

#### **4. Title: Access to E-Services at Upazila Level: Experience of Comilla And Moulavibazar District**

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##### **a. Objectives**

The general objective of the study was to analyze the status, prospects and challenges of e-Services at Upazila level of Comilla and Moulavibazar district. The specific objectives were:

- to analyze the current status of e-Services' availability at Upazila level;
- to explore the prospects of e-Services for the rural people;
- to identify existing challenges for providing e-Services at Upazila level; and
- to suggest recommendations for establishing an effective e-Service delivery mechanism for the rural people of the country.

##### **b. Research Methods**

###### **Nature of the Study**

The study was a survey research. Therefore, the survey was dependent on the opinion from different kinds of the respondents, which were collected through some suitable techniques.

###### **Selection of Methods**

To gain better understanding of the objectives of the study, content analysis, questionnaire survey, interview with checklists etc. had been applied.

###### **Study Area**

The study had been conducted in 10 Upazilas of Comilla and Moulavibazar district (five from each) where A2I project has covered to provide e-Services through Upazila web-portals. Homna, Muradnagar, Burichong, Debidwar and Sadar Dakshin from Comilla and Sadar, Sreemangal, Kamalganj, Kulaura and Rajnagar from Moulavibazar had been selected purposively for the study area.

###### **Population of the Study**

All the web-portals, all UISC entrepreneurs and all designated/assigned officials of all Upazilas of Comilla Moulavibazar district, all nation building departments' officials and the service receivers/clienteles were the population of the study.

### **Sampling Procedure**

The respondents were five categories for the study. From the population, all web-portals of 10 Upazilas of Comilla and Moulavibazar and 10 assigned officials (one of each Upazila), 10 Union Information Service Centers (UISC), Entrepreneurs (one of each Upazila) were selected as sample purposively. A total of 25 Nation Building Departments (NBD) have been functioning at Upazila. Taking one official from each department 25 officials from each district were interviewed. In this way, a total of 50 NBD officials were selected from two districts. The departments were as such Upazila Nirbahi Office, Primary Education Directorate, Upazila Secondary Education, Directorate of Health, Livestock Directorate, LGED, Women Affairs Directorate, Agricultural Extension Division, Directorate of Social Welfare, Fisheries Directorate, DPHE, BRDB, Directorate of Family Planning, Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Land Registration Office, Anser and VDP, Police Department, Election Commission, Accounts and Audit Directorate, Directorate of Forestry, Bureau of Statistics, Water Development Board, Power Development Board, Cooperative Directorate, Roads and Highways and REB which were selected as sample. Finally from the service receivers category, 10 respondents from each Upazila were selected and a total of 100 respondents were taken randomly. The following table shows in a nutshell:

**Table-1: Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Cluster of Respondents</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
1.	Designated/Assigned Official for Maintaining the web-portals	10 (10)
2.	Service Receiver	100 (10 × 10)
3.	UISC Entrepreneurs	10 (10)
4.	Nation Building Departments' Official	50 (25 × 2)

Apart from these, 10 Upazila Web-portals had also been taken (from each Upazila) as sample which had been analyzed according to all links given in the portals.

### **Sources of Data**

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Primary data were collected through questionnaire survey and interview. A structured questionnaire was prepared for face

to face interview schedule which was pre-tested and edited accordingly. On the other hand, secondary data were collected from books, journals, websites, reports, web-portals, documents etc.

### **Data Analyzing Tools**

The collected data were analyzed through frequency distribution, percentage, descriptive interpretation according to the objectives.

### **Data Presentation Tools**

After analyzing the data, the presentation was made through tables, graphs, charts, diagrams etc.

## **c. Major Findings**

### **Current Status of E-Services' Availability at Upazila Level**

- The current e-Services situation at Upazila level focusing broadly on availability indicator. It was explored that Upazila Web-portal has been providing various information services to the people. All nation building departments were included in this Web-portal.
- Analyzing 10 Upazila Web-portals of the study area, it was found that a number of e-Services were delivered through it. Access to e-Book, infokosh (National e-tothayakosh), submission of citizen application, official application, true copy for land deed application to Deputy Commissioner's Office, e-Directory for contact number, Upazila Administration service process map, hotline for service, all nation building departments' service process maps, different information, educational information, training and loan facility, agricultural information services, information on improved varieties of different crops, dealership list of fertilizer distribution, education results and admission information, education board access, health care facilities information, free health care service hotline, notices and news about different issues of Upazila Parishad, downloading of 715 different Govt. forms, income tax registration access etc. are generally available from the Upazila Web-portal. These information services opportunities encourage the peoples' penetration and participation in government development activities more. Services at door-step initiative have been ensured through this Web-portal as well.

