels legal access to water and electricity has been achieved.
- Positive benefits of mobilisation impact upon non-BOSC members in wards where BOSC committees are present.
- For slumdweller in areas that have not heard of BOSC, democracy has done little to improve the rights, livelihoods or participation of slumdweller. Aside from elections, there are no avenues through which slumdweller can press demands on local officials.
- As possibilities for grassroots mobilisation are limited to the municipal level, national policy commitment for the urban poor requires advocacy work within Central Government.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. Methodology and Ward Profiles	1
2. Research Findings	
Urban Poverty	3
Urban Local Government	6
3. Political Participation of the Urban Poor	
Traditional and Non-traditional Political Participation	8
Ward Commissioners and the Poor: Perceptions and Expectations	8
Other Forms of Political Participation	11
NGOs	11
Governmental Services	12
Informal Leaders/ <i>Mastaans</i>	13
Landowners and Other ‘Influential’ People	14
Police	14
What’s in a Vote?	15
Poverty and Social Exclusion	17
4. Mobilisation of Slumdweller: Lessons from BOSC	
A Framework for Participation	18
Achievements and Accomplishments	20
The Wider Impact of BOSC Activities	21
Limits to Political Participation	23
5. Conclusions	24
References	26
Appendix One: Structure of BOSC Network	28

Abbreviations

BOSC	<i>Basti Basheer Odhikar Surakha</i> Committee (Slumdweller Rights Protection) Committee
BURT	Bangladesh Urban Round Table
CUP	Coalition for the Urban Poor
DCC	Dhaka City Corporation
DESA	Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority
DWASA	Dhaka Water and Sewage Authority
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RAB	Rapid Action Battalion

Figures

Figure 1	Focus Group Profiles	3
Figure 2	The Long and Short Routes to Accountability	19

Glossary

<i>Bastee</i>	Slum
<i>Basti basheer</i>	Slumdweller
<i>Hartal</i>	A general strike, usually called by opposition parties
<i>Mastaan</i>	Literally, ‘muscleman’; a local leader or power broker who may use extortion or threats of violence to control a neighbourhood.
<i>Thana</i>	Administrative unit between district and village; also, a police station or district

Introduction

'People think it is a lack of resources that Bangladesh suffers from, but this is not the case. We have the resources required to alleviate poverty, but we lack unity and cohesion. Bangladesh's political context has held back the country's development process, and continues to do so.' – Ward Commissioner

There is widespread consensus, as indicated above, that throughout the country's democratic rule, political rivalry has hindered the policy and programme continuity that is a crucial prerequisite for poverty reduction. How can the poor have an impact on policy-making in such turbulent circumstances? While this question deserves attention on both a national and local level, the urban poor suffer from distinct difficulties that highlight the need for research in this field.

Previous research has identified a rural bias in poverty reduction strategies (Rashid and Hossain 2005, Banks 2006). With no national policy on urbanisation or urban poverty, poor households in Bangladesh's cities are left to live in illegal slum settlements, in many cases detached from the social, political and economic fabric of the city.

Given recent progresses in democratic participation for the urban poor, this research analyses the depth of participation of the urban poor. How involved are slumdweller in local governance, and what are their expectations and perceptions of elected officials? Which other actors are involved with regards to the urban poor? How can barriers to political participation be overcome?

Lastly, while the analysis aims to paint a clear picture of the depth of grassroots participation, it also studies the extent to which such progress is limited. How can the governance process in Bangladesh complement a 'bottom-up' process with a 'top-down' approach to ensure national commitment for the urban poor and urban governance in which the poor can actively participate?

The paper commences by illustrating the livelihoods and living conditions of urban slumdweller in Dhaka. It then investigates the political participation of the urban poor, identifying the actors with whom the urban poor interact for problem solving and gaining access to services in each of the two wards studied. The research investigates slumdweller perceptions of elected representatives and the voting process in Dhaka. What opportunities has democracy opened up for slumdweller? By comparing different experiences between the two wards, the research identifies barriers to effective political participation, before looking at how opportunities for participation can be advanced. The experiences of Coalition for the Urban Poor's *Basti Basheer Odhikar Surakha Committees* illustrates the accomplishments of grassroots mobilisation of slumdweller. Lastly, in relation to the successes of collective mobilisation, the research also investigates the constraints to such initiatives in terms of securing national commitment to urban poverty reduction.

1. Methodology and Ward Profiles

Research was limited to two wards in Dhaka city. It must be noted that living circumstances and political representatives in the two wards are very different. At the same time as being wary of over-generalisation, the research aimed to capture the extent of slumdweller's

political participation. Crucially, the research aimed to identify the differences between ‘active’ and ‘non-active’ slumdweller – in Ward A, participation was limited to the voting process itself, while in Ward B, collective mobilisation allowed slumdweller to press their demands on elected representatives and city government.

Selection criteria for Wards required the selection of two residential wards; one relatively wealthy, and one with a high proportion of slumdweller. The selection of residential wards ensured that results would not be distorted by the additional pressure of business interests in the ward. Research objectives were to uncover how Ward Commissioners balanced the needs of the rich and the poor. It was assumed that, given the city’s history of patron-client relationships, the addition of powerful business interests in a ward would push the needs of the poor further down the ladder.¹

Ward A² has a much higher proportion of slums, which have struggled to retain their settlements as the Ward has developed. The building of an embankment adjoining the Ward has improved the geophysical features of the area, which is no longer vulnerable to such frequent flooding. This has furthered the development of the Ward, where property is now in great demand. However, it has also intensified the struggles and insecurities of slumdweller, who have faced eviction to improve the Ward’s drainage capacity. As one of the founding members of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the Ward Commissioner has been consistently re-elected during his sixteen-year reign.

The selection of Ward B was based on its status as the “elite” residential area of Dhaka – land prices have soared and the city houses a diverse population, attracting Bangladeshis from all six Divisions, as well as a number of foreign expatriates. The majority of residents can be classed as high-income. However, adjoining the luxury high-rise apartments, the Ward also homes the city’s largest slum. The Ward Commissioner is serving his first post and hopes that his performance will see him re-elected in the 2007 municipal elections.

Within each Ward several semi-structured interviews were carried out with Ward Commissioners. In order to familiarise ourselves, the first interviews gathered an overall impression of their ward’s difficulties and priorities, and of their views on city governance. Follow-up interviews probed their priorities, particularly with regards to slumdweller in their wards. Ward Commissioners were surprisingly forthcoming with their revelations regarding the poor status of governance across the city, reflecting the frustrations they faced on a daily basis. Although both took what could be classed as a ‘pro-poor’ stance, showing concern of the lives of the poor in their wards, we aimed to verify this through focus group discussions in the slums.

Focus group discussions consisting of four to six slumdweller were carried out in each Ward. These were carried out in Bangla and translated into English. Discussions aimed to identify the political capacities of the poor at the local level, and to compare their experiences with the opinions shared by their Ward Commissioners. What were the expectations of slumdweller regarding their Ward Commissioner and to what extent were they met? Did they identify any means through which they could influence him and press their demands? Were there any other individuals or groups that helped or hindered their attempts to get their

¹ This does not, however, assume that wealthy residents are not powerful businessmen. Many of the residents in one Ward for example, are powerful property developers. However, by picking residential Wards we hoped to minimise, to the best of our ability, the influence of business interests on the Ward Commissioner.

² Wards have been anonymised.

voices heard? Focus groups were informed that we were not interested in investigating perceptions on party affiliation. Any information regarding party politics was volunteered by respondents independently.

Focus groups aimed to build a picture of the expectations and perceptions of a ‘typical’ slumdweller. In addition, however, we wanted to compare their experiences and perceptions with a group of ‘mobilised’ slum dwellers. Hereafter, these two groups are referred to as the ‘non-active’ and ‘active’ poor. Since 2000, Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP) has been mobilising slum dwellers under the *Basti Basheer Odhikar Surakha Committee* programme (Slum dwellers Rights Protection Committee, BOSC). Its objectives have been to form committees through which slum dwellers can be integrated into municipal governance. How do their experiences compare with non-active slum dwellers, and how do the benefits of their action impact upon non-members?

In viewing the success and the limits of BOSC initiatives, the research also hoped to draw some conclusions regarding a ‘view from below’ and a ‘view from above’ in terms of incorporating the poor into urban governance – to what extent can mobilisation of the urban poor influence upon local and national government, and to what extent is this limited by the need for wider policy reform and advocacy work within Central Government?

Figure 1: Focus Group Profiles

Location	Participants
Ward A <i>bastee</i> ³	Female respondents, housewives, domestic help
Ward A <i>bastee</i>	Male respondents, rickshaw pullers
Ward B <i>bastee</i>	Female respondents, garments workers, housewives
Ward B <i>bastee</i>	Male respondents, rickshaw pullers
Ward B <i>bastee</i>	Male BOSC Committee members – Small business/service holders
Ward B <i>bastee</i>	Female BOSC Committee members – Small business, housewives, garment workers

It is important to note that although some major cross-cutting themes may be reflected at the city-wide level, the conclusions drawn here are limited to the two Wards in question. Each Ward has its unique characteristics and composition, so to prevent generalisation, further research is required before city-wide conclusions can be drawn.

