THE INFLUENCE OF PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONS ON FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMNT IN BANGLADESH

by

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Abstract

In many countries of the Global South, a co-management approach has been introduced within fisheries to improve resource sustainability and human well-being. Very often, the introduction of co-management is top-down in design and supported by donor-funding, not necessarily taking appropriate account of existing institutions. The introduction of fisheries co-management does not, however, occur within an institutional vacuum. Multiple institutions already exist that affect how fisheries are managed and governed. These include longstanding patron-client relations. In the fisheries sector, the livelihoods of many fisherfolk are strongly dependent on a patron's economic, social and enforcement-related support and, in exchange, fisherfolk provide their patron with labour, money and votes at the time of elections. Little is known about how these strongly embedded social and power relations within fishing communities interact with and influence fisheries co-management. This study undertakes a critical institutionalist analysis and adapts the Power Cube framework to answer the research question 'how do patron-client relations shape the structure, functioning and practices of co-management?' This is investigated using Bangladesh as a case study. The government of Bangladesh introduced co-management in some water bodies under different donor-funded projects. In Bangladesh patron-client relations in the fisheries management are not new, rather they have been practiced over centuries, and are not always reciprocal and pecuniary in nature but are strongly socially and culturally embedded. Internalization of values, norms, rules and expectations of patrons by the fisherfolk and women have contributed to the continuation of these longstanding relationships. A multiple case-study research design was undertaken, and qualitative data were collected at two waterbodies in Bangladesh where co-management projects

were introduced. The findings suggest that the Panchayat (village organization) Murubbis (senior non-fisherfolk males), who are also the patrons in the studied areas bent the election rules of the introduced institutions, the CBOs and used Panchayat rules and ideas to reshape these introduced institutions and adapt them to existing social and cultural systems. This reshaping of introduced institutions was done in both strategic and unconscious ways. Strong logics of conflict avoidance, maintaining social order and culture, and retaining control of the waterbodies under CBOs worked behind assembling different elements of institutions. Institutional components used in bricolage practices in hidden and invisible ways excluded fisherfolk and women members from leadership positions and shaped their views, beliefs about participation and acceptance of the status quo. This gave Murubbis control over decisions of fisheries co-management activities, and the space and opportunity to adopt strategies that supported their interests, for example maintaining elite networks and practicing separate rules for credit distribution. These hidden actions provided them with maximum financial and social benefits. The case confirms that pre-existing institutions can significantly influence introduced co-management approaches, sometimes in ways that are damaging to resource management and the livelihoods of more marginalized community members. Pre-existing institutions in the form of patron-client relations are particularly influential as there are strong power dynamics within them, they are strongly embedded in society and the economy, and influence every aspect of life in fishing communities, reflecting broader power dynamics within society. This study also contributes to power-cube literature by integrating institutional analysis in the second dimension-level of the original Power Cube framework to enable examination of horizontal power relations and their influence on the composition and functioning of co-management.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis, which I submit to the University of Birmingham in consideration of the award for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my original research work. No portion of the thesis has been submitted to other universities or institutions.

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List of Acronyms and Glossary

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
DoF	Department of Fisheries
DoE	Department of Environment
DoC	Department of co-operatives
DSS	Department of Social Services
DoSW	Department of Social Welfare
FCO	Fisheries Co-operative Organisation
FCG	Federation of Credit Groups
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
MoFL	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
MoL	Ministry of Land
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
MoLGRDC	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives.
MoSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
NFMP	New Fisheries Management Policy
NFP	New Fisheries Policy
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NWMA	National Wetland Management Act
Aarot	Fish market
Beel	Perennial waterbodies
Bangal	One non-fisherfolk group involved in business
Bazar	Local market
Chapra	Area of waterbodies outside of the brush piles
GhorowaBoithok	Informal meeting held at one's house with few people's participation
Haor	Saucer-shaped naturally depressed waterbody
Imam	The priest of the mosque
Mahimal	A Muslim fishing group, usually considered low-class in social hierarchy
Mohajon	Moneylenders
Murubbi	Senior people in the villages

Panchayat	Village organisation
Para	A small human settlements
Samaj	Society
Shalish	Social system for informal adjudication of petty disputes/ local conflicts by Murubbis or Shalishkar

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research problem

Over the past several decades, co-management has been adopted globally as a potential way to improve the management of natural resources and resource conditions and to contribute to human well-being (Nielsen et al., 2004; Evans et al., 2011; Whitehouse and Fowler, 2018; d'Armengol et al., 2018). Co-management is a power- and responsibility-sharing arrangement between the government and resource users but often involves collaboration among a range of stakeholders, including government agencies, resource users, non-governmental organisations, and research organisations (Carlsson and Berkes, 2005; Evans et al., 2011; Whitehouse and Fowler, 2018). This approach has been adopted following the alleged failure of state management in dealing with overexploitation, destruction of habitats, and limited resources of many governments to effectively manage natural resources (Nielsen et al., 2004; Nunan et al., 2015; d'Armengol et al., 2018). Central to much implementation of co-management is designing new structures, involving resource users and other stakeholders in the resource management decision-making and implementation through varying degrees of devolution of rights and power (Carlsson and Berkes, 2005; Jentoft, 2005; Nunan et al., 2015; Whitehouse and Fowler, 2018).

The design and implementation of co-management in countries of the Global South is very often top-down in nature and mostly supported by donor-funding (Nunan et al.,

2015). A critical issue with this approach is that the new structures are not formed within a cultural, social, and institutional vacuum. The design and implementation process has rarely considered existing institutions, community norms, beliefs, traditions, daily practices and the broader social-economic-political field that envelops local arenas and implicitly governs the resources (Nunan et al., 2015). Therefore, the reshuffling of power and responsibility can challenge pre-existing institutions or existing institutions may interact with these processes, reorient them, or they may be further entrenched, hence limiting the effectiveness of the co-management arrangements (Nunan et al., 2015).

Patron-client relations are a prominent example of existing institutions within fishing communities. Lack of social and financial security marginalizes fisherfolk and encourages dependence on patrons, who include moneylenders, boat owners, fish traders, influential elites, and political persons (Ferrol-Schulte et al., 2014). Patrons provide them with differential support such as financial support, social support, access to markets, fish, fishing equipment and, through these, fisherfolk are better able to secure their livelihoods (Toufique, 1997; Ruddle, 2011; Nurdin and Grydehoj, 2014; Schulte et al., 2014; Miñarro et al., 2016). In exchange for this support, fisherfolk provide labour services, financial (interest on credit) and political services (votes during local elections, and campaigning) to their patrons, therefore this builds a clientelism system (Kaufman, 1974). Inequality is common in this clientelism system, dependent on client's moral obligation to their patron. This continuing pattern of reciprocity is backed by community values, customs, social, cultural norms, beliefs, rituals that create trust, affection and social obligation between patron and client (Scott, 1972).

Despite the longstanding and widespread existence of patron-client relations in small-scale fisheries, and associated vast literature, there is little literature that explicitly examines how patron-client relations within fishing communities interact with fisheries co-management, and identifies what the consequences are for how fisheries co-management operates and performs. Acknowledging this gap in knowledge, this thesis investigates how patron-client relations within fishing communities influence the structures, functioning and practices of fisheries co-management. In order to investigate this problem the research first undertakes an institutional analysis. Institutional analysis acknowledges the role and influence of socially-embedded institutions beyond bureaucratic institutions and the interaction of socially-embedded and bureaucratic institutions through processes of bricolage (Hall et al., 2014; Nunan et al., 2015; Cleaver and Koning, 2015). Taking an institutional analysis, this research first identifies which socially-embedded institutions influence the structure and practices, and secondly, it investigates how they interact with bureaucratic institutions through processes of bricolage. Next the research undertakes power analysis, investigating different forms of power relations and how forms of power, i.e. hidden power and invisible power, are manifested in co-management. The merit of this perspective for this study is that it offers specific insights on the design and practices of co-management systems and provides deeper understanding of the manoeuvers going on within systems in support of elite interests (Nunan et al., 2015).

1.2 Why study fisheries co-management in Bangladesh?

Bangladesh provides an appropriate case study to investigate the research problem set out above. Within the fishing communities in Bangladesh patron-client relations are not

new. Patron-client relations were developed for many years for several reasons, partly due to caste system and religion. These factors make the fisherfolk community socially and economically marginalized, forcing them to be dependent on powerful non-fisherfolk and, to work for them under uneven conditions (Rahman et al, 2002; Ahmed et al, 2008; Rab, 2009). In order to manage the wetlands and to ensure the fishing rights of genuine fishers since 1973 (following liberation), the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) adopted both licensing systems and restricted leasing policy (Khan and Haque, 2010) in different wetlands regimes. But state management was insufficiently capable of controlling resource exploitation and of achieving equitable distribution, to ensure fisherfolk rights over the waterbodies (Rab, 2009; Khan and Haque, 2010; Khan, 2011). Influenced by donors on improving governance as well as their strategic financial support, this motivated the government to consider co-management in wetlands (Hossain et al., 2006; Khan, 2011). The government has implemented a co-management approach under different donor-funded projects since 1988 (Kabir et al., 2013; Islam et al., 2020). In 2001, 429 inland public waterbodies were granted co-management under MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) between Ministry of Land (MoL) and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL), Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) on various terms or conditions (Brakel et al., 2021). Each project followed its own approach based on the type of waterbody: floodplain Haor[1], closed Beel[2], open Beel, rivers and canals. The nature of the waterbody is important for the adoption of co-management, because each waterbody is different and unique in environmental, regional and social characteristics (Sultana and Thompson, 2004). Considering these issues,

[1]Haor-Saucer-shaped naturally depressed water body.

[2]Beel-Perennial waterbodies

different approaches were therefore taken: fisher-led, community-led and women-led (Sultana and Thompson, 2004). This research took two examples of project interventions that sought to support the implementation of fisheries co-management in Bangladesh. The development projects that were chosen for this study were implemented in the two largest Haors out of 47 major Haors located in the north-eastern part in Bangladesh.

In wetland management, community involvement is assumed by the GoB and donors as crucial as it facilitates resource users' contribution in management decision-making and for maintaining well-functioning resources with greater compliance (Khan, 2011). Yet there is no national approach adopted for the implementation of co-management in the entire wetlands of Bangladesh. In the National Wetland Management Act-2009 (NWMA-2009), it was said under MoU the waterbodies can only be handed over to that organization made up of fisherfolk without any competitive bidding. Delivering waterbodies to the fisherfolk-initiated organization, involving fisherfolk in the organization is not simple; rather involving fisherfolk in the fisheries management is linked with larger socio-cultural, institutional complexities.

Regarding the effectiveness of co-management system in Bangladesh fisheries, mixed results are reported in several literatures. Earlier evidence of co-management in Bangladesh highlighted positive impact on fish production, harvesting, rising of household income and expenditure, and participation (Rahman and Begum, 2010, Ferdousi, 2011; Dev, 2011; Khan et al., 2012). But more recent studies on fisheries co-management in Bangladesh have pointed to detrimental social and ecological outcomes

such as risk of elite capture and dominance by individuals over committees, complexities in credit-distribution and conflict, livelihood insecurity of poor fisherfolk, overexploitation of resources that worsen social inequality, social exclusion from co-management process, and absence of women empowerment which are the most challenging factors for co-management (Al Mamun et al., 2016; Choudhury et al., 2016; Khan and Ahmed, 2017; van Brakel et al., 2018; Brakel et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2020; Cohen et al., 2021). From these more recent studies it is apparent that in fisheries co-management in Bangladesh the influential actors and the most beneficial actors are not the marginalised group, i.e. fisherfolk and women. Local elites who have family reputation, religious or political authority, wealth and financial capital capture co-management by using several channels for example by convincing NGO officials (Deb, 2009).This research in this case investigates how broader power relations within fishing communities influence the co-management, capture the co-management structure at community level and influence management practices.

1.3 Research questions

The study aims to investigate how strongly embedded social and power relations within fishing communities influence co-management structure/design and practices. The key research question for this study is

How do patron-client relations shape the structure, functioning and practices of co-management?