- On the other hand, people are getting 13 e-Services from UISC. Of them, ‘Online Birth Registration’ was found the highest number both in Comilla and Moulavibazar (86 and 88 percent).
- The cent percent of the respondents mentioned that they were fully benefited and satisfied. Ninety five and 94 percent of the respondents mentioned ‘Low Cost Services’ and ‘Saving Time’ as the factors of satisfaction. They mentioned the current role of Web-portal initiative as positive.
- The study also revealed that majority of the respondents from UISC entrepreneurs (70 percent in Comilla and 60 percent in Moulavibazar) were not using online application for settlement record to DC Office. None of the UNOs also sent any official application to DC Office through Web-portals. All the NBD office did not have internet connectivity.

### **Prospects of E-Services for Rural People**

- The study revealed the prospects of e-Services for the rural people of the country clearly. The findings indicated that new service receivers were coming to render e-Services from UISC. Cent percent of the service receivers in Comilla and Moulavibazar opined that e-Services saved time and money.
- Majority (88 percent) of the respondents mentioned ‘e-Service Center’s Closeness to Residence’ as important factor for saving the time while ‘No Need to Go to District/Upazila Sadar’ was opined as factor by 74 percent of the respondents. Eighty two percent of the respondents mentioned that e-Services are low cost. Moreover, the respondents had also accessibility to e-Services (96 percent in Comilla and cent percent in Moulavibazar) and they also demanded more e-Services. Majority of the respondents from (80 percent in Comilla and 86 percent in Moulavibazar) had been taking various e-Services from UISC.
- Thirty eight percent of the respondents mentioned ‘Electricity Bill Pay’ as extended e-Services. Moreover, 12 and 10 percent of the respondents mentioned ‘Gas Bill Pay’ and ‘Computer Training’ as e-Services. ‘Settlement Records’, ‘Money Transfer’, ‘Agriculture Services’ etc. were mentioned by 8, 7 and 6 percent of the respondents.
- The study identified six purposes of usage of Upazila Web-portals by UISC entrepreneurs. Majority of the respondents (75 percent) visited Upazila Web-portals for seeking information about the concerned district and Upazila which is followed by ‘Settlement Record related Inforamtion and its Download’ (60 percent). Apart from these, ‘To have Mobile Phone Number for Communication’ (30 percent), ‘Agricultural Information

Services' (25 percent), 'Different Information Seeking on Settlement' (15 percent) and 'Health Services' (10 percent) were mentioned by the respondent who visited the Upazila Web-portals for need of the clients.

- UNO and NBD officials had been taking various steps to providing smooth and adequate e-Services to the people. The majority of service receivers and UISC entrepreneurs had termed the initiatives 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' respectively. On the bases of all these analyses, it could be said that there is a huge prospects of e-Services for the people of the country.

### **Existing Challenges and Minimizing Measures For E-Services**

- The findings of the study indicated that there existed some challenges in providing smooth e-Services to the people. The Web-portals have technical and updating problems. From service receivers (75 percent) and UISC entrepreneurs' (85 percent) point of view, lack of uninterrupted power supply and very slow speed of internet were mentioned as the dominant problems respectively along with others. In providing e-Service delivery through Upazila Web-portal, the majority of the respondents from UNO (60 percent) mentioned 'Weak Network/Connectivity' was the main challenges followed by 'People's Inadequate Access to e-Services' (40 percent) and 'Lack of Skilled Manpower' (30 percent).
- UNO (90 percent) and NBD officials (46 percent) also mentioned the slow internet speed as major problem for updating the Upazila Web-portal. It was also a major cause for having some of the links of Upazila Web-portal dysfunctional sometimes which was mentioned by the respondents both from UNO and NBD official group (60 and 30 percent respectively). Apart from this, 'Problem due to Central Server' (40 percent) and 'Technical Shortcomings' (20 percent) were also causes mentioned by the respondents of UNO category.
- They all suggested to increase speed as main remedy (41 percent of service receivers, 70 percent of UISC entrepreneurs, 70 percent of UNO and 40 percent of NBD official respondents). In regard to dysfunctional of some of the links of the portals, the concerned officials thought that due to low internet speed this problem occurred.

### **d. Recommendations**

The results of the study led to the following specific recommendations:

- The e-Service initiatives are very good effort of the government and its potentiality is high. Therefore, the scope of e-Services could be widely extended.
- The password of Web-portals could be given to concerned Nation Building Department (NBD) official under strict office secret rules and regulation for regular uploading and updating of their own office link and creating of new e-Service.
- Adequate infrastructure like broad band connectivity, uninterrupted power supply special to UISC etc. could be ensured.