2. Research Findings

2.1 Urban Poverty

Dhaka’s ever-expanding pool of urban poor is visible in the expansion of slums on vacant private and public land across the city. This informal system of self-help housing is a direct result of poor governance; exorbitant costs and no formal provisions of housing for the poor have rendered even the cheapest land and housing inaccessible to the poor (World Bank 2006, Islam 2005, Nawaz 2003). Recent statistics indicate that slum dwellers constitute 35.4 percent of the city population, or 3.4 million people (CUS et al 2006).

³ *Bastee* is the bangla translation of ‘slum’. *Basti Basheer* is the bangla translation for slum dwellers.

Slums are defined by their country-specific characteristics rather than a universal definition. Bangladesh-specific characteristics include; low quality housing; high population density and room crowding; very poor environmental services; low socio-economic status; and a lack of security of tenure (CUS et al 2006). It is estimated that while almost seventy percent of Dhaka's population is classed as 'low-income', this population has access, but not ownership, to only twenty percent of the city's land (BURT 2005).

Failures in urban governance impact hardest upon the most vulnerable households, who face social, economic, political and cultural marginalisation. Low incomes, poor health, employment difficulties, barriers to service access, environmental hazards and gender disparities all play a role in urban poverty. A recent study by CUS (2006) gives a snapshot of living conditions in slums across Dhaka, as illustrated below.

Legal access to services poses a significant challenge to slumdweller. While around 95% of households have access to electricity, only 57.6% of households can access cooking gas (CUS et al 2006). Focus groups expressed this as a major concern. The purchase of alternative fuels was significantly more costly, and shortages had serious repercussions for health. Respondents highlighted that they were unable to purify the river water they drank, stating that, *'...we are frequently infected with water-borne diseases and have to pay if someone is hospitalised'*.

Municipal taps and tubewells provide the major source for drinking water, with only a small proportion of households indicating that they collect water from other sources such as rivers, ponds or canals. In both wards, focus groups noted, that NGO-installed tubewells were now out of order.

Only just over 35% of households use hygienic latrines (CUS et al 2006). Residents in Ward B suggested that NGOs have established proper sanitation systems and raised awareness about hygiene. While over half of slums in Dhaka received regular garbage collection, a further 35% had no collections at all, leading to waste disposal in open spaces and water bodies (CUS et al 2006). Poor drainage in nearly 60% of slums ensures that many slums are at risk from annual flooding. Poor environmental services are thus major contributors to the vulnerability of slumdweller. Consequently, urban slumdweller are identified as a particularly vulnerable group in terms of health by Bangladesh's PRSP (GoB 2005).

The status of female-headed households is worse than their male-headed counterparts, with women and children being particularly vulnerable to extreme manifestations of poverty (BURT 2005, GoB 2005, Barkat 2003). Female respondents did, however, specify that there were more employment opportunities for women in the city, especially as garment workers or housemaids. Respondents suggested that their relative invisibility in the city provided women with the means to earn a livelihood. This was impossible in their home villages, where they specified that women are chastised for working outside the home.

Previous assumptions have suggested that rapid urban growth has been fuelled by rural migration. A dichotomy of 'push' and 'pull' factors can be identified as contributing factors to migration to urban areas. Contrary to initial beliefs, however, the rural poor leave villages due to their adverse conditions, rather than come to cities to follow 'bright light' ideologies. Focus group discussions identified that the major reasons for their migration were poor conditions in their villages – river erosion and rainy seasons reduced livelihood opportunities, and the limited employment opportunities available in their home villages do not provide

sufficient incomes. One group identified the terror caused by the banned *Sharbohara* party as a contributing factor. ‘Pull factors’, such as the possibility of wage employment in Dhaka, are simply additional instigators.

Government has been unwilling to concentrate poverty reduction initiatives in urban areas for fear that giving slum dwellers a sense of permanency or security will encourage a further influx of migrants. Consequently, previous assumptions that ‘pull’ factors enticed migration have ensured that poverty alleviation efforts are concentrated in rural areas. Although rates of poverty reduction in urban areas are actually faster than their rural equivalents, several indicators in urban areas are worse in slums, particularly in health, education, and access to water and sanitation. BURT (2005) indicates that while the number of poor households continues to increase in Dhaka, their environmental and socioeconomic conditions continue to deteriorate (BURT 2005). Although rural manifestations of poverty must be remedied to slow migration, this cannot be at the cost of neglecting the millions of urban poor who live in such torrid conditions.

The rural bias present in poverty reduction strategies means that the urban poor are underserved in comparison to their rural counterparts in education and health facilities (Rashid 2004, Barkat 2003). Higher school drop out rates and more severe rates of malnutrition show the extreme forms of vulnerabilities faced by the urban poor. The rural bias exists within both governmental and non-governmental initiatives, with NGOs facing several barriers to interventions in slums.⁴ Naming one of the biggest NGOs in the country, one focus group demanded, *‘they are the biggest NGO in the world, but what do they do for us?’* Slum dwellers lacked trust in the legitimacy of NGO programmes, due to their high costs and previous experiences, as will be discussed shortly. However, Siddiqui et al note that even given such problems, NGOs are still considered the best service providers in the city by the poor themselves (Siddiqui et al, 2000).

As slum dwellers lack land ownership, it is illegal for public service providers to supply services to slums. This also creates difficulties for NGO interventions, with the possibility of eviction discouraging heavy investment. Several large slum communities have been evicted from central Dhaka in recent years (CUS et al 2006, Nawaz 2003). Although laws stipulate that eviction is illegal without the rehabilitation of slum dwellers, this has not prevented the practice. Rehabilitation to peripheral areas of the city also forces detachment from existing livelihoods, particularly employment. Insecurity therefore cuts a menacing figure at the forefront of slum dwellers lives.

There is remarkable discontent with regards to the discrepancy between government actions and the ‘pledges’ that have been made for urban poor (BURT 2005). Urban planning has bypassed the poor, regardless of the huge contribution they provide to the social and economic fabric of society. *‘Wherever you plant a garden, the bees will come’*, stated one interviewee – not only do the poor rely on the urban economy for employment opportunities, this dependency is two-way. Transport, garments and construction industries are only a few of those sectors which are heavily dependant on the labour of the urban poor. Yet this is not reflected in policy. *‘Government does not recognise our settlement in Dhaka city. The Government thinks that we are worthless people’*, stated one discussion group.

⁴ See Rashid, S. F and Hossain, Y. (2005).

2.2 Urban Local Government

McCarney *et al* define governance as:

a system of government concentrating on effective and accountable institutions, democratic principles and electoral processes, representative and responsible structures to ensure an open and legitimate relationship between the civil society and the state (McCarney et al in Islam and Khan, 1997).

Thus, governance and Government are two distinct identities. The relationship between them, however, is most noticeable when it is bad, as evidenced throughout Bangladesh's democratic history. As policy commitments and programmes are implemented by the State in the public interest, and *not* through the identity of the ruling power, in theory this should result in policy continuation regardless of a change in ruling party. This has not been the case in Bangladesh, as noted by CUP with regards to official policy on slum evictions. While one Government implements policy and programmes, its successor has often discontinued them in preference for their own, a practice which hits hardest upon the city's most vulnerable. This viewpoint is shared by Kamal (2000), who states that the efficiency of poverty alleviation initiatives has been constrained by a lack of effective governance (Kamal, 2000: 6). To what extent does Dhaka's governance structure allow the poor to participate in programme or policy formulation?

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is the most visible authority in Dhaka.⁵ As the central administrative body, it carries responsibility for social welfare. Headed by a democratically-elected Mayor, DCC is split into ten zones and ninety wards.

Wards constitute the most localised level of municipal governance, with each Ward governed by a democratically-elected Ward Commissioner. Ward Commissioners manage municipal affairs and carry out development works in their Ward. As the closest representatives of the city dwellers, Ward Commissioners play a crucial role in city governance. However, with no fully-defined framework of duties and responsibilities, Ward Commissioners are left to perform their responsibilities according to their individual initiative and commitment. This leads to significant variation in efficiency, particularly with regards to prioritisation of the needs of the poor. Siddiqui et al detail the lack of empathy and prioritisation that the majority of Ward Commissioners accord to the poor (Siddiqui et al, 2004: 388).

At the foremost of their problems, Ward Commissioners identify a lack of decentralised power – the heavily-centralised system of governance⁶ entails major frustrations in the day to day running of their wards. Although closest to residents, their power is very limited, with decision-making power hidden behind closed doors in the hands of an inefficient bureaucracy. Thus, decision-making does not correspond with transparency and accountability - those who are accountable to the electorate do not have any power to take decisions. *'If you want something from me,'* one Ward Commissioner stated, *'give me the power...If I have done a bad job I will not be re-elected. This will be my judgement day'*.

⁵ For a detailed description of the institutional structure of metropolitan governance, see Banks 2006.

⁶ Although an autonomous body, Central Government holds great power over DCC. In addition, the structure of DCC is also very centralised, with the majority of powers held in DCC head office rather than decentralised to the zone or ward level.

Centralised power also undermines independent political representation. While democratic elections lift the voices of the poor at the local level, this is not echoed into policy or priority due to the weakness of Ward Commissioners in relation to DCC, and more importantly due to the weakness of DCC in relation to Central Government.