The sub-questions are as follows:

1. Why do patron-client relations continue to be significant in fisheries and how are patron-client relations maintained over time?

2. How is co-management influenced by existing socially-embedded institutions?
3. How are patron-client relations reflected in the structures and practices of co-management?

1.4 Analytical framework

This study adopts and adapts Gaventa's (2006) 'Power Cube' framework as an analytical tool. The reason for adopting Gaventa's Power Cube framework is it provides understanding about how less-visible forms of power, hidden and invisible power, operate, enable or constrain actions-who can do what, and who has the voice within a given space (Pantazidou, 2012). This is useful for understanding why patron-client relations persist and how they interact with and influence co-management. The study adapts the power-cube by bringing in analytical concepts and tools from the literature on elite capture, focusing on who are the elites, and what makes and maintains them as elites, and by undertaking a critical institutionalist analysis of how existing institutions interact with the introduced fisheries co-management.

Gaventa's Power Cube framework has three dimensions; space, levels and power, where space refers to a potential arena for participation, interaction and action, levels refer to the layers of decision-making and authority, where actors shape what happen within it, and 'forms of power' refers to the way power operates, and manifests itself in spaces and levels (Gaventa, 2006). These three dimensions are not separated rather are interrelated within the cube. Using the Gaventa's Power Cube, this study examines how different actors were involved in the co-management committees at village level, what core values, norms, knowledge are legitimized inside the space, who controls the co-

management space and who influences decision-making, and which factors mediate or challenge participation. This study investigates socially-embedded institutions beyond co-management at the village level, how powerful actors assemble different elements of these institutions and why these institutions are assembled, and whether processes of assembling of institutions are deliberative or evolve. This study investigates hidden and invisible power, specifically how powerful actors exert their power in different less-visible ways, for example through social practices, norms and ideologies, and how less-powerful actors internalize norms, practices that facilitate and sustain pre-existing power relations in co-management spaces. The rationale of drawing on all these areas of theory – institutional analysis, elite capture and forms of power - is to understand how elites control and capture the structure and practices of fisheries co-management.

1.5 Research methodology, design and methods

Multiple-case research design is used in this study. Taking Bangladesh as a case study, two donor-funded projects, which introduced co-management in the inland waterbodies of the northeast part of Bangladesh, were chosen for this research. The coastal site co-management projects were not considered in this study since they were related to biodiversity conservation. Coastal fisheries co-management has only been implemented in 2014, and this is an ongoing project (Islam et al., 2020). Completed fisheries co-management projects with active CBOs were the primary consideration for this study as this study wants to understand the management practices and relations among the stakeholders. A number of factors were behind the choice of two particular projects, project-1 and project-2. Firstly, this study investigates how power and social relations within communities shape fisheries co-management, so projects were chosen that

involved the local community and a wide range of stakeholders in managing fisheries. There were some projects which approached co-management in inland waterbodies in different ways, such as fisher-led and women-led approaches. These projects were not considered for two reasons; first, women-led CBOs were not related to fisheries co-management. Second, fisher-led CBOs involved only fisherfolk community. Since this study aimed to understand how patron-client relations influence fisheries co-management so these projects were not considered. Besides this, CBOs that were established under these projects many of them became dysfunctional following the project's end. The problem with choosing a project with a dysfunctional CBO is it is hard to find lists of the respondents and contacts of respondents of dysfunctional CBOs. Project-1 introduced fisheries co-management in three inland waterbodies situated in the northeast, the north side of the capital, and the north-central. On the other hand, project-2 introduced co-management in two areas; the northeast inland waterbodies and the coastal area. Factors that guided case selection were first relevance to this study. Project-2 which introduced co-management in coastal area was related to biodiversity conservation but not to fisheries co-management. Hence this co-management project in the coastal area was not considered here. In choosing case under Project-1, the accessibility of the site for the researcher was considered.

In the first case-study site, project-1 established 8 CBOs. The study purposively selected 2 CBOs. CBO-1 had actively managed the waterbodies. Out of these 8 CBOs, 7 CBOs claimed lease extension from the government, which means waterbodies were given to those CBOs under co-management, but these waterbodies were not renewed by the government when project-1 ended. So these 7 CBOs filed a lawsuit to secure the

waterbodies. Out of these 7 CBOs, CBO-2 was chosen. The reason for selecting CBOs was to understand how patron-client relations influenced the composition and functioning of co-management and managing waterbodies, and what characteristics/types of patron-client relationships existed there. In the second case-study area, project-2 established 28 CBOs; however, not all the CBOs were given authority to manage the waterbody, and some were found dysfunctional during fieldwork. Since the study aimed to research how these CBOs had been formed, how they managed waterbodies, and how patron-client relations influence co-management structures and practices, the study selected active CBOs and those that have the authority to manage water bodies. In the studied areas, 3 CBOs out of 9 CBOs were given authority to manage some water bodies and were active, and these 3 CBOs were selected for the study. In the studied areas, 5 CBOs were chosen out of 36 CBOs, taking into consideration the capacity of a single researcher, since qualitative data were collected entirely by the researcher. The availability of respondents and the location of villages or remoteness were also factors when choosing the CBOs.

The ontological position for this research is subjectivism, which holds that social phenomenon is created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors, therefore reality is socially constructed and multiple realities can exist (Saunders et al., 2007). With this ontological position, the study is interested in epistemology involving the collection of actors' perspectives, and their different interpretations about co-management, to understand how socially-embedded institutions shape the structure, practices of fisheries co-management. The research takes an interpretivist approach, qualitative-phenomenology, aiming to investigate how individuals make sense of their

world (Saunders et al., 2007), exploring personal experiences, and concerned with individual perceptions and responses to a particular situation (Smith and Osborn, 2004). The key advantage of this methodological choice is that it attempts to embrace different perspectives of the social world that lead to viewing a research problem holistically, getting close to the participants, entering their realities and interpreting their perceptions as appropriate (Leitch et al., 2010).By valuing actors' subjective interpretations, their lived experiences and perceptions relating to fisheries co-management practices, we can understand the institutional complexities entwined in everyday social life and the interplay of institutions.

For this research, participant selection was done using non-probability sampling techniques: purposive sampling, convenience and stratified sampling. The qualitative data collection method was employed in this study to explore 'what is happening' to seek new insights, raise questions and assess the phenomenon from a new insight (Robson, 1993 in Kabir, 2012). Key informant interviews were employed to generate in-depth information. Participants were selected from diverse stakeholder groups: resource user groups, members of CBOs, local governmental officials, NGO professionals, local elites, and local fisherfolk. Six sets of questions were developed for different groups of participants in key-informant interviews. All the interviews were conducted by me. Most of them were recorded and where recording was not possible due to restrictions from informants, notes were taken. In the entire data collection phase, observation was employed to develop an insightful understanding of the details of local culture, social complexities, and how the community behaves and interacts with each other. Observation was undertaken at the wholesale fish market area to generate data on

the local culture of setting the fish price and how fishermen interact with fish traders and, at meetings of the CBOs**.**

Thematic data analysis (Smith and Osborn, 2004) was followed to analyse data. The coding process was undertaken to organise the data in the first stage. Three themes were identified included i) patron-client relation in the studied area ii) elite capture of co-management structure by Panchayat and iii) strategies for maintaining elite control and capture. In the second stage, analysis was carried out using the thematically organised data. The underpinning logic of following this sequence of data analysis was to understand how a fishing community's pre-existing power and social relations can influence structures and practices and initiate elite capture. The details of the research methodology are presented in Chapter 4.

1.6 Why is this topic significant?

This topic is significant because it acknowledges the role of context in influencing structure and practices of fisheries co-management. There has been limited discussion on how pre-existing social, economic and political context can influence design and practices of fisheries co-management. This was reported in a systematic review by d'Armengol et al. (2018), who found that empirical research on co-managed small-scale fisheries has to date rarely paid attention to the socio-economic-political and ecological context so they had to exclude two sets of variables from their analytical framework; first, related ecosystem and second, social, economic and political settings. In a study on the political economy of fisheries co-management Nunan (2020, p. 1) mentioned that within wider literature on natural resource governance, the external context is often

viewed as a ‘black box’, recognized as a variable that can influence rules, actions in a social-ecological setting.

An important issue is why this social, economic and political context needs to be considered in the context of fisheries co-management. Context gives an understanding of micro level inequalities that exist within a community, factors work behind this inequality. One of the important parts of this external context is social context-social norms based on caste/class, occupation, religion and gender, which set different people in a society in different social positions, determine social, economic opportunity for different identities, which also influence economic context. Both of the social and economic context influence political context.

This topic is a significant one because patron-client relations have long shaped the material realities so of fisherfolk communities live. Patrons provide services to their clients, distribute/share benefits in such a way that they can maintain and endure social, economic and political inequalities. There is a contradictory or puzzling combination of power asymmetry and mutual solidarity exist in communities, which is backed by social institutions and hierarchies within the society related to caste, gender, race (Kashwan et al., 2021). d’Armengol et al. (2018) emphasized that this power asymmetry in fishing communities can lead to uneven distribution of co-management benefits among fishers and mentioned that these power asymmetries and distributional inequities were rarely explored in-depth in their set of studies. This research topic provides evidence on how benefits of co-management are shaped by existing social and power relations within fishing communities, how class/caste, religion and gender dynamics play an important

role in co-management process, therefore allows to make visible the complex ways in which social, economic and political context influence design, practices and potential for success of co-management.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter 1 Introduction, provides an overview of the current study. In order to develop the research questions, it discusses the research problem. It then briefly discusses the justification of studying the co-management projects in Bangladesh, the analytical framework adopted and the research methodology applied in this research.

Chapter 2 Background, provides relevant background of wetland management in Bangladesh. This chapter gives first a comprehensive view of wetland resource governance in Bangladesh, and then discusses how the community is involved in both centralized fisheries resource management and co-management. This chapter also identifies and discusses the key challenges and gaps in fisheries governance.

Chapter 3 presents a comprehensive review of both empirical and theoretical literature relevant to this research. This chapter reviews co-management and its challenges, power, patron-client relation, elite capture and institutional analysis. Drawing on patron-client relations, Gaventa's Power-cube framework is adapted to form the analytical framework. From the reviewed literature, a number of factors were identified under

three dimensions, space, level, and power, and incorporated into the analytical framework.

Chapter 4 Research design and methodology, first discusses the justification of the case study design, multiple case studies and the criteria for selection of cases. The methods of data collection and the analysis of data are then discussed. The challenges of the study are also identified and reflected on.

Chapter 5 Patron-client relations in the studied areas, addresses the first research sub-question. It first presents the social, economic and political context of the studied areas and then discusses why patron-client relations continue to be significant in these fishing communities and how relations are maintained over time.

Chapter 6 Elite capture of co-management by the Panchayat responds to the second research question. In answering the question, it first sheds light on who the elite are in the studied areas and how they captured co-management, and then undertakes institutional analysis and power analysis of fisheries co-management.

Chapter 7 Maintaining elite control and capture, addresses the third research question. In order to answer the question, it reflects on the practices of co-management, explains different strategies the elite actors adopt to keep control over the resource and capture maximum benefit.

Chapter 8 concludes the study by answering the overall research question and how far sub-research questions were addressed, discussing the key research findings from the three empirical chapters, 5, 6, and 7. The contributions of the study are identified. In addition, directions for future research are also presented.

Chapter 2: Wetlands in Bangladesh and their governance: a background

2.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to provide background to the governance and management of wetlands that guided the research design and process and to give the reader an understanding of the subject matter at the outset of this thesis. The rest of this chapter is divided into four sections. Section 2.2 provides an overview of wetlands in Bangladesh. Section 2.3 discusses the governance of wetlands, from global level to national and local levels. Section 2.4 presents the challenges of the wetland governance in Bangladesh under state management and co-management. The last section 2.5 concludes the chapter.