One of the most significant achievements with regards to the participation of the urban poor has been the extension of the democratic municipal election process to incorporate the poor.⁷ Slumdweller achieved voting rights before the Mayoral election of 1994. Previously, the electorate constituted only 9% of the city's population, as voting rights were dependant on property, income and qualifications. Voting tended to be based on kinship and group interests rather than on city welfare (Khan, 1997: 9). In face of the introduction of voting rights for the poor, it becomes impossible to refute the proposition that representation and participation of the poor have come a long way. However, crucial questions arise regarding the *depth* of this participation.

A representative contemporary definition of political participation is, 'all voluntary activities by private individuals which seek, either directly or indirectly, to influence political decisions on different levels of the political system' (Kersting and Sperberg, 2003: 153). This study extends the scope of participation beyond a 'political' definition to incorporate any form of participation through which slumdweller aim to solve social problems. In essence, the importance of participation allows individuals to take the initiative to become involved in issues that affect their lives (Khan, 1997: 18). This extension is necessary to fully understand the depth of participation of the urban poor. Traditionally excluded from the social and political fabric of society, it is important to identify with whom they interact to gain access to facilities and services.

Siddiqui et al (2004) argue that participation by the general public has been limited to simply voting in municipal elections (Siddiqui et al, 2004: 389). Earlier studies indicate that a lack of participation by the general public allowed DCC to reach a state whereby the role of interest groups and the ruling party became dominant over and above public interest in decision-making (Rajbangshi (1986) in Khan, 1997: 18). In the face of this, slumdweller identify several other actors with whom they interact to solve their problems, such as *mastaans*, landlords and NGOs. They also identify negative interactions with the police. While earlier studies of slumdweller have identified a 'culture of poverty' in which city slumdweller face considerable social exclusion (Lewis, in Berg-Schlosser and Kersting, 2003: 4), today's experiences in Bangladesh indicate that the urban poor now have more avenues of both traditional and non-traditional political participation, which will be discussed in section three.

However, although the poor enjoy voting rights, they have no effective voice to force proactive reforms exercising their majority in the electoral system (Kamal, 2000: 2). What are the underlying causes of the urban poor's inability to project their voices for political change? Kamal (2000) attributes this inability to a lack of accountability – the absence of effective constitutional and political structures that regulate and influence the transparency and accountability of governance (Kamal, 2000: 3). How does this fit in with the experiences of the poor in the two wards studied? Section three identifies avenues of participation open to

⁷ Democratic elections have also been blamed for an increase in corruption, for reinforcing political networks and policies that favour the elite and for DCC's lack of autonomy. Ruling parties are unwilling to transfer significant power to city Mayors for fear the position will be captured by the opposition. The loss of Mayor to the opposition party in 1994, for example, has been named as one of the contributing factors to the decline of the BNP which lost power in the next election. See Banks (2006) for further detail.

slumdweller. In the process it investigates the depth of their participation and constraints to further participation. Section four then investigates the success of BOSC in mobilising poor communities across Dhaka city. Finally, it also notes that with the impacts of grassroots mobilisation limited to the local level (DCC), the recognition of urban poverty at a national level requires further action.

3. Political Participation of the Urban Poor

3.1 Traditional and Non-traditional Political Participation

The most conventional form of participation for slumdweller is the voting process in local and national elections. Both Dhaka's Mayor and Ward Commissioners are directly elected by residents. Bangladesh's patron-client hierarchy has meant that clientelistic relationships have personalised the nature of politics. The use of personal contacts with politicians or officials, for example, is often a more successful solution to grievance resolution than formal complaint channels, particularly in service delivery (World Bank 2002). The role of the *mastaan* makes connections between slums and political leaders, in which a votebank mobilised by a *mastaan* is exchanged with elected officials for improved services or other benefits. This has become an important element in Dhaka's political context, and will be discussed further below.

Non-traditional forms of participation include those of controversial legality which do not correspond to laws that regulate participation, such as demonstrations, building occupations, and petitioning. The latter have been very visible given the intense rivalry between Bangladesh's two main parties. With 2006 being an election year, *hartals* (or strikes) are a regular occurrence for political as well as economic reasons. The poor are often paid to partake in political demonstrations. One respondent mentioned that, '*If anyone is in financial crisis, and he is offered 100 taka, why would he not go to the demonstration?*' Slumdweller also mentioned that during programmes initiated by the ruling party, political workers closed access roads to the slum to force all slumdweller to go to their programme.

It is important however, to assess the depth of participation with regards to any external pressures felt in carrying out political activities. Such activities include 'vote-buying' - the practice of payments in exchange for votes - or payments to facilitate presence at protests and demonstrations. In such cases, monetary obligations become the major facilitator behind participation or voting behaviour, thus undermining the idea of independent political representation of the poor.

3.2 Ward Commissioners and the Poor: Perceptions and Expectations

Official duties of Ward Commissioners are limited to managing development works and the day-to-day running of their Ward. What do slumdweller expect their Ward Commissioner to do on behalf of the poor?

First and foremost, all focus groups identified that the most important characteristic of a Ward Commissioner is simply to maintain a presence and show an interest in the lives of the

slumdweller. Such perceptions ranged from *'We do not expect a lot, simply to keep in touch'*, to *'he must communicate with the people'*, or, *'he must be an easygoing person so that we can approach him'*.

This helps to distinguish between the disillusionment experienced in Ward A and the satisfaction experienced in Ward B. In Ward B the Commissioner was widely praised for his regular visits to the slums, his concern for them, and his approachability. A different role was identified in Ward A where the Ward Commissioner was unreachable. Respondents noted that he had never been to see them since the election, they were unsure of his office location, and they noted that it was impossible to meet him directly— one had to first make an appointment through his associates.

The different responses of each Ward Commissioner under similar circumstances can help to illustrate this distinction. In both wards, male respondents detailed that at one point, a rickshaw had been stolen. In each case, the rickshaw puller requested help from their Ward Commissioner. In Ward A, the Ward Commissioner did not deal with the problem himself, but instead sent him to an associate, another influential person in the ward. In Ward B however, the Ward Commissioner came to the slum himself and directly exerted his influence to find the thief and recover the rickshaw. Although both respondents had their rickshaws returned, the experience of Ward B was viewed much more favourably. The disinterest showed by the Ward Commissioner in Ward A illustrated to the slumdweller that they were not a priority for them.

Ward Commissioners identified that their most important duty with regards to the poor was to, *'help them live a peaceful life'*. Informal dispute resolution was one of the main activities that they carried out in this sphere, as well as activities both had taken to eradicate criminal behaviour. Informal dispute resolution was named as a characteristic of a good Ward Commissioner on all accounts. However, in general the Ward Commissioner was not the first port of call for resolving grievances, but was seen as a further actor who could be utilised if other avenues were not possible. This will be detailed in the following section. Performances by Ward Commissioners again varied dramatically – while respondents in Ward A had difficulties contacting their Ward Commissioner, respondents in Ward B praised the Ward Commissioner for coming to the slum himself. While in Ward B the Ward Commissioner was applauded for immersing himself in the problems of poor slumdweller, in Ward A there was no contact between the Ward Commissioner and slumdweller - *'He does not give heed to our affairs'* stated male respondents.

Neutrality was also identified as an important characteristic of a 'good' Ward Commissioner. *'He should keep it in his mind that he is an agent of the people. He should measure all people equally, and be honest and neutral'*. This importance is stark when it is considered that a frequent practice in informal dispute resolution is that in the majority of cases, a positive verdict is given to whichever party was affiliated with his political party. This occurrence was noted by several groups. Ward B respondents also suggested that political affiliation impacts upon access to officials, stating that, *'When he comes, he talks first with his party members, and then the others'*. This may, however, simply be because party members provide him with an entry point to the slums, as discussion surrounding his visits were otherwise entirely positive. Male non-BOSC respondents were the only group that specified the Ward Commissioner had not visited the slum since elections. It is impossible for the Ward Commissioner to cross paths with all slumdweller, and as such, his visits may be limited to

those he has contacts with. Furthermore, it is likely that as rickshaw pullers, this group may be working outside of the slum at times when the Ward Commissioner is likely to visit.

One focus group in Ward B highlighted that they tended not to go to the Ward Commissioner for personal purposes, although if someone had a problem that could not be solved or needed a certificate, they could go to his office. Instead, they viewed the Ward Commissioner's duty as to look after their *collective* requirements, such as roads, street lamps or water pumps. Slumdweller in Ward A made no suggestions of pressing collective demands on the Ward Commissioner. Although they recognised the power of collective might, they could identify no platform through which they could press their demands. This will be further analysed in section 2.5.

All groups suggested that a good Ward Commissioner would provide them with a primary school for their children, good roads, street lighting, and healthcare facilities. Of these, only street lighting and roads are within the jurisdiction of Ward Commissioners. In Ward B, slumdweller were enthusiastic about improvements in both the roads and street lighting *within* the slum since the present Ward Commissioner was elected. Slumdweller in Ward A received no such resources in the slum, although they did appreciate the indirect benefit of improved roads elsewhere in the ward.