2.2 Wetlands in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is endowed with a vast network of diverse and complex wetlands ecosystems (Khan, 2011). About 50% of the total land surface of the country is made up of wetlands, such as inland open waterbodies (rivers, estuarine areas, permanent and semi-permanent filled depressions, floodplains and lakes), closed waterbodies (ponds, oxbow lakes, brackish water farms), and marine water exclusive economic zones (sea zones over which Bangladesh possesses the right to exploit and use marine resources such as fish and minerals) (Craig et al., 2004; Byomkesh et al., 2009). The overall area

of wetlands in Bangladesh is approximately 7 to 8 million hectares, in which the core Haor basin — a bowl-shaped large deeply-flooded depression, mostly located in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh — is estimated to spread over an area of 4 million hectares (Brakel et al., 2021). This vast area of inland waterbodies and floodplains contains a broad spectrum of biodiversity that includes plant species, fish, amphibians, reptiles, local and migratory waterfowl and a significant number of endangered species of local and international interest (Rahman 1995; Thomson et al., 1999; Byomkesh et al., 2009; Islam, 2010). According to the Department of Fisheries (DoF), approximately 60% animal protein supply comes from fish (DoF, 2021). There are 260 fish and 24 prawn species recorded in inland fresh water. In the early 1960s, this stock contributed around 90% of the country's total fish production but according to DoF (2021) only 27.72% of total fish production now comes from inland open water.

Table 2.1Types of fisheries in Bangladesh.

Fisheries	**Nature**	**Area (Hectare)**
Inland Culture (closed water) fisheries	Pond, seasonal waterbody, Baor, shrimp farm, pen culture and cage culture.	797,851 ha
Inland capture (open water) fisheries	Rivers (during dry season), Estuarine area, Beels and Haors, Kaptai lake (man-made), Inundate floodplains (seasonal).	3,927,142 ha
Marine Fisheries	Territorial Water, Exclusive Economic Zone, Continental Shelf, Coastline	6,494,170 ha
Co-managed fisheries		429 waterbodies (included within inland open and closed water)

Source: Department of Fisheries (DoF, 2022)

The Bangladesh wetlands possess strong seasonal distinctive characteristics. Floods and flash floods are the most recurrent phenomenon in the north-eastern floodplains. During the monsoon period, the Bangladesh floodplain converts into a single biological productive system and remains like that for approximately 5 or 6 months, until the drawdown of flood water (Craig et al., 2004). Through this entire time period, the major river systems — Ganges-Padma and Jamuna-Brahmaputra, along with their more than 700 of tributaries — carry a huge volume of nutrient-rich runoff that enriches the floodplains (Craig et al., 2004; Khan, 2011). In the dry season period, the entire wetlands remain isolated with distinct boundaries and features. These seasonal dimensions, along with the tropical climatic conditions, contribute to the higher productivity of wetlands as well as offer diverse opportunities to stakeholders from this seasonal aquatic and territorial system (Rahman, 1995; Hossain et al., 2006).

Rural livelihood depends on the inland open water fisheries. Cultivation of rice is a major livelihood activity in and around the wetlands of Ganges-Brahmaputra floodplain and Haor basin. On the other hand, fishing is the second largest livelihood in the country. More than 17 million people along with 1.4 million women are directly, indirectly and partially engaged in and dependent on fishing (Shamsuzzaman et al., 2017). The wetland environment unites its inhabitants in a society that has a specific culture. Three categories of fisherfolk are found in the floodplain area: first, professional fishers, who are full-time fishers, use more efficient gears (current net, seine net, drag net etc.) and work alone or in small group of up to 5 people; second, seasonal fishers or part-time fishers, who fish only in the monsoon period; and the third category consists of subsistence fishermen who depend on borrowing money from

Mohajon[3], use inexpensive gear and fish mainly to maintain consumption at a minimum level (Ferdous, 2013).

The cycle of economic activities in the Haor region fluctuates significantly with the seasons. However, access to water bodies is not identical throughout the Haor region. During the monsoon, when the entire floodplain is submerged, local people enjoy their customary fishing rights in the common property areas. But they are not allowed to establish their customary rights in the private property areas of canals and leased out waterbodies, sanctuaries, and rivers (Khan, 2011). But the problem here is there are many powerful leaseholders occupied areas surrounding their waterbodies for a long time, which reduced the fishing zones of the fisherfolk (Ferdous, 2013). Children and women are often allowed by owners and operators to glean the leftover fish when major fishing is done (Rahman, 1995). Apart from fishing activities, 'floating-bed cultivation'[4] is a widely practiced livelihood activity in the south-western Haor basin. This practice has traditional roots in practices dating back to the country's forebears (Islam and Atkins, 2007). This picture is significantly different during the dry season period. In the dry season period, beels are particularly used in breeding grounds (mother fishery) for most of the freshwater fish species, which ensures the next generation of fish species, and thus protects the fish productivity in these ecosystems (Khan, 2011). At that time, local people are actively involved in other livelihood activities such as share cropping, livestock rearing, sand and reed extraction and daily labour, non-timber

[3]Mohajon--Moneylenders.

[4]Floating bed cultivation is similar to Hydroponic agriculture practices. People living within the wetland ecosystem utilise locally available paddy straw, water hyacinth and various aquatic plants for making floating beds of organic material on which crops, seedlings and vegetables are grown.

forest resource (aquatic and non-aquatic) collection, operating small business, establishing plant nurseries etc. (Rahman and Begum, 2010).

From a global perspective, Bangladesh is certainly a hotspot regarding species diversity. Due to the ecological importance of the Haor in terms of flood control, aquatic productivity and micro-climatic regulation, the area has received significant attention since 1999 (Chowdhury, 2010). The Tanguar Haor and the Hakaluki Haor, situated in the north-eastern part of Bangladesh, were declared an "Ecologically Critical Area" in 1999, and in 2000, Tanguar Haor was designated as the Ramsar site.

2.3 Wetland Resource Governance

This section provides a comprehensive view of wetland resource governance in Bangladesh, including at international level, national level, and local government administration and local community management and discusses how each level is related with wetland governance and management.

2.3.1 International level-Ramsar wetland governance

Wetland conservation gained attention in the early 1970s. The "Convention on Wetlands of International Importance", which is commonly known as the Ramsar Convention (1971), mainstreamed wetlands in the environmental discourse and established a globally coordinated institutional framework for conserving the most threatened group of habitats, the wetlands (Matthews, 1993; Finlayson et al., 2011; Hettiarachchi et al., 2015). The convention was designed to call international attention to the rate at which wetland habitats are being degraded and endangered and to increase

recognition of the ecosystem services they provide (provisioning, regulating, economic and cultural) across the political spectrum and in all sectors of society (Global Wetland Outlook, 2018, p.75). International environmental agreements are important, since they legally bind multiple national governments to address vital environmental issues that are transboundary as well as global in nature and allow them to reach to an environmental goal.

The initial goal of the Ramsar Convention was to establish an overarching legal framework to protect waterfowl habitats. Later, the scope of the convention systematically expanded to cover entire aspects of wetland conservation and extended its focus beyond the 'designated wetlands' to entire wetlands in the territory of a contracting party and offering them as ‘protected area’ status under national laws (Hettiarachchi et al., 2015, p.60). At subsequent conferences, Ramsar adopted four broader goals and principles of wetland governance: sustainable utilisation of resources (wise use); listing of wetland values and services; developing and implementing national wetland policies and local action plans; and, stakeholder involvement in wetland management.

Central to the whole schema of the Ramsar Convention is the ‘wise use’ concept. The concept is broadly defined as “The maintenance of their [wetland] ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches within the context of sustainable development” (Ramsar, Resolution 9, Annex A, 2005 in Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010). To assist contracting parties in implementing the ‘wise use’ concept,

Ramsar encouraged the formulation of a clear national wetland policy framework, to include wetland conservation considerations within national land-use planning, to develop unified catchment-management plans and to carry out policy, institutional and legal reviews to ensure their compatibility with the Ramsar obligations of conservation and wise use (Barbier et al., 1997; Hettiarachchi et al., 2015).

Adopting a comprehensive national wetland policy to meet the challenge of conserving wetlands of national and international importance gained prominence in Ramsar discourse towards the late 1990s. The convention provides systematic guiding principles for developing, adopting, and implementing the national wetland policy for each nation, which involves criteria for formation of a distinct agency to lead the development phase and the implementation phase separately and the establishment of a national wetland committee (Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010). The role of a national wetland committee is advisory to assist the government in managing the wetland resources (ibid).Regarding the establishment of a national wetland committee, Ramsar adopted a broad definition of stakeholders, involving government departments, non-governmental organisations, local government and many others, and set out the process of their involvement in the committee (Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010, Section 2.5, Article 87). Ramsar emphasised involving representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other interests to secure the success of the process by national government (Ramsar Convention Secretariat, 2010, Section-2.1, Article 76). Particularly, the convention holds a more participatory approach in the stakeholder involvement process. Another concept that has significant traction in Ramsar discourse from the late 1990s is ‘ecosystem services’, a core component of the Ramsar

Convention's conceptualisation of ecological character, and of Ramsar Site values (Sharma et al., 2015). The Ramsar Convention was a core partner to Millennium Ecosystem Assessment[5] (MA) (2001-2005) and, therefore, officially adopted the MA conceptual framework for wetland ecosystem and human well-being (Hettiarachchi et al., 2015). By adopting the ecosystem approach of the MA, Ramsar developed guidelines for mainstreaming ecosystem services into economic decision-making and proposed the use of different ecosystem service indicators (provisioning, regulating, economic and cultural) for valuation (Finlayson et al., 2011). To map cultural valuation, Ramsar presumed that wetlands and culture coexist, and wetland-related cultures and their diversity can support sustainable livelihoods and the well-being of human societies (Pritchard, 2008).

Over the last five decades, the Ramsar Convention has been used as a means of conveying the message regarding the value of wetlands to nature and humankind (Bowman, 2013). It has undergone significant conceptual transformation and has extended its scope to concepts such as 'wise use', 'ecosystem services', 'ecosystem values', 'participatory management', and 'policy advocacy' (Hettiarachchi et al., 2015). Despite its achievements in providing wetlands with protection status, the threats to the physical condition and survival of many of the wetlands have not diminished (Hettiarachchi et al., 2015).The declining rate of the wetlands is significantly higher in forest and tropical peat lands than in coastal and marine wetlands (Global Wetland

[5]The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) was called for by the United Nations. The objective of the MA was to assess the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being and the scientific basis for action needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of those systems and their contribution to human well-being.

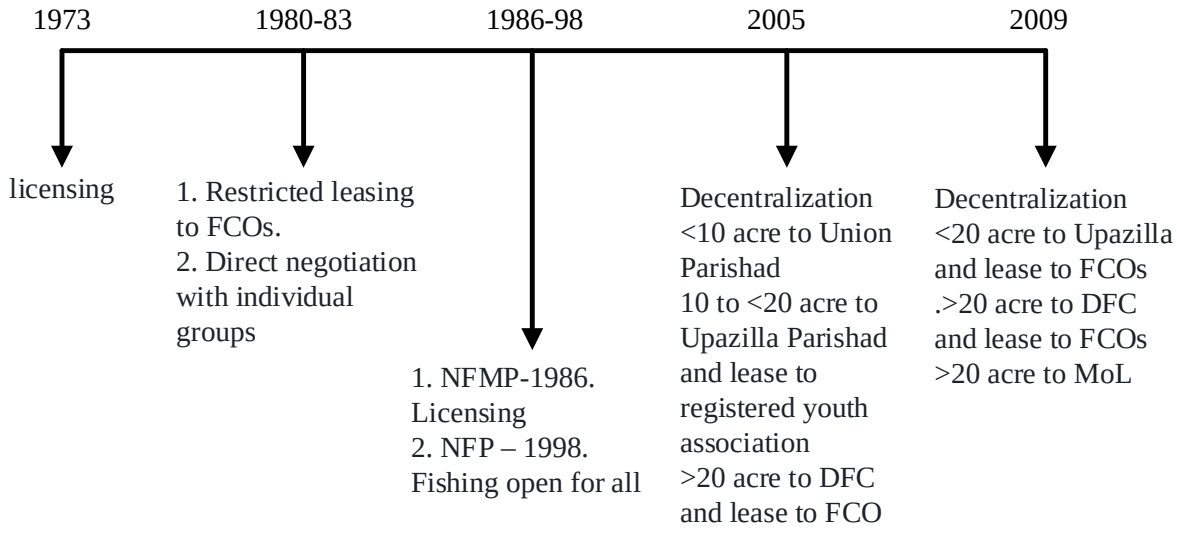
Outlook, 2018). According to Hettiarachchi et al. (2015), human-dominated landscapes are the most threatened. Bowman (2013) mentioned that the relatively 'soft' nature of most Ramsar obligations suggests that the general strategy of persuading contracting parties towards embracing appropriate mechanisms and sustainable policies for wetland conservation is undoubtedly sound and reasonable, yet there is a risk that the emphasis upon simple, quantitative indicators may allow the masking of underlying problems and function to the detriment of qualitative aspects. Hettiarachchi et al. (2015) identified four conceptual gaps that put Ramsar institutions at risk: failure to acknowledge the concept of complex and transforming adaptive eco-social systems; lack of recognition of the concept of empowerment, either conceptually or strategically; underestimation of the political complexity of actual public policy processes; and failure to acknowledge the concept of environmental justice.