Several groups also mentioned that they would like a savings and credit cooperative to be organised under the Ward Commissioner, as they did not trust those run by NGOs. The distribution of monetary and food assistance was also indicated as a desirable quality. Both Ward Commissioners indicated that they gave food assistance in emergency situations, and helped with medical expenses from their own pockets. During festival times they collected monetary donations for the slumdweller.

Slumdweller in the two wards placed different emphasis on their definition of a 'good' Ward Commissioner. In Ward A, respondents emphasised personal qualities and duties, such as 'being approachable' and 'keeping in touch'. Although these were also mentioned in Ward B, here more priority seemed to be placed on tangible responsibilities such as carrying out more development works in the slum. Higher expectations have arisen due to the differences in performance by respective Ward Commissioners. Since the Ward Commissioner performed much more positively in the first aspect in Ward B, his residents placed more emphasis on the things that they would like him to do more of. In Ward A on the other hand, feeling neglected and unable to press their demands on the Ward Commissioner, slumdweller saw these qualities as a crucial foundation to a relationship with the Ward Commissioner, which could hopefully lead to development in the future.

When asked to identify characteristics they associated with a bad Ward Commissioner, respondents suggested that a bad Commissioner was simply one that didn't fulfil the criteria of a good Ward Commissioner, '*...And if any Ward Commissioner has no feature like this, he would be a bad commissioner*'. 'Bad' Ward Commissioners therefore, offer greetings and respect during election campaigns, but never visit after winning the election. They do not worry about the slumdweller concerns, and do not try to provide services to the slumdweller.

3.3 Other Forms of Political Participation

Political participation is not limited to interactions with Ward Commissioners. In fact, respondents suggested that the Ward Commissioner would not be their first calling point in most instances. Focus Groups identified four other avenues for problem resolution or service delivery; NGOs; government services; *mastaans*; and landlords. In addition, respondents highlighted their negative experiences with the police, due to the police force becoming increasingly used for political ends.

NGOs

One of the most interesting findings regarding NGOs was the substantial doubt and suspicion that was identified throughout all focus group discussions about NGOs. While the more extreme views came from BOSC members, non-members mentioned the high costs involved and problems with accessing certain services.

Responses surrounding NGOs were overwhelmingly negative.⁸ The opinions of BOSC respondents tended to be overarching criticisms of NGOs in general rather than particular experiences. This was in contrast to non-BOSC respondents who described specific incidents with NGOs. *'It seems more like they develop themselves'*, stated one BOSC group. *'NGOs have been exploiting the poor in the name of poverty reduction'*, stated another. BOSC committees identify two problems. Firstly, they feel that while slumdweller have learnt a lot from NGOs regarding social and legal awareness, hygiene and sanitation, the NGOs have developed themselves more, highlighting the misery of the poor in order to gain more funds. *'We get awareness while NGO staff get rich'*, BOSC respondents asserted.

The second problem they identified was that NGO programmes in urban areas were simply not meeting the primary requirements of slumdweller. At the forefront of their daily struggles was their insecurity – slumdweller are vulnerable to the threat of eviction at any time. Consequently, their primary need is security of tenure, which would allow them the stability and security that is a prerequisite to the development of their housing.⁹ The crucial prerequisite to investment in housing is security – without this, households are unwilling to channel funds into improvements that will be lost in case of eviction.

This is not to say that slumdweller did not appreciate those NGO interventions in sanitation and services that did reach them. However, they did stipulate that in face of the eviction threat, these were wasted. Like building a house without first building the foundations, at the end of the day they will crumble, having been built on shaky ground.

Non-BOSC committees also voiced suspicions regarding NGOs. However their sentiments were not as strong as BOSC members, and were regarding specific experiences with NGOs.

⁸ This finding corresponds with a national survey of attitudes across Bangladesh by the BBC World Service, which found that public trust in NGOs was only slightly higher than the worst-performing category of the police (BBC 2005)

⁹ This matches research showing that given security of tenure, low-income households will improve the quality of their housing in an incremental fashion, undertaking additional improvements when they can afford it. Given security of tenure, on average, each \$1 invested in infrastructure has been proven to generate \$7 in household investment (MIT 2001)

A history of raised expectations and dashed hopes has made slumdweller wary of NGOs. Several instances were mentioned of people pretending to be NGO representatives and disappearing with savings. Other individuals come asking questions but are never seen again. One man came to ask whether they would quit rickshaw driving if they could take a loan, but never returned.

Although respondents suggested that some slumdweller had been able to purchase a rickshaw or start a small business through microfinance activities, rickshaw pullers were frustrated that they could not access small loans. Other criticisms were voiced, such as the high rates of interest that they charged. They also detailed the case of one man, who unable to pay his weekly instalment, returned to his house to find NGO staff raiding his belongings, without first listening to his circumstances.

Focus groups identified several areas in which NGOs are working in their wards. Respondents identified initiatives in schooling, microfinance, health clinics and immunisation programmes, sanitation and awareness campaigns. Although in the past NGOs had installed some water pumps, slumdweller in both wards stated that these had stopped working. Both slums, therefore, experience difficulties with water.

Several criticisms were voiced with regards to NGO schooling. Ward B, with the largest slum in Dhaka, had several NGO schools within its boundaries, but these experienced significant differences in quality. Certain schools were applauded for their distribution of free schoolbooks and notepads. However, inequality even within the slum dictates schooling opportunities, with respondents stating that, *'only powerful people within the slum can get their children admitted'* at this preferred school. The social hierarchy within the slum itself means that slumdweller who have contacts take precedence for limited school spaces. Other schools were referred to as poor quality – *'they are not serious about our children, and have no headache if the children come to school or not'*. Enrolment fees are also often beyond the means of slumdweller. Residents in Ward A stipulated that the 200 taka monthly fee at the nearby primary school rendered it inaccessible. Thus, a lack of places and unaffordable prices characterise NGO schooling, and provide a significant barrier to education. The quality of education is also a concern.

In terms of health facilities, slumdweller in Ward A mentioned an NGO clinic, which although they claim it was meant to provide free treatment, charged from five to ten taka for treatments. In this instance, they remarked, it would be better to go to the Government hospital than the clinic.

Governmental Services

Respondents confirmed that few governmental services reached them. While some NGO health services reached slumdweller, there were no governmental health services within the slum. Slumdweller also lamented the negligence they face when they try to access governmental health services. Slumdweller feel that they are stigmatised by doctors due to their lack of social status and worn clothes. All groups mentioned that good Ward Commissioners should help to provide schools and health facilities that the slumdweller can access.

Slumdweller also detailed their difficulties in obtaining official services. *'We were refused a legal DWASA line, because when they came to power, they thought that all slumdweller*

were supporters of the Awami League'. Slumdwellers recognise that the party in power tends to reward their supporters while neglecting those who support the opposition party. This practice emphasises the detrimental effects that Bangladesh's political rivalry has on the city's most vulnerable.

Access to gas was a major priority for slumdwellers. Without gas, several problems occur. In some instances, unable to boil and purify water, slumdwellers got ill from water-borne diseases. Other groups noted that the cost of wood and straw for cooking could amount to half of their daily wages. '*And then how can we buy other necessities?*' women asked whilst promised gas, water and other facilities during elections, slumdwellers lament that none of these promises are fulfilled after victory.

Respondents in Ward A discussed their disappointment with local leaders. Representatives had visited the slum to enlist the names and addresses of slumdwellers. They claimed that they were providing Government with information regarding the size of the slum, which could be used to distribute basic necessities such as rice, tin and dal. Residents never heard from them again, and slumdwellers believe that instead, they sold the goods back to the market. They believe that Government officials receive goods allocated for the poor, but that these goods and benefits never reach poor households.

Informal Leaders/Mastaans

Respondents noted the important role played by the informal leaders of the slum in problem solving. These individuals portray a conflicting battle. On one hand, respondents recognised their necessity for mediating with officials and connecting slumdwellers to service providers and political contacts. '*It is not possible for a government to reach each and every household*', one respondent suggested, '*so it is better to select a person who can take care for the slumdwellers*'.

At the same time, however, these leaders are the source of much fear and harm amongst the slumdwellers. The description of the role played by these leaders suggests that much of their legitimacy is reliant upon the fear of slumdwellers.

One focus group detailed that the leaders were not good people. Many are drug addicts or drink alcohol, do not work, and threaten weaker residents. They are vicious and do not respect the women or the elderly, but are free from reprimand because of their affiliation with the Ward Commissioner and political leaders. On one occasion, the police asked the slumdwellers to assist them catch criminals in the slum. After turning over one alleged criminal to the police, the slumdwellers did not receive the gratitude that they were promised. Instead, the criminal was released from jail with help from '*the black link of administration*' – officials allowed him to bribe himself out of jail. On his return, he began to torture families who had helped to seize him, and the police would not step in to protect them. This helps to illustrate how ordinary slumdwellers are at the mercy of *mastaans* who are controlled by higher authorities. '*Political parties protect all the terrorists and no one can do anything against them*¹⁰', stated one discussion group.

¹⁰ Please note that the use of the word 'terrorist' by slumdwellers is a synonym for 'criminal'. It has no reference to the connotations that the word 'terrorist' invokes in today's global context.

Those experiences with local leaders described by slumdweller matches the concept of the *'mastaan'*. The *mastaan* is a 'creation of the elite and politicians' (Rashid, 2004). The *mastaan* fills the institutional gap divide that excludes the poor from services, providing connections to slumdweller at vastly inflated prices. Political parties rely on links with local *mastaans* for support and re-election (Rashid and Hossain 2005), by providing guaranteed votebanks in return for services. In comparison to services accessed legally, these informal channels involve significantly higher costs. Rashid and Hossain estimate that poor households pay up to three times for electricity as legally-connected (Rashid and Hossain 2005). One focus group identified that they paid up to three taka per litre of water.

Respondents also suggested that slum leaders were able to capture resources that were provided to the slum. *'The leader grasped all the facilities and relief goods provided by highlighting our difficulties, and nothing is provided for us'*. This phenomenon, of *mastaans* capturing the supply of Government and NGO-provided facilities and services has been identified as a significant barrier to service delivery interventions within slums.

Landowners and Other 'Influential' People

Slumdweller in Ward A identified that instead of the Ward Commissioner, their land owner, a large property developer, was actually their first port of call for problem-solving. The major advantage they specify with the landlord is his political neutrality. Other avenues, such as community elders or Ward Commissioners, respondents associated with political bias. *'We cannot get political justice (through elders or the Ward Commissioner) because he always gives support of his party fellow'*. Slumdweller also note the uncertainty that they face at the hands of the landowner. *'We pay him rent, but if he orders us to leave this place, we must leave'*. In Ward B, the slum is situated on Government-owned land, so no comparable relationship exists.

Another actor identified in Ward A was the son of a local influential person. He plans to run as Ward Commissioner in the next election when the current Commissioner stands down. With the support and affiliation of the Ward Commissioner he is involving himself in ward affairs to generate a positive social image before the election. One respondent detailed that his rickshaw had been stolen by miscreants. The Ward Commissioner referred him to the aforementioned person, who was able to retrieve the rickshaw.

Police

Slumdweller identify harassment by the police force as a major difficulty that they face. Increasingly in Dhaka, the police have been used for political ends. Prior to any large opposition party parade or demonstration, respondents state that the police arrest large numbers of slumdweller. *'In such a time, the police are given some target to arrest a fixed number of people. It is easy to access a slum, so they arrest people from here, whether they are involved in politics or not'*. Although the police should be a separate entity from Government, they are increasingly being used for political means. As a result they exist as a major disturbance to the lives of slumdweller, 'whose greatest hope is to escape harassment by the police and public officials (Kamal, 2000: 7).

Experiences with the police force increase the costs of economic participation for slumdweller. One respondent mentioned that one of his rickshaws was seized by the police because it had no license. Unable to pay a bribe for its return, the police kept it. Although

recognising the legitimacy of his punishment, he stated, *'But I have been punished. But the rich can avoid the punishment, and they are much bigger thieves'*. The slumdweller laments the lack of rule of law for the rich, viewing their ability to escape from punishment because of their wealth and resources. The poor cannot afford to bribe themselves out of escaping punishment. A lack of rule of law therefore is a much greater burden on the poor, who are vulnerable due to their lack of power and money. *'The poor have to suffer all kinds of hazard either in police or political action'*, stipulate slumdweller. They detail that sometimes innocent slumdweller are retained in jail because the police demanded unaffordable bribes for their release.

The preceding discussion has identified the main actors slumdweller interact with for problem solving or access provision. However, the analysis shows that even those that can help the poor can also harm them. Although viewed as an integral part of the slum's social hierarchy, slum leaders also generate considerable fear. Landlords, while renting their land and helping to resolve grievances, can at any time evict them. The police offer no help or protection to the poor, and are viewed as protecting only the rich or powerful, including criminals. They identify both NGOs and Government as manipulating their miseries to gain funds, of which only a small proportion reaches them.

Many of these problems have resulted from a lack of formal and legitimate channels for service provision and facilities. Laws prohibiting service provision to slums, for example, allows the creation of the *mastaan*, who provides services at the same time as exploiting the poor. Attempts to overcome such problems therefore, require formalised and legitimate relationships regarding land ownership and service delivery. It is also evident that NGOs working in urban areas may need to review their operations and make coordinated efforts to match the needs of the urban poor.

3.4 What's in a Vote?

Universally viewing the vote as an important citizen right, how do slumdweller cast their vote and how do they view their influence on Government once they have given their vote? It is important to note that slumdweller did not distinguish between Government and Local Government (DCC). Although the Ward Commissioner is a visible representative, unless discussions stipulated 'the Ward Commissioner', discussions quickly switched to Government at a national level.

Female respondents in Ward B highlighted the importance of the voting rights that slumdweller now experience. *'Without this vote, we have no importance to them. Only during election times do they come to us seeking votes, and in this time we feel ourselves stronger than them'*. This identifies the idea of a 'subordinate' poor – people take advantage of them, while the wealthy are free from troubles and harassment because they have money and power. Thus, voting is a hugely important process for them, as this is the only time in which they feel that they hold social and political power.

Throughout all focus groups it became clear that the poor's perception of governance is closely linked to their peace and security. They identified major improvements in the reduction of terrorism solely with the efforts of the present Government and the introduction of RAB (Rapid Action Battalion, Bangladesh's 'elite' police force). *'We give our vote for*

keeping security and peace', stated one focus group. Another group said that, *'At present, we are living in a peaceful and sound environment because of RAB'*. Under the previous regime, miscreants, hoodlums, thieves and criminals were common across the city. The last BNP Government (2001-2006) is therefore closely associated with the reduction of crime. Crime reduction was a major vote winner for Ward Commissioners in both wards, and a primary focal point in their campaigning.

Discussions with slumdweller in Ward A highlighted the lack of accountability of elected representatives. *'It is our right to vote'*, stated one focus group, *'but after this, it is not our affair if the leader does not undertake development works'*. While they view their vote as a very important right, after they have voted they see nothing that they can do to hold the Ward Commissioner to account. Kamal (2000) identifies accountability as the missing link that ensures the poor lack the ability to convey their voices for political change. While they enjoy voting rights, they have no voice to force pro-active reforms exercising their majority in the electoral system (Kamal 2000).

These distinctions help to explain the feelings of neglect and disillusionment experienced by slumdweller in Ward A.¹¹ They feel that the Ward Commissioner has not fulfilled the minimum requirements for retaining his legitimacy. For this reason, slumdweller feel detached from the social and political fabric of the Ward - their duty begins and ends with the voting process. After the vote, the Ward Commissioner can choose to work or not to work, but this has nothing to do with the slumdweller. Crucially, in Ward A, slumdweller could see no platform through which to press their demands on, or even meet with, their Ward Commissioner. Instead their priorities are focused on dealing with day-to-day survival.

Slumdweller in Ward A were hugely disillusioned by their experiences with the Ward Commissioner. *'We cast votes in the hope that they might bring something positive for our well-being'*, they specify, yet they are repeatedly disappointed. During campaigning, candidates frequented the slums to ask for their vote. Yet after winning the vote, he never visits the slum or takes heed in their affairs. Instead, residents see that the Ward Commissioner's first priority is maintaining social relationships with the rich. *'We are valued less because we are poor, and our votes are valueless'*, stated one respondent. Disappointed at the Ward Commissioner's neglect, female respondents stipulated that, *'We have decided that no votes will be cast in the next election'*.

Why were slumdweller in Ward A quietly accepting of a Government which neglects their needs?¹² In research on popular expectations on Government, Ali and Hossain (2006) explain that in part, this may be because some action has been taken that has improved their livelihoods (Ali and Hossain, 2006: 4). Respondents in all focus groups praised the Government for its efforts in eradicating terrorism through RAB. With the eradication of the regular extortion of payments, muggings and other forms of criminality, the improvement in slumdweller lives were very pronounced in discussions. *'These changes seem a big factor to us, because during the last Government we got nothing'*, stated one focus group.

¹¹ Berg-Schlösser and Kersting (2003) details experiences of 'marginalised personality', associated with a lack of participation and long-term perspectives (Berg-Schlösser and Kersting, 2003: 4).

¹² An important discrepancy must be noted with regards to the repeated re-election of a Ward Commissioner who has continually disappointed his poor residents. In this instance, it may be that seeing their vote as 'valueless', the helpless situation faced by slumdweller in Ward A may encourage them to get what they can in exchange for their vote. See Kamal 2000 and Bergman-Schlösser and Kersting 2000 for information regarding the undermining of independent political representation of the poor.

This does not entail overall satisfaction, however. At the same time slumdweller are very conscious of Government policies which have made their livelihoods more difficult, with one rickshaw puller stating that, *'...but they have hurt the poor like me, so I will not vote for this Government again'*. Policies implemented under this regime like the rickshaw ban on highways and main roads have had significant detrimental impacts on the livelihoods of the poor. The price index of basic goods is also a crucial indicator for poor households regarding Government performance. Focus groups argued that a good government should at the very least control the price of basic goods. One even suggested that Government should subsidise these staples. However, slumdweller view that any subsidies in society in fact go to the rich. *'Government reduces the price of houses and cars in the budget, but these are for the rich. It is never for our necessities'*, stated one group. This was matched by other groups, who suggested that, *'We are always the deprived group'*.