2.3.2 National level

Following the abolition of the Zamindari system in 1950 and the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act (EBSATA) in 1973 (after liberation in 1971), the wetlands that were under the property of East Pakistan have turned into state property of Bangladesh under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Land (MoL) (Khan, 2011). Several ministries and departments — including MoL, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL), Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), Department of Environment (DoE), Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), and DoF— are directly and indirectly involved in wetland resource management with various policy objectives. Two ministries have engaged in managing countries' inland and closed waterbodies: the MoL and MoFL (Murshed-e-Jahan et al., 2009; Kabir et al., 2013).

All waterbodies, with the exception of privately owned ones, are under the legal ownership of MoL. MoL is responsible for formulating and implementing policies on land and water, the administration of leasing arrangements, the transfer of water bodies to local government authorities, defining their remit, and setting regulations of access to the waterbodies (Ministry of Land, 2021; NWMA- 2009). MoFL, the other wing of wetland management, is responsible for the conservation, development and management of all the water bodies suitable for fisheries production and fisheries resources (National Fisheries Policy, 1998). MoFL possesses the authority to undertake diverse policies, including policies for procurement, preservation and management of fishery resources, for fish culture and management in closed freshwater bodies, for the culture of shrimps in coastal region, and for the exploitation, conservation and management of marine fisheries resources (National Fisheries Policy, 1998). Moreover, MoFL is also responsible to set policies regarding transportation and marketing, fish processing and quality control, fish export, fish research, fisheries extension, fisheries credit policy, and policies for fisheries co-operatives (National Fisheries Policy, 1998). To manage the water bodies, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has pursued a range of initiatives, including a licensing system and a restricted leasing system (Khan and Haque, 2010). The main conceptual difference between licensing and leasing concerns the transferrable right and exclusionary right. Leasing is a written contractual agreement for transferring the exclusive right to possession of a property to a lessee for a fixed period of time in consideration of a payment subject to the terms and conditions that are set out in the agreement. In contrast, licensing refers to granting permission to use the waterbody in consideration of a fee subject to the conditions set out in the licence.

Figure 2.1 Wetland governance systems at different times.



Source: Authors Compilation

The licensing system was first introduced by MoL in 1973 to give priority and to ensure fishing rights to the real fishermen[6] (Khan, 2011). Licensing was limited to the registered Fisherman Cooperative Organization (FCO) comprised of "Prokrito Motshojibi" i.e., real fishermen for a 1-year period of time for open fisheries and 3 years for closed fisheries (Khan and Hoque, 2010). The licence fees were determined at not more than 10% above the last three years' average income or the last year's income from a waterbody (whichever one is higher) (Khan and Hoque, 2010; Khan, 2011; Ferdous, 2013). In 1980, the responsibility for managing waterbodies was transferred from the MoL to MoFL. In the case of waterbody leasing, MoFL introduced two systems: first, restricted leasing to the registered FCOs through an open-bidding process

[6]Real fishermen—Real fishermen are those whose livelihoods depend only on catching fish from natural sources and selling it (NWMA-2009)

and second, through direct negotiation with organisations or individuals (Ahmed et al., 1997; Khan, 2011; Ferdous, 2013). In 1986, the government introduced the New Fishery Management Policy (NFMP) on an experimental basis on nearly 270 of the 12000 water bodies under the direct supervision of DoF (Thompson et al., 2003; Murshed-e-Jahan et al., 2009). The aim was to allocate the fishing right to the real fishers, limiting the number of fishers, confirming maximum sustainable catches, and ensuring long-term sustainability (Bernaseck, 1995; Khan, 2011; Ferdous, 2013; Kabir et al., 2013). So a process was followed here that involved local peer selection where the National Fisherman Association (NFA) outlined a list of real fishers at the local level, which was then approved by the district NFMP committee and then the listed full-time real fisherfolk were provided a certificate and issued renewable annual fishing licences (Bernaseck, 1995). NFMP-1986 was managed by three levels; national, district and local level and each respective committee of these three levels had two representatives from NFA. Under this system, a licence fee was determined based on the lease fee collected under the earlier restricted leasing system as the government took decision that the total of all license fees for individual fishing gears issued for a particular waterbody should be the same as the old lease fee (ibid). Moreover, NFMP also created a credit component for poor fisherfolk since they have limited capital. In support of NFMP, the Krishi Bank, Bangladesh started to provide credit facilities to support real fisherfolk to buy gear (ibid). In 1998, the Bangladesh government took the decision to stop leasing. Under the National Fisheries Policy-1998, the government declared fishing in the open water fisheries open to all, with the aim of ensuring open access for poor fisherfolk (Kabir et al., 2013). From a social perspective, the policy was

good, but failing to develop institutions for limiting fishing resulted in overfishing, the reduction of the fish-stock and declining catches (Kabir et al., 2013).

In 2005, the government moved towards decentralisation and transfer the responsibility for wetlands management to various institutions: Union Parishad, Upazilla, and Zilla or district administration (Khan and Haque, 2010), as discussed in Sub-section-2.3.3. In parallel with this state management approach in 2001, under the framework of MoU between MoL and MoFL to work jointly for a period of 10 years, MoL transferred 429 waterbodies to the DoF, to be managed under development projects through a co-management approach (Khan, 2011; Kabir et al., 2013; Brakel et al., 2021), as discussed in Sub-section-2.3.4.

2.3.3 Role of local government administration in wetland management

Decentralisation of wetland resource management and decisions for better fisheries resource management had received limited attention from the GoB before 1990 (Uddin, 2011). The underlying logic for moving from centralisation to decentralisation is that local level actors are believed to have better access to information concerning their constituents, better knowledge of local needs and demands, and, therefore, when endowed with powers are able to respond to local aspirations and are more easily held accountable by local populations (Ribot and Agrawal, 2006). Moreover, there was a growing emphasis from donors to improve governance and adopt greater decentralisation and devolution of power (Thomson et al., 2003). With the target of supporting a more equitable and efficient form of wetland resource management, the

GoB actually followed a devolution process in the context of wetland management, ceding power to actors and institutions at mid-level in the administrative hierarchy. National level institutions (ministries, departments and directorates) framed policy objectives in the National Development Program (a five-year plan) at the national level and then these objectives were channelled and implemented through field-level government institutions (Khan, 2011).

With the objective of decentralization, a new wetland management policy was introduced in 2005. The Wetland Management Policy-2005 aimed at widening the scope of diverse institutions in wetland resource management and incorporated the bottom level institutions named Union Parishad, Upazilla (sub-district) administration, and the District and Divisional administration (Khan, 2011). At the union level, water bodies that are less than 10 acres were distributed among the local poor fisher groups selected by Union Parishad (Khan, 2011). The MoL transferred water bodies of less than 20 acres to the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) which was targeted to engage local youths and provide them employment opportunities (Khan, 2011). The Upazilla wetland management committee, under Upazilla administration, was responsible for providing licences to local registered youth associations through a restricted leasing system. On the other hand, the district administration committee was solely responsible for leasing out more than 20 acres to the highest bidder among the registered fisheries co-operatives for a period of 3 years (Khan, 2011).

There was a further change made in wetland management policy when ruling government came into power in 2008. With an aim of prioritising real fishermen in the leasing process, improving the biodiversity and conserving resources, along with revenue collection, a new National Wetland Management Act was introduced in 2009 (NWMA-2009). A primary objective of the new policy was to address the previous limitations, so this policy made some significant changes regarding leasing fees and wetland authoritative responsibility: first, by reducing the lease fee for water bodies less than 20 acres in size and fixing the price at 5% above the three-year average lease value; secondly, waterbodies less than 20 acres in size were returned back from MoYS to MoL (GOB, 2009);thirdly, due to the government's abolition of Union Parishad's administrative status, the previous authoritative rights of the water bodies less than 10 acres were moved to the authority of Upazilla administration from Union Parishad (GOB, 2009). Through this amendment, the control rights also changed and shifted from local registered youth groups to registered FCOs. A fourth provision was made to involve a local Member of Parliament (MP) and the Upazilla Parishad Chairman, advisors of both the district and Upazilla Fisheries Committees.

According to NWMA-2009, a 15 member Upazilla Fisheries Committee (UFC) is responsible for leasing out water bodies less than 20 acres for a period of 3 years. Upazilla Fisheries Committee (UFC) is chaired by Upazilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and member secretary is Assistant Commissioner of Land (AC Land). UFC has the right to select two representatives from FCOs whereas the UNO holds the authority to select a respected person of that area, one representative from a farmer's organisation and one from a women's organisation (GOB, 2009). The other members of this committee are

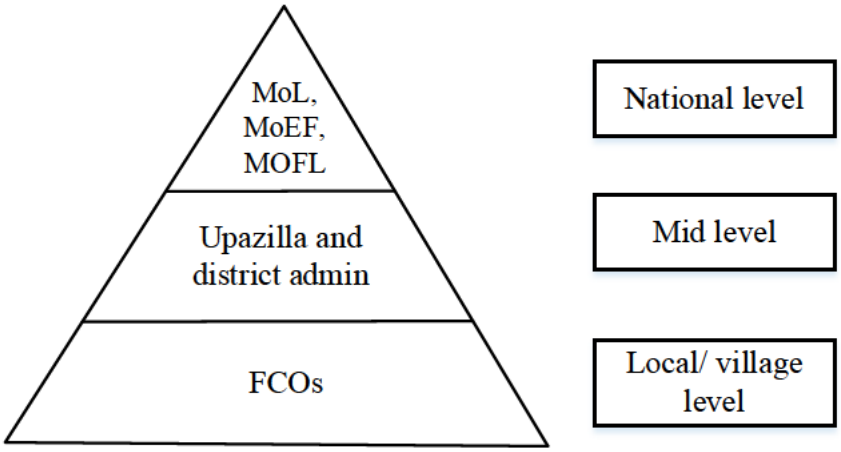
Upazilla Fisheries Officer (UFO), Upazilla Cooperative officer, Upazilla Agriculture Officer, Upazilla Welfare Officer, Officer-in-charge(Thana), Upazilla Youth Development Officer, Upazilla Women Affairs-related Officer, and Chairman, Union Parishad (GoB, 2009).

At the district level, there is also a 15-member District Fisheries Committee (DFC), which is responsible for leasing out water bodies of more than 20 acres (GOB, 2009). The District Fisheries Committee (DFC) is chaired by the District Commissioner and the member secretary is the Revenue Deputy Collector (RDC).The DFC has the authority to select 2 representatives from FCO, whereas the District Commissioner possesses the authority to select representatives from farmer's organisations and from women's organisations. The other members of this committee are Superintendent of Police (SP), Additional District commissioner, District Fisheries Officer (DFO), District Co-operative Officer, Deputy Director of Department of Agriculture, Executive Engineer of Water Development Board, Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department, District Forest Officer, respective UNO, and District Women affairs-related Officer (GoB, 2009).

At the Upazilla and district level, both the UFC and DFC hold the responsibility to lease out the water bodies but only to those FCOs comprised of real fishermen and registered with the Social Welfare Department or the Department of Cooperatives. The leasing authorities in both Upazilla and District levels preserve the power to abolish the lease contract if any lease holder fails to pay the leased money by the due date without any

verified reason and the caution money will then be confiscated in favour of the government (GoB, 2009). The UFC has the responsibility of monitoring fishing activities of the fisheries cooperatives, monitoring and evaluating the underlying leasing conditions that are imposed on FCOs, arranging a list of real fishermen, dispatching information and recommendations to the DFC and producing annual monitoring and evaluation reports about proper management of the waterbodies under the territory of UFC committee and sending the report to District waterbody management committee (GoB, 2009).

Figure 2.2Arrangements under state management



Source: Authors compilation

2.3.4 Involvement of community with wetlands management under leasing, licensing and co-management

This sub-section provides an overview of how local communities either individually or in groups are involved in wetland resource management. First it discusses involvement

of community under leasing and licensing system of the GoB and later it presents community involvement under co-management.

In the 1980s, prior to widespread neoliberalisation policy reform, organisations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO) significantly focused on co-operatives-led fisheries development policy (Bennett, 2017). They viewed co-operatives as an instrument for establishing social equity and strengthening the resilience and stability of fishing communities. Therefore, subsidies, price mechanisms on fish products, ties to state marketing firms and technological modernisation programs were all factored in to incentivise formation of FCOs (Bennett, 2017). In the 1980s, the debt service obligation in many South Asian Countries marked the beginning of a move away from the state intervention production system towards privatisation, deregulation, and a property rights system. The policy shift towards decentralisation in Bangladesh was part of the broader neoliberal policy shift that started in the 1980s. Under this major policy reform, the state reduced subsidies to fisheries cooperatives and opened the competitive bidding process in conceding fishing permits. In effect, the flow of private capital into the fisheries sector has increased and an expansion of the fisheries export market has intensified overcapitalisation of fishing fleets and carved out new challenges for the marginalised communities in wetland areas (Ferdous, 2013).

To ensure fishing rights to real fishers, the GoB introduced both leasing and licensing system in different wetland regimes and restricted them to registered FCOs. FCO is a

formal outlet for transferring property rights of fisheries to fisherfolk for their well-being (Nabi, 2001). Apart from the issue of ensuring access, the government decision to form FCO was linked to the equity issue, since most of the inland waterbodies are too large and expensive for single fisherfolk to harvest (Bernaseck, 1995). In Section-2.3.2 it was said that under the licensing system of NFMP-1986, licence fee was determined on the basis of the lease fee collected under the earlier restricted leasing system and credit facilities were provided to the fisherfolk to purchase fishing gear. But, poor fisherfolk rarely could be involved in the licensing process. Several factors were created obstacle — first, lack of mortgage and securities for accessing credit facilities, which influenced fishers to depend on past lessees and intermediaries to pay licence fees, to purchase fishing gear; second the bias of the NFA in making a list for real fishers, since it was led by powerful non-fisherfolk, so poor fisherfolk were kept off the list; third, some powerful non-fisherfolk was also demanded money from the fisherfolk to include their name in the district approved real fishermen's list and having access to the fishery and fourth, some of the waterbodies were overpriced so poor fisherfolk failed to pay the license fee (Bernascek, 1995;Thompson et al., 2003).

Under the leasing system, GoB has been instituting two types of bidding process — one is sealed-tender bidding, and the other is competitive or open bidding (Nabi, 2001). In order to take control over a particular waterbody, FCOs first need to submit an application fee as security money at the time of submitting the application and then the total lease money is required to be deposit within 15 working days of the decision about lease being made (GOB, 2009). Although, in principle, forming FCO and establishing property rights over waterbodies were offered fisherfolkwith the right to rent, in practice

these rights were not devoid of costs. Toufique (1997) mentioned two sorts of costs were involved— enforcement costs and transaction costs, which determined how the rights will be appropriated, which benefits will be distributed, and who will be the ultimate beneficiary. Enforcement costs are the cost of establishing and upholding property right over the water bodies and are determined by three factors: how much social power (ability to generate the desired behaviour to others) the fisherfolk/individual possess; their ability to prevent capture attempts; and their ability to charge an unauthorised toll from other fishermen for fishing (Toufique, 1997). Power and enforcement costs are very closely linked in waterbody management. A powerful leaseholder can take any actions in the case of any breach of contract, and they also possess strong networks of acquaintances, which the fisherfolk lack (Toufique, 1997). This yearlong enforcement cost has created a secondary market for the waterbodies, where real fisherfolk improved their income by transferring their property right to the socially and financially powerful individuals, whom Toufique (1997, p. 458) identified as 'white-collared middleman'. Though, rhetorically, de jure rights may remain with the FCO, however, de facto right was apprehended by the lessee (Toufique, 1997; Kabir et al., 2013). However, this transfer of rights between lessee and the fisherfolk community is not always straightforward but rather imbued with different types of disguised side payments, which are not always fundamentally monetary in nature (Toufique, 1997).

Like the enforcement cost, transaction cost was also high for the marginalised fishing community. Though the government has a distinct policy for setting out the leasing price, in reality the leasing cost is comprised of three components: the official auction

value, bribes made to the leasing bureaucracy and the transaction cost[7] of leasing (Toufique, 1997). The leasing price was determined in auction at 10-25% above the average annual revenue of the last 3 years. There is no explicit justification of this increasing leasing price, except the logic of the regular price inflation (Bernacsek, 1994; Nabi, 2001). In order to get a lease and to pay the entire leasing-related costs, fishers were compelled to submit to the social and financial power of 'Ijaradar' (lessees), and Mohajon (Nabi, 2001). However, Kremer (1994, p. 11) commented that this relation between fisherfolk and Ijaradar and/or Mohajon is not only a compelling one but fisherfolk also consider their supported Ijaradars as key defenders of their fishing livelihoods and their financial wealth, and social and political influence is considered as an advantage to them rather than an obstruction to their access to the fishery (Nabi, 2001). The Ijaradars were allowed by the fisherfolk to use their names in their FCOs and, having won the de jure property rights, the Ijaradars distributed fishing access of leased fisheries to a group on payment of fee based on gear efficiency. In most cases, groups were organised according to kinship relations and factional loyalty (Toufique, 1997; Nabi, 2001).

In reality, the government's leasing and licensing policy actually eases expansion of the patronage network. It opens the route for moneylenders and influential non-fishermen to take control of FCOs and take part in the competitive leasing process. Their establishment of de jure rights generated several consequences: overpricing of the leases and forced the genuine fishers either to pay or to leave the open auction. Additionally,

[7]Transaction cost—"Costs of travel, paperwork, payment to informal brokers, and the muscle men in district administration office during auction" (Toufique, 1997, p. 464)

their strong socio-political power prevented new competitors from participating in the leasing arrangement, because leasing a fishery not only entails payment of lease fees but also depends on the nature of the cost of maintaining control of it (Nabi, 2001). These competing interests of the Ijaradars divided the fisherfolk community and the FCO into different groups and made leasing a subject of constant conflict and litigation (Nabi, 2001).

Parallel to the centralised management approach, a number of partnership arrangements have taken place over the years to involve the fishers in the management of fisheries. Under this partnership arrangement, government has provided administrative support, partner NGOs have given support to build local institutions, and communities are involved in taking decisions collectively and making local rules for fisheries management (Kabir et al., 2013). Three broad categories of partnership arrangement have been adopted in managing inland water bodies: 1. NGO-led strategy; 2. Government-led strategy; and 3. Government and NGO partnership (Ahmed et al., 1997). Under the NGO-led strategy, NGOs were responsible for securing a lease from the government on behalf of target communities and took the central role in organising and representing the fishing community's interests until the communities were sufficiently organised enough to manage the leased waterbody (Ahmed et al., 1997). This model was successful in terms of production and equity as it introduced collateral-free credit to the landless as well as created alternative income generation activities for the economically powerless group of the population (Ahmed et al., 1997). The government-led strategy model was pursued under the guidelines of New Fisheries Management Policy-1986 (Discussed in Sub-section-2.3.2). This basic model of

establishing a relationship between state and user community was experimentally held in six water bodies consisting of rivers, beels and Haors under a project called Experiment in New and Improved Management of Fisheries (ENIMOF), financially supported by the Ford Foundation, and technically supported by ICLARM[8]during 1987-89 (Ahmed et al., 1997;Rab, 2009). However, a lack of support from NGOs made the Government-led fisheries management model more challenging, particularly in terms of budget and the ability to reach out to the poor fisherfolk community (Ahmed et al., 1997). The Government and NGO-led partnership model emerged from the limitations of the Government-led model. In planning this model, attention was therefore paid to partnerships and roles of implementing organisations assuming that NGOs might act as an intermediary between DoF and NGOs or both DoF and NGOs could separately support the community (Thompson et al., 2003; Ahmed et al.,1997).

The Improved Management of Open Water Fisheries Project (IMOF) from 1991-1994 first piloted the concept of community-based management (Khan et al., 2016). From the mid-1990s, the DoF adopted different co-management arrangements through various development initiatives to encourage and support an effective and equitable management system (Kabir et al., 2013) such as the Sustainable Environment Management Program (SEMP) (2000-2003) project, Community Based Fisheries Management (CBFM) project (Phase-1, 1995-1999 and Phase-2, 2001-2006), Management of Aquatic and Community Husbandry Project (MACH) (1998-2008). During the implementation of these projects, different GO-NGO-local partnership models were developed (Thompson et al., 2003; Khan et al., 2012).

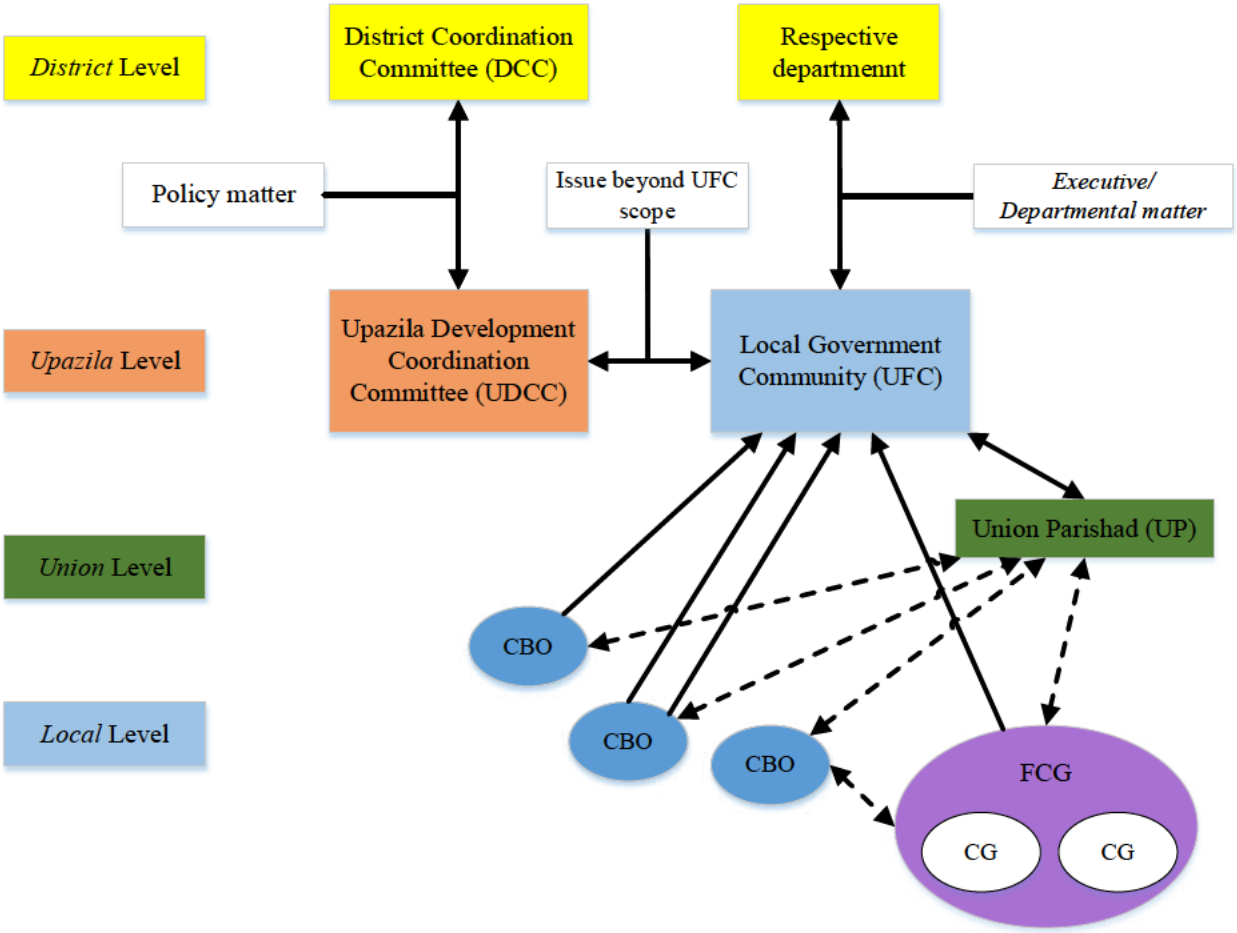
[8]International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources Management