These insights do indicate that slumdweller vote on performance rather than party affiliation, in particular on how Government policies and programmes impact upon their lives. Ali and Hossain suggest that, *'...poor Bangladeshis see the vote as a referendum on the incumbent government, and their votes are based on their evaluation of the incumbent's performance rather than the challenger's leadership styles or policies'* (Ali and Hossain, 2006: 22). This viewpoint was confirmed by female respondents in Ward B who stated that, *'A vote does not help us anyway, but in this way we express our liking and disliking'*. CUP also suggests that one major improvement in political participation is that slumdweller are now more politically aware. Consequently, they judge Government performance on tangible outcomes of programmes and policies that have direct impacts upon their livelihoods, rather than party rhetoric. Male respondents, for example, confirmed that they would not vote for this Government again because of the harm it has done their livelihoods. Kamal (2000) identifies the high levels of enthusiasm in the political process as evidenced by the continuously high election turnouts (Kamal 2000).

Numerous groups identified their disillusionment with the broken promises of past and previous governments. *'Candidates bestow their heads and hands to us during the election, but the same candidates kick us after the election'*, specified one group. *'They tell us that they will work for us, and give us roads and services, and that they will clean the dust from our legs'*, stated one female respondent, *'but first they have to clean their hearts'*. Not only does this show disillusionment with successive governments, but also with the campaigning and voting process itself, which allows the victorious candidates or Government to renege on their promises once they gain power.

3.5 Poverty and Social Exclusion

Although poverty is a multi-dimensional deprivation, focus group discussions highlighted the direct relationship between their lack of money and their social and political exclusion. The poor identify a lack of money as their main impediment to social and political recognition; attribute this to their lack of power vis-à-vis Ward Commissioners and the Government. In a society where the rich reap the benefits, the voices of the poor are not heard. *'Everywhere in your life requires money if you want to benefit from any facilities or advantages'*, stated one focus group. In a system of governance that equates power and access with wealth, the poor feel that they will always lose out. Slumdweller could envision no place for the poor in

Dhaka's future – *'the poor will probably not survive in Dhaka city in the future because all property goes to the rich in Bangladesh'*. Neither municipal nor national Government is seen as pro-poor. In the interactions of slumdweller with society, society is characterised by rules that are made and broken by the rich; where the rich go unpunished and capture the lion's share of resources and subsidies. This viewpoint is portrayed through statements such as *'The Government always puts oil in the oily hands'*, in Ward B and, *'the Ward Commissioner maintains healthy relationships with the rich'*, in Ward A.

'We are living in such circumstances where our might is our right', suggested respondents in Ward A. Female respondents shared this sentiment, stating that if slumdweller could come together, then many crucial problems could be solved. They also identified that this process of collective mobilisation would be the only way pressurise Ward Commissioners or the Government. Slumdweller in Ward A recognise that those who possess a voice against oppression can facilitate reconciliation, but can envision no channel through which they can utilise this power. With matters of daily survival taking priority, their lack of money prevents them from attempting to overcome political marginalisation.

Attempts have been made, however, to facilitate the mobilisation of slumdweller in order to hold municipal government to account. Section four details the achievements of Coalition for the Urban Poor's BOSC programme.

4. Mobilisation of Slumdweller: Lessons from BOSC

4.1 A Framework for Participation

In 1997, Khan identified that *'The poor's exclusion from local urban bodies is complete. They simply have no means through which to directly or indirectly participate in the deliberations of such bodies and influence decisions'* (Khan 1997). To overcome barriers to effective participation Khan recommended the mobilisation and conscientisation of NGOs and community-based organisations. CUP's *Basti Basheer Odhikar Surakha* Committee (BOSC) programme has initiated progress in this sphere and laid the foundations for further improvement.

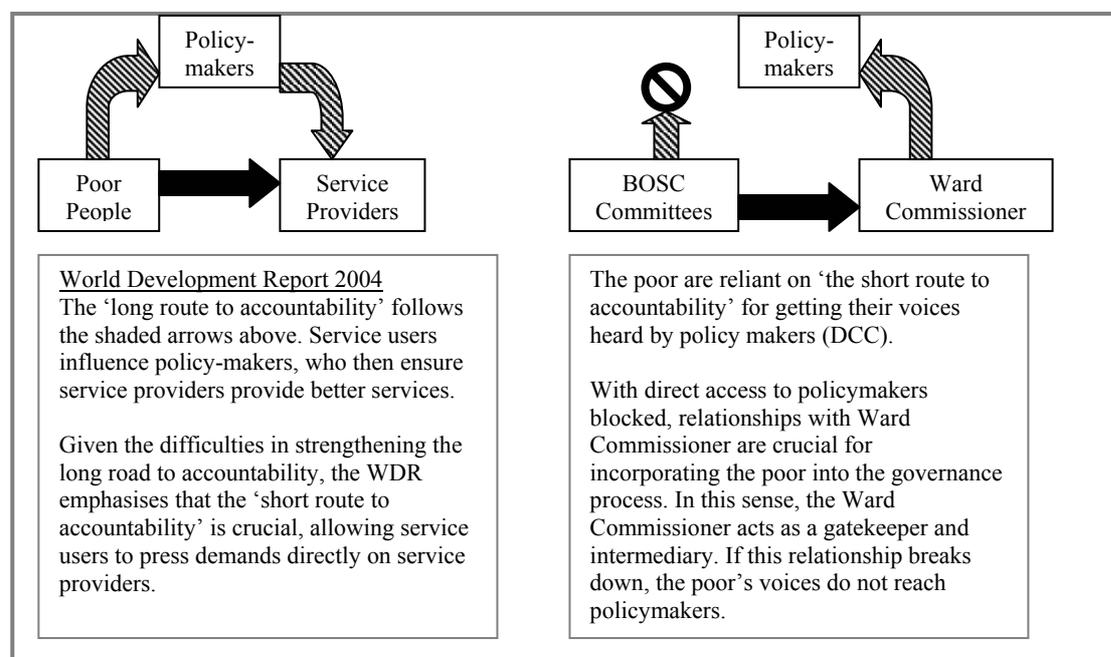
The initiation of BOSC in 2000 aimed to provide a non-violent alternative to the violent rallies, protests and demonstrations that had previously been the main forum for staging the voices of the poor. The programme created a network of local committees through which slumdweller could organise themselves and press their demands upon Local Government. It aimed to create accountability mechanisms for the urban poor and to incorporate slumdweller into the urban governance process.

The Ward Commissioner-citizen relationship can be viewed as a service-provider relationship. The method of payment is a vote, and the services provided are, ideally, those facets of good governance which render the local government responsive and accountable to the needs of the slumdweller.¹³ The World Development Report (2004) can provide insight into the abilities of the poor to participate in accountable urban governance. It also highlights

¹³ This chain will, however, fall apart in instances where there is no accountability or legitimacy for the poor, as we have seen in the case of Ward A, where slumdweller identify that after they cast their vote, there is nothing that they can do if the Ward Commissioner chooses not to look after their interests.

the argument for decentralisation – bringing ‘good governance’ within the reach of the poor, so that they can participate, monitor, and hold elected officials accountable. Figure 2 illustrates the World Development Report framework for service accountability to the poor. A modified framework is shown on the right that illustrates the ability of the poor to participate in urban governance.

Figure 2: The Long and Short Routes to Accountability



Source: (World Bank, 2004)

As suggested by CUP, Ward Commissioners should provide a platform of access between the poor and DCC. The Ward Commissioner is the gatekeeper, in a sense, to the poor’s participation in the wider system of governance. If this relationship breaks down, then ‘service delivery fails’ – the voices of the poor do not reach DCC. As the most local representative of Government, Ward Commissioners incorporate poor communities into the whole governance structure of DCC.

The ‘gatekeeper’ role is not limited to Ward Commissioners. With a multitude of agencies involved in DCC’s governance, in many cases the Ward Commissioner is not the right actor on whom to press demands. CUP plays a vital role, helping BOSC to access and communicate with the relevant agencies or service providers. However, CUP aims to create a sustainable network where slumdweller themselves play the major role; while playing a major role in instigating BOSC committees, CUP’s role is progressively becoming limited to one of support.

The BOSC network is split into four sub-committees; Primary Committees; Ward Committees; *Thana* Committees; and one Central Committee. Primary Committees are the most local committee, with the Central Committee heading the entire BOSC network in Dhaka. Across Dhaka, there are 404 Primary Committees, 90 Ward Committees (one per Ward), 29 *Thana* Committees, and one Central Committee.¹⁴ This information suggests that

¹⁴ See Appendix One for a map illustrating BOSC Committee presence across Dhaka.

6,060 slumdweller have membership of the BOSC network. Against the overall slum population of Dhaka city, this constitutes around 0.18 percent of slumdweller.