Involvement of community in studied projects

For this study two donor-funded fisheries co-management projects were investigated. Project-1 was supported by donors and implemented by national NGOs linking with MoFL and DoF. The key feature of the project-1 was that it emphasised support to the entire resource user community, including poor fisherfolk, farmers, the landless, labourers and women, and acknowledged that local elites and local government are also a part of the resource user community and hence they must be involved in the management, for the project's sustainability (USAID, 2001). Project-1 developed an institutional arrangement to ensure sustainable wetland management and resource conservation in order to confirm sustainable productivity of wetland resources and to assure food security through Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) linked with local government administration (Thompson and Choudhury, 2007). Partner NGOs worked to support village and Upazilla level and their activities in a collaborative and coordinated way. Under this project, the roles and responsibilities were divided between CBOs and FCGs (Federation of Credit Groups). CBOs and FCGs are formally linked with two tiers of local government administration: District administration and Upazilla Parishad. Upazilla is staffed by technical officers of various line agencies as well as administrative officers and has responsibility to provide government services (Thompson and Chowdhury, 2007). The UFC coordinates management activities, resolves problems, oversees improved wetland management, makes co-management decisions and evaluates the activities in the leased-out waterbody, according to the conditions of MOU. The DFC has a formal link with UFC, but they do not have any formal or informal links with CBOs. The UFC arranges a quarterly meeting to discuss the potential issues regarding wetland management and conservation, and the

performance of the wetland management project as executed by the CBOs. All the developed and agreed-upon rules that the CBO formed are endorsed, co-ordinated and overseen by the UFC and approved through the UFC (Thompson and Chowdhury, 2007).

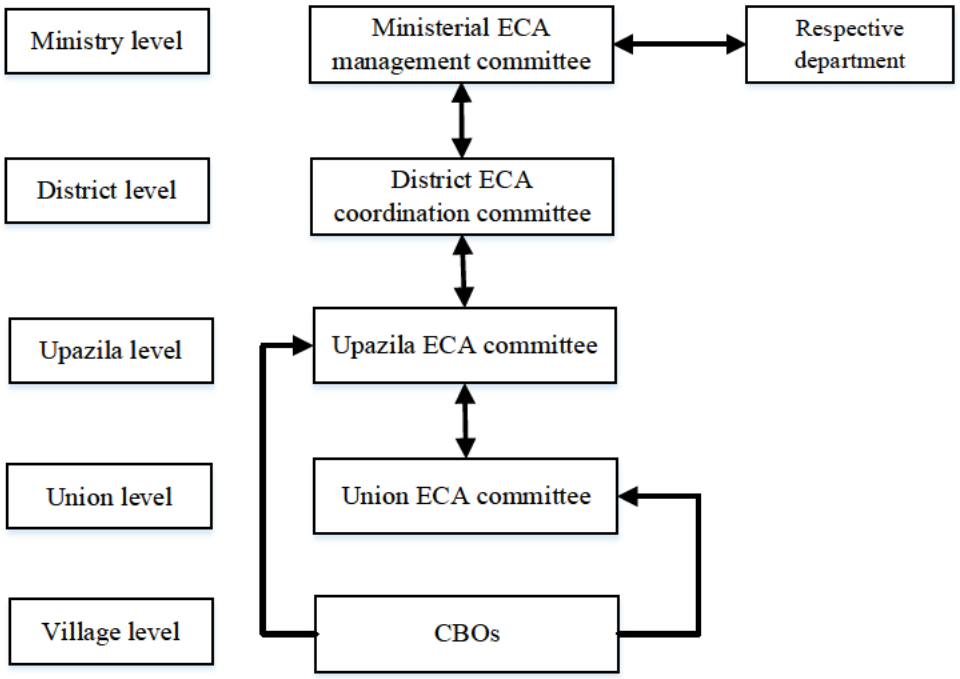
Figure 2.3Arrangements under Project-1



Source: Halder and Thompson (2006, p.21)

Project-2 was introduced to manage the ecologically critical areas and was implemented jointly by DoE, and one national level NGO, two local-level NGOs. The project was supported by donors and GoB. Under this project, 27 CBOs were formed by including members from farmers, service holders, women, day labourers, fish traders, agricultural labourers, and transport workers. CBOs are linked with Union, Upazilla and District levels through different committees. At the Union level, there was the Union ECA committee headed by the Union Parishad Chairman. The committee was responsible for supervising and providing the necessary support to CBOs, resolving conflicts at the local level, and assisting implementation of development activities. At the Upazilla level, there is Upazilla ECA committee, headed by UNO and, at the district level, District ECA Coordination Committee, which is headed by a Deputy Commissioner (DC). The District ECA committee supervises and guides the Upazilla ECA committee. CBOs have formal links with Upazilla level but they do not have any link with district level.

Figure 2.4Arrangements under Project-2



Source: Authors compilation

To sustain the co-management program and to support the functions of established committees once the project support ended, these co-management committees were endowed with funds (Thompson and Chowdhury, 2007; Khan, 2011; Ferdous, 2013). The reason for establishing endowment funds was that, previously, when a project ended, activities and institutions gradually weakened or disappeared due to the sudden absence of resources. The fund was deposited in a joint account held by the District Fisheries Officer (DFO) and the District Commissioner (DC) and could be withdrawn only by Upazilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and Upazilla Fisheries officer (UFO)

(Thompson and Choudhury, 2007). Ninety percent of total interest gained from the endowment fund was distributed between STD-1 and STD-2 accounts. The UFC uses the fund of STD-1 in organising monthly or quarterly meetings, monitoring the activities of CBOs, carrying out the mobile court[9], arranging workshops on wetland management, and in the public awareness program (Ferdous, 2012). The STD-2 fund is utilised to provide the necessary technical and institutional support to CBOs that they demand under the yearly scheme. UFO and UNO have the authority to disburse the check in the name of president and secretary of CBOs (Thompson and Chowdhury, 2007; Ferdous, 2013).

The rationale for introducing co-management was to include resource users in the fisheries management, to empower fishing communities, and to improve the management system through incorporating local knowledge and expertise (Deb, 2009, Khan, 2011). But, in reality, co-management failed to produce remarkable outcomes. Poor fishers found it hard to be involved in the co-management committee and the management activities were limited and dominated by a few influential committee members within the CBOs (Deb, 2009; Khan and Ahmed, 2017; Brakel et al., 2021).

2.4 Challenges

Wetlands in Bangladesh have long been facing serious degradation in both quality and quantity. Over the decades, the GoB has taken centralised, decentralised and co-management interventions to manage the resources and allocation of fishing rights to

[9]Mobile court is a formal court that conducts proceedings in locations other than their home offices, usually in remote areas where no justice services are available.

real fishers but none of these interventions have delivered on better management of inland fisheries or generate a sufficiently strong institutional base to solve the basic problems that confront fisherfolk (Khan, 2011; Bernacsek, 1994). The key challenges in fisheries governance are discussed below.

2.4.1 Governments' revenue earning trend and emergence of a rent-seeking culture

The key limitations of the centralised management regime consisted in an emphasis on collecting substantial revenue together with a low level of compliance with management measures and ignorance of government socio-economic aspects of poor fishers (Khan, 2011; Ferdous, 2013). The poor governance of centralised management contributed to developing a class of rent-seeking powerful non-fishermen and created scope for political influence over the leasing process (Rab, 2009). Though the NFMP-1986 was a major improvement and was the first step towards promoting a co-management approach, providing roles of NGOs and donors in management of inland fisheries, and was targeted to divert the maximum benefits from fishing to the real fisherfolk, it eventually failed to fully address the objectives (Craig et al., 2004; Hossain et al., 2006; Islam et al., 2020; Brakel et al., 2021). The NFMP committee identified 300 waterbodies out of 12,000 but in reality nearly 270 were handed over to the DoF (Murshed-e-Jahan et al., 2009; Rab, 2009). The lengthy bureaucratic process involved in doing so frequently causes unacceptable and unnecessary delays, which were critically hampered the implementation (Bernacsek, 1994; Khan, 2011). Additionally, logistic support was deemed necessary to win fishermen's confidence to achieve partnership. Along with limited legislative, logistic and financial support, the enforcement of law and order in regulating unfair fishing activities was distinctly

limited — hence, DoF failed to control widespread illegal and destructive fishing practices (Hossain et al., 2006; Deb, 2009; Khan, 2011). Moreover, DoF was also failed to identify any compelling evidence of identifying technical management models that support optimal harvest strategies (Hossain et al., 2006). All these matters gave grounds for the MoL to criticise the inability of the DoF and to transfer no more water bodies to DoF jurisdiction (Bernacsek, 1994).

It was assumed by the government and donor that decentralisation would establish an accountability relationship between local constituents and local government, but in the wetland context accountability relationships are complex and often subject to negotiation. Decentralisation in reality does not stop rent-seeking — rather, it gradually manipulates the social as well as political environment (Rab, 2009). Politicisation in the leasing process took a new direction following the enactment of National Wetland Management Act-2005. Waterbodies below 10 acres were leased to fishers under the supervision of the Union Parishad (GOB, 2005) but, in reality, this authority prioritised the supporters of Union Parishad Chairman, who directly contributed to the Union Parishad election in favour of the Chairman (Khan, 2011). Therefore, a ‘give and take’ policy was at work in the administrative hierarchy. On the other hand, waterbodies up to 20 acres were transferred to the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) to lease out among youth associations where the supporters of the ruling party were prioritised in the selection process (Khan, 2011). Waterbodies larger than 20 acres were administered by the DFC, where financially and politically powerful groups and individuals influence management decisions to capture the water bodies (Khan, 2011). Leaseholders or powerful groups were gained access through political interference from the Upazilla

Parishad Chairman and from local MPs. Now they are the main gatekeepers in accessing the wetlands. These malpractices pose the question whether the decentralisation policy is really pro-poor or just an outcome of clientelist politics.

2.4.2 Overlapping remits of different ministries

The inland fisheries of Bangladesh operate under complex institutions. Presently, the inland fisheries are typically managed at two administrative levels: Upazilla and District level. Apart from this administrative pattern there are also reservoirs and roadside water bodies that are administered by the Bangladesh Water Development Board, the Railway department and the Roads and Highways department (Hossain et al., 2006). The Ministry of Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control are responsible for water resources management and development in the broadest sense (Bernascek, 1994). The DoE, under the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), is also responsible for monitoring the environmental quality and providing an ECC certificate to development programs. On the other hand, the MoFL has the authority to manage and develop the major renewable and living aquatic resources while legal ownership of water bodies rests with the MoL (Bernascek, 1994). Therefore, separate government bodies and industries directly or indirectly provide inputs to fisheries management.

Historically, the relation between the MoFL and MoL is highly contradictory. Empowering the MoL to lease out the water bodies undermines the capacity of other government agencies — particularly MOFL, MoEF and MoWR[10]— and hinders

[10]Ministry of Water resources

implementation of the mandate to scientifically manage, protect and conserve the inland fisheries resources in the different periods of wetland governance (Bernacsek, 1994). Although MoL and MoFL are both separated in their mandate to manage water bodies and their resources, there are lots of areas where their coordination is imperative for ensuring a healthy wetland ecosystem. MoL is responsible for setting leasing and licensing policy for waterbody management, but the power of issuing licences and training the cooperatives in fish culture and management are retained to MoFL (NFP, 1998). The DoF is the key authority for issuing, cancelling or renewing licences for fishing vessels and other aspects of the proper management of marine fisheries resources (NFP, 1998). Additionally, as the DoF is liable for the management of sanctuaries, they have always opposed the 3 years lease period as it encourages a "plunder mentality" among leaseholders (Bernacsek, 1994, p. 250). But as the MoL has the responsibility for leasing the waterbody, it focuses particularly on different leasing options rather than on the quality of the waterbody and its capacity to generate future yields. Because of the overlapping responsibilities of a number of government ministries, and the diversity of interests and lack of coordination (Murshed-e-Jahan et al., 2009), the waterbody leasing system leads to severe resource management inefficiency. Moreover, asymmetrical power distribution between MoL and MoFL systematically empowered alternative groups and shaped the entire social and political system (Ferdous, 2013).

2.4.3 Challenges in community-based and co-management approach

The financial support of donors keen to improve governance through decentralisation motivated the GoB to consider co-management in the context of wetlands (Khan,

2011).The projects that are linked with introducing and implementing co-management and participatory processes focus on empowering community by involving them in resource management. But the process is not simple and straightforward as it is bound up with different expectations and interests of diverse stakeholders (Thompson et al., 2003). For the DoF, it is a way to gain more power through access and have a greater say in fisheries; for some NGOs, it is a new venture or opportunity to improve the resource base and capabilities of their existing fisher's group (Thompson et al., 2003). Clashes over the interests of the stakeholders are therefore very common. Community-based and co-management setups have been facing major constraints in institutional capacity and ability to promote implementation of long-term sustainable policy (Khan et al., 2012). Evidence suggests that, in most cases, sustaining co-management depends on the nature of the resource user group, whether homogenous or heterogeneous, the role of the facilitator, and the type of partnership between government agencies and NGOs (Thompson et al., 2003; Khan, 2011).

At the local level, the quality of partnership depends on various factors but primarily the level of commitment of the assigned authoritative body or individual. Local government officials are often endowed with huge responsibilities. Along with their normal workloads, they have to maintain protocols and perform many administrative assignments by the district administration and so often lack time and resources to provide support in co-management activities (Rab, 2009). A second factor is a strong rapport between the local administration and community (Rab, 2009). In establishing local co-management institutions, the NGO acts as a facilitator but, in the context of Bangladesh fisheries, this is not necessarily sufficient. Literature reported that progress

is also better when DOF staffs take the initiative in developing local organisation and undertaking fishery management action (Ahmed et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2003). At field level, it seems that there is an agency clash between NGOs and government officials. The reason for this is that donor-driven initiatives often fail to address the embedded social and power structures, and individual NGOs are very restricted in their own approach and can only make limited modifications to fit with local circumstances and are often unable to coordinate with local government offices adjacent to their area (Ahmed et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2003; Khan, 2011). Failure to address social power, structure and the role of local government eventually creates a political crisis as well as conflicts between the actors (Khan, 2011). A third factor on which the partnership of NGO and local government officials depends is the identity and the ability of the assigned NGO. Rab (2009) mentioned that politicisation of NGOs is a critical issue that in some cases can make field-level implementation of co-management worse. The local elites and the leaseholders take advantage of the politically weak position of the NGOs. When something becomes too political, the local level administration also shows an unwillingness to take action (Rab, 2009).

One important challenge for fisheries co-management is polarisation of power with one faction and a reduction in the participation of fisherfolk (Thompson et al., 2003). CBOs are viewed as primary institutions in building and sustaining the co-management process (Kabir et al., 2013). In many cases, the community's involvement in these organisations is limited, particularly due to the structure of the resource management committee, which supports inclusion of poor fisherfolk, who had been excluded earlier, in the resource management (Thompson et al., 2003; Sultana and Abeyasekera, 2008).

At the inception stage, NGOs promote a transparent and a more accountable leadership system, which prompts a new set of leaders to emerge who start to see the NGO as their source of help and power (Thompson et al., 2003). Waterbodies that are now under co-management were once targeted by the socially and politically influential groups (Thompson et al., 2003). In the past, these influential groups utilised diverse political networks to occupy various locations of authority and were able to manipulate the leasing decision-making arena. So, these old leaders took NGO as a threat and look toward the DoF for support (Thompson et al., 2003). Since they have a good connection with government officials, they always try to influence the decisions regarding co-management.

Another challenging factor is that fisheries co-management projects did not provide any forum for CBOs to interact with higher levels — district and national. The Upazilla administration in this case supervised the field level activities and maintained liaison with the district administration and district level advisory committee (Bevanger et al., 2001). Therefore, the success of this project depends to a great extent on the effective functioning of this office and the interest of the District Commissioner. Active support from the district administration was critical for the success of the project (Bevanger et al., 2001). Vertical and horizontal linkages of CBOs with multi-level organisations are essential for ensuring the legitimacy of the CBOs, since they generate scope for the CBOs to participate in the decision-making process, to share concerns and issues with higher levels and provide feedback from local communities (Khan, 2011).

Institution building and power-sharing are the key elements of fisheries co-management. The success of this approach also depends on government perspectives towards this management approach. Under co-management, CBOs were developed (supported by local government authority and concerned NGOs) to implement a shared vision for effective management practices. But these institutions need to conform with national wetland management policies to have legitimacy and have a management plan supported in law. Co-management in Bangladesh is not grounded in any form of legislation (Deb, 2009; Ferdous, 2013). It was said in the National Wetland Management Act-2009 that, under the MoU, the waterbodies can only be handed over to an organisation made up of real fisherfolk. Without a legal status, the co-management approach cannot operate effectively. For this reason, the end of the lease period of the waterbodies under co-management often threatens the sustainability of co-management (Brakel et al., 2021). Moreover, at the operational stage, lots of uncertainties turn up regarding the roles of stakeholders and internal government co-ordination — all stemming from the inherent indistinctness within the National Wetland Management Acts-2005 and 2009 — such as which partner will play the lead role in transferring waterbodies from the government to CBOs, and who will collect the yearly rent of the waterbodies (Khan, 2011; Ferdous, 2013). These are very important characteristics for sustaining the CBOs following project completion. In addition, there is a lack of political lobby to advocate for a legal mandate of co-management (Ferdous, 2013).

2.5 Concluding Summary

This background chapter has presented the governance and management of wetland resources in Bangladesh, how the fisherfolk communities are involved in management

and the challenges of the wetland management system. Over the last several decades, the entire Haor basin has been particularly threatened by overexploitation of fishery stocks, deforestation, and large-scale waterfowl harvesting. Extensive irrigation schemes for agricultural fields and indiscriminate use of agrochemicals result in altering the feeding and breeding grounds of many indigenous fish species (Chakraborty, 2009). Moreover, the constant discharge of pollutants into waterbodies from industries (tea), and over-fishing (especially of juvenile and brood fishes) have led to many fish species becoming locally extinct. Bangladesh has been a signatory to the Ramsar convention since 1992 and is consequently committed to the restoration and protection of wetland biodiversity. During 1990, Bangladesh completed two major conservation initiatives — the National Conservation Strategy (NCS) and the National Environmental Management Action Plan (NEMAP). As a follow up of NEMAP the GoB carried out the SEMP (Section-1.3.4). To conserve the wetland resources and to offer legal rights to real fishers, the government has taken various measures over the last couple of decades; however, the basic fact is that these rules, regulations and management systems have largely been unsuccessful or insufficiently supportive of the fishing communities. From the background information it can be concluded that a lack of co-ordination between different ministries, between NGOs and local government agencies, an absence of executive order (gazette notifications) regarding the legal obligation to co-manage, the absence of vertical linkages of CBOs with district and national levels and, most importantly,the pre-existing control of the powerful over the waterbodies and their connection with government officials, all create obstacles to bringing about any desired change.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review and discuss the literature, and the concepts related to the research question: How do patron-client relations shape the structure, functioning and practices of co-management? The chapter focuses on co-management, power dynamics, patron-client relations, institutions involved in natural resource management, and elite capture, with emphasis on the influence of community norms, culture and traditions in shaping fisheries co-management practices and outcomes. In doing so, it identifies the gaps that the current literature has not yet adequately addressed. The chapter begins with a discussion of the concept of co-management and its related challenges, with a focus on power sharing, empowerment, participation and gender. Secondly, it focuses on Lukes' three dimensions of power and Gaventa's Power Cube framework and how the latter framework is applied in the literature to look at how forms of power operate in different spaces and levels. Thirdly, this chapter discusses patron-client relations and, in particular, reviews the literature on patron-client relations in the context of fisheries management. Fourth, special attention is given to elite capture in the context of co-management to provide a deeper insight into fisheries co-management. Fifth, this chapter sheds light on institutions and the different processes involved in institutional bricolage. The chapter concludes by presenting conceptual and analytical framework that draws on the entire chapter linking Power Cube and institutional analysis to guide the research design and data analysis.

3.2 Co-management-concepts and challenges of co-management

3.2.1 Co-management –power sharing and empowerment

Since the 1990s, across the Global South, the co-management paradigm has been introduced as an institutional response to managing natural resources — fisheries, forests, wetlands, and protected areas —via a participatory and collaborative process. The co-management concept has been adopted as an alternative approach and a means of rectifying basic shortcomings in the state management approach of natural resources that often failed to deliver sustainability. Centralised top-down management did not necessarily lead to better conserved resources for dealing with people-centred problems (overexploitation, habitat destruction) because it takes insufficient account of resource users' social, economic and cultural conditions. It left the resource user communities completely out of the management process and formed barriers between them and the government administration (Nielsen et al., 2004; Marin and Berkes, 2010). These factors, in effect, undermined the legitimacy and efficacy of the management system (Nielsen et al., 2004). To effectively address the socio-ecological challenges, it was increasingly accepted that institutional policies and development initiatives should reflect on involving resource user and try to resonate with local ecological knowledge, local realities and values, and how people relate to the resources and ecosystems (Berkes and Folke, 1998). But this is not sufficient condition to address natural resource conservation and economic development. It is also important to empower the community and government have to establish "rights and authorities and devolve some of their own powers" (Pomeroy, 1995, p. 149).

Co-management is a social system that transforms the relationship between actors in the resources management chain by reshuffling power, rights and responsibilities (Jentoft et al., 1998; Carlsson and Berkes, 2005). The emergence of this new system is grounded in four arguments: i) sustainability (the ability of the system to absorb and deal with changes and shocks); ii)equity (the scope of stakeholder representation, transparency of the management process and homogenous expectations of the resource user community concerning the management process); iii) efficiency (more effective collective action, reducing implementation cost, improving compliance of management institutions and integration of diverse knowledge and a value system that leads to better problem solving) and iv) legitimacy (inclusion of the resource user community and other entitled stakeholders to participate in the management process, share in controlling and influencing institutions, with the aim of making them responsible, improving the legitimacy of state management and leading to a sound utilisation of the resources) (Sen and Nielsen, 1996; Béné et al., 2009; Evans et al., 2011). From an eclectic ideology of grassroots participation in resource management, collaboration, power, rights and responsibility sharing between government agencies and the resource user community it is thought that co-management will lead to better conservation of resources (Carlsson and Berkes, 2005). Nevertheless, this idea of harmonious negotiations between government and resource users has been critiqued in the literature (Njaya, 2007; Nunan et al., 2012; 2015) for overlooking the structural, institutional and historically determined inequities in power among different stakeholders.