The four lower tiers of committees consist of fifteen members, headed by one President, two Vice-Presidents, one Secretary, one Vice-Secretary and ten members. Gender balance is always maintained as 7:8 or 8:7. Primary committees are formed by direct vote within every 500-1000 households. If there are 15 primary committees in a Ward, then the Ward Committee is elected from the members of those primary committees. In the same way, *thana* committees are elected with members of the ward committees. Finally, the central committee is formed with members of the *thana* committees by a direct voting process.¹⁵

Primary committees are the first calling point for slumdweller. They deal with localised problems such as rainwater removal, problems with electricity, or quarrels among residents. Any problems out with their control are passed onto the ward committee to solve. If the problem is still too big it will be transferred to the *thana* committee. At the top of this hierarchy, the Central Committee exists to solve city-wide problems concerning slumdweller, such as land tenure, resistance to eviction or legal service provision. Members of the Central Committee are the major participants in urban governance, representing slumdweller across the city. It is at this level that the slumdweller communicate and press demands upon Ward Commissioners, service providers and other agents.

4.2 Achievements and Accomplishments

'BOSC has been one hundred percent success' claimed female BOSC members. BOSC has been responsible for securing legal water and electricity connections to slums. Land holding laws render it illegal for utilities to provide legal connections to slums. This is to the detriment of slums, service providers, and citizens across the entire city. Slumdweller must rely on *mastaans* for services. Service providers and customers suffer from revenue loss and irregular supply. CUP facilitated a meeting between BOSC and the Minister of Power in the Secretariat. Through discussion and debate BOSC members acted as a catalyst for the provision of services. Consequently, DESA is now committed to providing electricity to slums (BURT 2005). In addition, BOSC committees are also actively involved with the provision of legal water connections.

With household electricity connections infeasible due to the unsound nature of housing, BOSC Primary Committees helped to overcome technical difficulties in electricity provision. After meters were installed per twenty households, Primary Committees were responsible for mobilising a committee to look after each meter and ensure regular payments. Thus, community participation and ownership is mobilised from the very outset of provision, which has proven to have the most successful outcomes in sustainability and cost recovery (Rashid and Hossain 2005).

CUP tries to involve Ward Commissioners in a supervisory role in operations and maintenance committees, as this incorporates the committees in the urban governance system. There is a significant distinction between 'active' and 'passive' Ward Commissioners however. 'Active' Ward Commissioners, participate in these committees. In Ward B, the

¹⁵ See Appendix Two for a graphical representation the BOSC network formation.

Ward Commissioner was praised by both slumdweller and CUP for having shown his commitment and support to slumdweller. ‘Passive’ Ward Commissioners, on the other hand, do not actively oppose projects, but do not participate in them either.

Apart from tangible achievements such as service provision, membership of BOSC has had additional benefits for female members. *‘We can talk now. We can go outside of the house and we are familiar to each other. We might not have financial help, but we have mental strength now.’* Without further study, it is impossible to assert the depth of empowerment accompanies female membership, but certain conclusions can be drawn. Previously, women mentioned that they had to stay at home, building houses and running their households. Now they talk amongst themselves and have influence on matters affecting their communities. Some of the women are even President of their respective Primary Committees, and hold respected positions of power. They are more aware of political issues, and showed a great deal of understanding of local politics.

Both male and female BOSC members seemed more aware of election ‘tactics’. In Ward B, male respondents indicated that the Ward Commissioner has promised that he will implement more work in the area if he is elected in the upcoming election. The women remarked that recently the Ward Commissioner had erected street lights in the slum, *‘It is election politics. He gives us street lights at the end of his time because he thinks that people will vote for him again’*.

Female respondents revealed a subtle political awareness: they view the last local election as ‘biased’. Another popular BNP candidate was expected to win. He was very popular amongst the constituency, but had not been backed by his party. Instead the BNP party backed the present Ward Commissioner, whom they suggested was not so popular at the time. The latter Commissioner however, was still elected. In addition they note, no Awami League candidate stood for Ward Commissioner. Consequently a lack of choice for Awami League supporters meant that the election was not fair.

In contrast to non-BOSC respondents, who detailed experiences that had directly affected their livelihoods, BOSC discussions covered national and city-wide issues, such as the neglect of the poor in the national budget. They also seemed more aware of issues surrounding NGO and Government services, and held stronger opinions. Their discussions were not limited to specific examples of their interactions with these actors, but covered citywide phenomenon.

BOSC members are more politically aware because they have the most direct contact with the Ward Commissioner and Government officials. It was clear that non-BOSC households in Ward B themselves never saw the Ward Commissioner, but had heard through other slumdweller that their Ward Commissioner was a good man. Slumdweller also informed us that the Ward Commissioner helped to supervise BOSC activities and NGO involvements in the slum, which requires regular communications and interaction. How do the achievements of BOSC impact upon non-members in the slum?

4.3 The Wider Impact of BOSC Activities

The research has distinguished between three distinct groups of slumdweller. First are those ‘active’ households who hold membership within the BOSC network. ‘Non-active’

households can be split into two groups; non-BOSC households in a slum where the BOSC network is active, and households in a slum where there is no coverage of BOSC. Differences between the three groups illustrate the impact that BOSC has on both its members and non-members within BOSC slums. The major difference that can be identified is in participation. While BOSC members experienced direct participation in both slum affairs and urban governance, non-BOSC members had no direct participation in these matters.

At the top end of the spectrum, BOSC committees have very positive impacts on committee members. Membership increases their awareness, gains contacts with Government and non-government officials and allows their voices to represent slumdweller across Dhaka. It also has a significant effect on the empowerment of female slumdweller.

Looking at the composition of BOSC committees themselves, it is clear that those who are elected are the more respected and relatively 'better off' amongst the slumdweller. Members are directly elected by a hand-vote amongst residents - this suggests that those with leadership status, contacts, knowledge and confidence are selected for these positions. BOSC respondents held more respected jobs, being either Government service holders or small business owners. Their ability to spare the time to partake in BOSC activities, which are not financially supported, also suggests that they do not have the same urgent focus on their immediate day-to-day survival as indicated by non-BOSC respondents. Their relative position is furthered by BOSC membership – they have access to contacts with Ward Commissioner, and more frequent access to higher classes and networks for jobs outside the industries of garments and rickshaw-pulling.

'Non-active' households within Ward B indirectly benefit from BOSC activities. Not only to they receive the services and rights achieved by BOSC committees, respondents were also more aware than their counterparts in Ward A, but solely by word of mouth rather than direct experience. This was particularly poignant with the women, who stated that politics was an affair solely for men. *'We are female so politics is not our subject. We are busy with our work and the rest of the time we are busy with family affairs'*. This is in stark contrast to the more empowered view of female BOSC respondents previously illustrated. Although female slumdweller in Ward B had heard about the BOSC committee, it was through their husbands. Consequently, they knew little of the detail, stating that, *'We heard about a committee here, but we don't know much about it'*.

Slumdweller in Ward A revealed the most obstacles to political participation. With no BOSC coverage in their area, they had never heard of the network or its aims and objectives. They had no interactions with the Ward Commissioner and were very disillusioned with the voting process. Lacking an avenue through which they could press their demands, there was no way that slumdweller could affect whether or not the Ward Commissioner carried out his duties. Faced with the hardships of day to day survival, matters of political participation were pushed aside.

Although non-BOSC slumdweller in Ward B were also busy concentrating on their immediate livelihoods, and could not spare time to interact with Ward Commissioners and other political affairs, discussion groups did not identify the same amount of resignation that

was discovered in Ward A. Here, this phenomenon coupled with a *complete* lack of participation apart from the voting process itself, has led to their marginalised personalities.¹⁶

Hence, in comparing the experiences of non-BOSC slumdweller in both Wards A and B, one can note that slumdweller do benefit somewhat from the wider impact of BOSC committees in their vicinity. Although not benefiting from direct participation in urban governance, respondents in Ward B were more politically aware and optimistic. They did not indicate the complete lack of direct participation that slumdweller in Ward A suffered.

4.4 Limits to Political Participation

CUP has broken ground in political participation of the urban poor at the local level through the facilitation of the BOSC network. However, the achievements of BOSC activities are limited to the local, municipal level of DCC. In addition to this, however, improvements in the livelihoods of poor urban slumdweller need national recognition, through reflecting urban poverty in Bangladesh's policy agenda. Although verbal commitments for urban poverty reduction have been made, it is imperative that these are translated into a national policy for the urban poor, which can then be used to hold the government to account.

Within Bangladesh's highly-centralised structure of governance, grassroots mobilisation is not sufficient to generate national change. Consequently, even in light of successes in political participation for the urban poor, there remains a lack of recognition of urban poverty in national policy and political action. A lack of decentralisation undermines successes in political representation by limiting the voices of the poor to the local level. Consequently, although initiatives such as BOSC can have significant impacts and achievements in participation at the local level, there are no avenues through which slumdweller can influence national policy. The impacts of grassroots mobilisation efforts are not far-reaching enough to be reflected in policy or priority due to the weakness of DCC in relation to Central Government.

Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP) stresses the importance of generating simultaneously both 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' advocacy work in fighting for the rights of the urban poor. Community mobilisation at the local level must be complemented with advocacy work within Central Government to encourage national policy change. Major change requires policy advocacy within the highest levels of Government where political will and power are concentrated. CUP has made progress in this sphere through two avenues.

The representation of CUP on the Dhaka Good Governance Committee, directly within the Prime Minister's Office, brings voice to the urban poor where it was previously neglected. CUP presence on this committee brings considerations of the poor into the search for solutions to city-wide problems. CUP detail that deficiencies are not solely due to a matter of neglect, but also of ignorance, and has taken strides to overcome a lack of awareness amongst policy makers through this channel.

¹⁶ Berg-Schlosser and Kersting (2003) describes this 'marginalised personality' as is a direct result of dealing with the hardships of daily life. This results in the inability to focus on long-term perspectives. A subsequent lack of participation can lead to fatalism and resignation (Berg-Schlosser and Kersting, 2003: 4).

At a national level, CUP has formed the Bangladesh Urban Round Table (BURT) to strengthen its advocacy powers. This includes CUP's 53 member organisations and advocates from highly visible organisations such as the World Bank, ICDDR, The United Nations, and ADB. The importance and impact of advocacy work at the national level can be illustrated by BURT's successes. When the draft PRSP was distributed, for example, it made no accommodations for urban poverty. Subsequent advocacy work by BURT facilitated the incorporation of urban poverty into the final PRSP, although a relatively small focal point.

Thus, while recognising the limitations of grassroots mobilisation of the poor, CUP complements the activities of the poor with advocacy work within Central Government. The ultimate aim is to generate firm policy commitments. Commitment would allow the poor themselves to hold Government to account, thus extending successes in political participation for the urban poor made at the local level to the national level.

5. Conclusions

Bangladesh's turbulent political circumstances, as referred to in the opening quotation, have not only held back the country's development, but have also directly harmed the most vulnerable of its citizens by limiting access to elected officials and basic necessities. In urban Dhaka this is prominent through the difficulties faced by slum dwellers with regards to political affiliation. Water connections were refused on the basis of the slum being identified as under Awami League influence. Respondents also suggested that relationships and problem-solving were only an option for those affiliated with the Ward Commissioner's party. How can the poor influence policy making in such tenuous circumstances?

The voting process is identified as an important citizen right for two reasons. Firstly, it is the mechanism through which they can evaluate the Government with regards to the impacts that policy and performance have had on their lives. This concurs with literature that suggests that people cast votes with regards to performance rather than party affiliation. In addition, it also empowers slum dwellers, who identify that the election period is the only time in which they hold power over Government and are not kept in a subordinate position. Although the voting process is accessible to all slum dwellers, the depth of participation beyond this varies.

Experiences of slum dwellers within the two wards studied illustrates that participation in urban governance is possible, but by no means the norm. Initiatives such as BOSC coupled with an active Ward Commissioner has taken great strides in incorporating slum dwellers into the structure of urban governance. Slum dwellers without such a platform for conveying their voices have had very different experiences.

In Ward A, the democratic municipal elections have done little to improve the rights, participation or livelihoods of slum dwellers. Over and above the voting process there is no accessible avenue through which they can press their demands on elected officials. While expectations are low – merely that the Ward Commissioner 'keep in touch' – even these remain unfulfilled. Although recognising that collective mobilisation is imperative for getting their voices heard, their poverty, defined by a lack of wealth and power, holds them back. A quiet resignation was inherent within respondents, who argued that it was not their duty to ensure that the Ward Commissioner met his responsibilities. Disillusionment was such that female respondents indicated that they may not vote in the next election.

In face of a lack of avenues for participation, slumdweller rely on a network of other social actors to fulfil their needs, such as landlords, slum leaders and NGOs. However, in scrutiny of their experiences it becomes clear that these relationships, although bringing positive benefits to the poor, also have the ability to harm them. Negative interactions with the police increase their vulnerability.

A lack of accountability can be found at the heart of problems regarding the participation of slumdweller. After voting, slumdweller in Ward A could envision no route through which to press their demands or even ensure that the Ward Commissioner fulfilled his duties. In contrast, in Ward B, BOSC committees have enhanced the political capabilities of members by creating a channel through which committees can press their demands and hold elected officials to account. Accountability is the crucial 'link' here – the BOSC network ensures that accountability mechanisms are utilised to make local elected officials responsive to the needs of their poor electorate.

In Ward B, democracy has led to much greater participation and expectations, and opened up avenues through which slumdweller can improve their livelihoods. With the assistance of BOSC, slumdweller are now mobilised to press demands upon Ward Commissioners, service providers and other authorities. The successes of BOSC are partly attributed by an active Ward Commissioner, who in the eyes of the slumdweller, is a good man who takes concern in the lives of the poor. As well as helping with general problem resolution in the slum, he also is actively involved in NGO programmes and BOSC activities. Such interactions help to incorporate the poor into the wider structure of urban governance. Even non-BOSC respondents in Ward B displayed more positive sentiments with regards to expectations and experiences of the Ward Commissioner. The experience of Ward B illustrates that initiatives such as BOSC provide a forum through which Ward Commissioners can engage their poor communities, and in the process incorporate them into the urban governance structure.

The successes of BOSC illustrate the possibilities for incorporating the urban poor into local municipal governance. The urban poor however, remain a neglected socioeconomic class at the national level, with successes in grassroots mobilisation limited to the local level. Coalition for the Urban Poor complements its grassroots mobilisation of the poor with top-down advocacy work to encourage Government to translate verbal commitments into a comprehensive urban policy for poverty reduction. This can then be used to hold Government to account, thus extending successes in participation made in municipal governance to the national level.

Bibliography

Ali, T.O. and Hossain, N., 2006, **Popular Expectations of Government: Findings from Three Areas in Bangladesh** PRCPB Working Paper No. 13 BRAC Research and Evaluation Division, Programme for Research on Chronic Poverty in Bangladesh (PRCPB), Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), and Institute for Development Policy and Management, The University of Manchester (IDPM). Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Urban Round Table (BURT), 2005, **Position Paper: Bangladesh Urban Round Table** Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Banks, N., 2006, **Urban Governance in Bangladesh** Centre for Governance Studies, BRAC University and BRAC Research and Evaluation Division Dhaka, Bangladesh

Barkat, A., 2003, 'Right to Development and Human Development: Concepts and Status in Bangladesh' in, Hossain, H. (ed.) **Human Rights in Bangladesh 2002** Ain O Shalish Kendra Dhaka, Bangladesh.

BBC, 2005, **The Pulse of Bangladesh: The Lives and Opinions of Bangladeshis** BBC World Service Trust/BBC Bengali Services, found at www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/docs/pulse-of-bangladesh.pdf

Berg-Schlosser, D. and Kersting, N., 2003, 'Poverty and Democracy. A Contradiction?' in, Berg-Schlosser, D. and Kersting, N (eds.) **Poverty and Democracy: Self-Help and Political Participation in Third World Cities** Zed Books, London and New York

Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) and Measure Evaluation, 2006, **Slums of Urban Bangladesh: Mapping and Census, 2005** Dhaka, Bangladesh and Chapel Hill, USA.

Islam, N. and Khan, M. M. (eds.), 1997, **Urban Governance in Bangladesh and Pakistan** Centre for Urban Studies Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Islam, N., 2005, **Dhaka Now** Bangladesh Geographical Society Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Kamal, A., 2000, **Accountable Governance and Poverty Alleviation** Commissioned Papers for the Regional Workshops Democracy Forum 2000: Democracy and Poverty: A Missing Link? Kathmandu, Nepal.

Kersting, N. and Sperberg, J., 2003, 'Political Participation' in, Berg-Schlosser, D. and Kersting, N (eds.) **Poverty and Democracy: Self-Help and Political Participation in Third World Cities** Zed Books, London and New York.

Khan, M. M., 1997, 'Urban Local Governance in Bangladesh' in, Islam, N. and Khan, M. M. (eds.) **Urban Governance in Bangladesh and Pakistan** Centre for Urban Studies Dhaka, Bangladesh.

MIT, 2001, **Upgrading Urban Communities: A Resource Framework**, < <http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/> >.

Nawaz, R., 2003, 'Right to Shelter' in, Hossain, H. (ed.) **Human Rights in Bangladesh 2002** Ain O Shalish Kendra Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Rashid, S.F., 2004, **Worried Lives: Poverty, Gender and Reproductive Health of Married Adolescent Women Living in an Urban Slum in Bangladesh** Unpublished PhD Thesis

Rashid, S. F. and Hossain, Y., 2005, **Constraints in Delivering Services to the Urban Poor Living in Slums in Dhaka, Bangladesh** Washington DC: World Bank

Siddiqui, K., Ahmed, J., Awal, A., and Ahmed, M., 2000, **Overcoming the Governance Crisis in Dhaka City** University Press Limited Dhaka, Bangladesh

Siddiqui, K., Ghosh A, Bhowmik S. K., Siddiqi S., Mitra M., Kapuria S., Ranjan N., and Ahmed J., 2004, **Megacity Governance in South Asia: A Comparative Study** University Press Limited Dhaka, Bangladesh

World Bank, 2006, Background Paper 3: Shelter for the Poor, in, **Dhaka: Improving Living Conditions for the Urban Poor** (Draft Discussion provided for the World Bank Workshop on Urban Poverty in Dhaka, February 2006)

World Bank, 2004, **World Bank Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People** World Bank: Washington DC

World Bank, 2002, **Bangladesh Urban Service Delivery: A Scorecard** World Bank: Washington D.C, Proshika, Survey and Research System

Appendix One: Structure of BOSC Network