One of the major justifications for co-management is empowerment at individual and community level. At the individual level, empowerment involves strengthening self-

confidence and increasing awareness about environmental, social and political factors that influence his or her life, ability to influence the political process and play an assertive role in managing resources, and shaping the ideology of the community (Zimmerman and Rappaport, 1988; Jentoft, 2005). At the community level, empowerment means a raised level of psychological empowerment among the members and increasing the political power of a group or community to handle their own affairs and influence their own futures and ability to cope with competing use of resources (Nielsen et al., 2004). Co-management, therefore, emphasises the creation of a countervailing power in the community (Jentoft, 2005) alongside a systematic disempowerment of government agencies, which previously had full control (Nielsen et al., 2004) over the resources and the management decision-making process. But such changes require, first, a reorientation in the mindsets, both in the community and in government organisations, concerning their roles in the newly crafted arrangements; second, a substantial restructuring of the institutional and organisational arrangements; and third, capacity building at different levels within the government and resource user communities (Nielsen et al., 2004). Pinkerton (1989) viewed this empowering co-management approach from the perspective of equality that allows a balance between the needs of the local community for its self-regulation and the state's needs for some assurances that the resources are being well-managed. In this arrangement, the state has a pivotal role in providing the legal basis for the functioning of co-management, to establish supportive legislation, policies, rights and authority structures (Pomeroy et al., 2001),creating an enabling political environment for resource users' participation, and to allow the user groups to exercise their powers and authorities (Njaya, 2007). In co-management, consequently, a critical issue is how the power sharing arrangement will

evolve and the nature of communication between the resource users and government agencies in the decision-making process.

Sen and Nielsen (1996) identify five broad categories of power sharing arrangements. First, instructive arrangement, which involves the setting up of a mechanism for dialogue with resource user groups and an exchange of information between government and resource user groups, where the resource users are the passive actors in co-management and are informed only about what decisions the government plan to make; second, consultative arrangement, which involves the government consulting with users but remaining responsible for making final decisions; third, cooperative arrangement, where the government and resource users have equal power in the decision-making process; fourth, advisory arrangements, in which resource users advise the government about what decisions to be taken and the government endorses those decisions; and, finally, informative arrangements, which are the highest level of partnership where power is delegated to the resource users' community (Sen and Nielsen, 1996). A key aspect of power sharing arrangements is the initiation of a learning process for all parties (Nielsen et al., 2004), which requires involving user groups at all stages of co-management — planning, implementation and evaluation. Nevertheless, in many developing countries, the practical adaptation of the co-management approach still tends to be stuck at the instructive or consultative level, and has most often been limited to involving user groups in the implementation process, with little or no consideration or attention given to the traditional practices and local knowledge of the resource users (Njaya, 2007; Nielsen, 2004; d'Armengol, 2018). In this case, government perceived co-management not as a means of introducing more

democratic principles but acknowledged co-management as an instrument to attain its management objectives by confining the level of participation of resource user groups to the implementation phase (Nielsen et al., 2004). This made governance reform tend towards instrumental participatory programmes rather than transformational governance reforms, where the priorities of the community define the development projects (Béné et al., 2009). Resource users in this system, therefore, have no influence on how the resources are to be managed or how to challenge the government's actions.

A critical point in the context of co-management, then, is who is to be empowered in this collaborative and communicative process — the individual, the community or a different group. In the context of co-management, community empowerment has been seen as a way to gain support among users because community is a source of identity and attachment, provides interactive learning, enhances self-confidence, and helps people find meaning, strength and power by connecting to others. However, a community cannot be contextualised as a static concept, i.e. a "small spatial unit...homogenous social structure... [with] shared norms" and common interests (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999, p.629) — rather, it needs to be considered as a "multidimensional, cross-scale, social-political unit[s] or network[s] changing through time" (Berkes, 2004, p.23). In managing resources, it is crucial to recognise there are conflicting interests, worldviews, and diversity in terms of power and influence existing within society. The role resource user groups play in the decision-making process depends on the nature of representation, how the user group is represented and who is represented (Jentoft and McCay, 1995). Although it is important in the co-management process to develop the capacity of different communities simultaneously, Nielsen et al.

(2004) and Jentoft et al. (1998) state that co-management is mostly seen in terms of functional communities in which rights and responsibilities have been assigned to functionally defined groups. Another major challenge for co-management identified by Jentoft et al. (1998, p.424) is that user groups may benefit from the cooperation but, at the collective level, co-management suffers from opportunism, which the authors represented by the metaphor 'Fox in the hen's house'— a situation where resource user organisations with a formal position within the natural resource management system exploit the power that they have been accorded as protectors of the resources. Jentoft et al. (1998) also stated that some users get disproportionate privileges in this context and, in many cases, it is found that the dominant actors in the decision-making arena are not fishers but other actors who hold political and social power, and hence inequalities that already exist within the community become entrenched (Njaya, 2007; Hara, 2008). Co-management therefore cannot be seen as a panacea for legitimacy or regulatory capture. Constructing an effective co-management arrangement is not only a matter of building institutions, but of who participates, how debates are structured, how conflicts of interests are addressed (Jentoft et al.,1998) and, importantly, also how the community actively monitors, interprets and shapes the world around them.

3.2.2 Space for participation in co-management

Over the past couple of decades, participation has become one of the key principles of contemporary development practices, often directly linked with claims of empowerment and transformative development — i.e., development that can effectively challenge the existing power structures, institutional practices and capacity gaps (Hickey and Mohan, 2005). For co-management to be effective, a clearly defined membership and the

representation and participation of every affected resource user group are viewed as essential (Pomeroy et al., 2001; Nunan et al., 2012). For Cornwall (2002), participation is about creating spaces, making room for different opinions to be heard and also about allowing people to engage in spaces that were previously denied to them. In the context of co-management, this participation has often been facilitated through the designing of new structures and institutions (Nunan et al., 2012). However, Gaventa (2006, p.25) notes that "simply creating new institutional arrangements will not make them real and will not necessarily result in greater inclusion or pro-poor policy change". Participation does not take place in a power vacuum. Quoting Lefebvre (1991), Cornwall (2002, p.6) defined space for participation as "a social product...it is not simply 'there', a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control and hence of domination, of power." Investigating how spaces for participation are occupied, negotiated, undermined or interceded, therefore requires focus both on the dynamics within these spaces and on the patterns of interactions between officialised/public spaces and unofficial spaces (mosque, church, home etc.) and the spaces of everyday life (Cornwall, 2002).

Inherent in the idea of space are power relations, which shape the boundaries of participatory spaces, what is possible within these boundaries, who can enter there, and with which identities, discourses, what decisions, and whose interests and agendas will be pursued (Gaventa, 2006). Issues of power not only challenge the very possibility of equitable, consensual decision-making but can also restrict the possibility of "thinking outside the box" (Cornwall, 2002, p.5). The effectiveness of co-management depends on who creates space and how it is created. Spaces created by powerful actors may

permit only limited citizen influence, colonising interactions, resulting in reinforcing hegemonic perspectives, and reproduction of dominant knowledge rather than amplifying marginalised voices (Cornwall, 2002). In many countries of the Global South, the creation of co-management arrangements has, until recently, been carried out without a clear policy or legislative backing and been implemented by a donor-driven approach (Kepe, 2008), adopting an "invited space" for participation mechanism, in which people (as users, as citizens, as beneficiaries) are invited to participate by various kinds of authorities (Gaventa, 2006, p.26). The key point of this space is that external resource-bearing agents bring them into being and offer a frame for participation within them, but invited spaces are not separate from the social or unofficial spaces; rather, they exist alongside and impinge on each other, and the power relations within and across the space are constantly reconfigured (Cornwall, 2002).

Space for participation and the power dynamics surrounding the democratic space are reflected in the literature on fisheries co-management, recognising that co-management is rarely able to challenge pre-existing power relations or facilitate empowerment of the fisherfolk community (Nunan et al., 2012). In the study on space for participation, Nunan et al. (2012) examined the participation of migrating fisherfolk in the co-management arrangement in the Lake Victoria fisheries. The authors investigated the inclusion/exclusion process and reproduction of hierarchies through the lens of the concept of "space" and showed that 'invited' space can be an obstacle to effective participation and can limit genuine representation. The capacity in which representation in co-management in the Lake Victoria fisheries is allowed is mostly through occupation (boat crew, fish traders, and boat repairers), along with some representation

by gender to show that women are also involved in the Beach Management Unit (BMU) committee and that registration with BMU is limited only to the residents at the landing site (Nunan et al., 2012). In their study, it was found that fisherfolk movement, the cost of their time and lower endowments relating to employment, income and ownership of boats and gear, and their general social status are the main factors limiting their opportunities to maintain networks and participate in management; hence, the decision-making arena is dominated by boat owners, resulting in dissatisfaction among the boat crews that their voices are not heard (Nunan et al., 2012). In another study on fisheries co-management in Malawi, Hara (2008) identified that the Beach Village Committee (BVC) in Malawi fisheries, created by the fisheries department, involved only 30% of fishers (mostly gear owners) and 70% of other community members, reflecting the logic that electing a major portion of gear owners and crew members in BVC would be counterproductive for improved adherence to regulations. Therefore, in the BVC, members were chosen according to whom fisheries officers can work with and whose views match with the interest of the fisheries department. Boat crew members who used to be regular resource users and made operational decisions on the fishing ground, fish traders, migrant fishermen and women (despite being gear owners)were excluded from this process due to the definition of ‘fisherman’ adopted by the Fisheries Department (Hara, 2008, p.82). The author illustrated the critical role that the traditional leaders play in fisheries governance and stated that, though powers have been legally provided to the BVC to formulate and enforce rules, because of the strong influence of traditional leaders in this reformation, the BVC could not effectively exercise their power, leaving the BVC to depend on the traditional leaders for effective exercise of their function, creating confusion about whom the BVC is accountable to, whether to the Fisheries

Department, their own constituency or the traditional leaders. In these cases, the authors question the nature of space created through co-management, to what extent it is open to all stakeholders and highlight the need for the co-management design and implementation to understand the institutional landscapes before introducing reformation.

3.2.3 Gender dimension in co-management

The previous section of the literature review discusses the space for participation and the power dynamics. Associated with this discussion is how co-management deals with the gender dimension. Recognising the importance of equity in managing natural resources, donors and development practitioners emphasise fostering the participation of women in the co-management process. It is argued by Agarwal (2001) that, though the co-management program operates on the principal of cooperation, it effectively excludes women, a significant group within the community. Women's involvement, according to Cornwall (2003), in most participatory projects has often been limited to implementation, where essentialisms regarding women's reproductive role, and naive assumptions about the community, constantly play a critical role. The way women are excluded from participatory spaces may also echo and reinforce hegemonic gender norms. Choudhury et al. (2016, p.53) point out that space is a "silent language" and a "hidden dimension", which shapes how the women will act. Ideas regarding social spaces are socially constructed and these ideas take up as institutionalised form and shape women's capability to manoeuvre their agency. Gendered spaces in the context of resource management (fisheries, forests, water, etc.) are created and recreated through everyday activities, isolating women from the public places and strengthening

inequality between men and women (Choudhury et al., 2016). Gender is a constitutive element of every social relationship, sanctioned and reinforced by a host of cultural, political and economic institutions, manifested through division of labour and resources, ideologies and representations (Cornwall, 2003; Evans et al., 2017; Samdong and Kjosavik, 2017). Gendered norms within the participatory space determine individuals' degree of influence. Increasing the number of women and providing them with a platform to speak may serve the instrumental goals of co-management but will not necessarily address more fundamental issues of the local power structure (Cornwall, 2003). Hence, a closer look into the gender norms and how these norms are used will reveal how power is manoeuvred, both in hierarchical and lateral ways, in the participatory space, to influence access, use and management of resources.

Several studies have found that women's space for participation in resource co-management is nominal and controlled politically and socially (Nunan, 2010; Nunan et al., 2015).Several factors can constrain women to be part of co-management. Cornwall (2003), Choudhury et al. (2016) and Evans et al. (2017) highlight one important factor that challenges women's participation: relations among the women in the community in terms of class, religious identity, social networks, and institutional capital. Viewing women as a homogenous unit is therefore questionable in the context of resource management. The second factor is social perceptions about women's capabilities and activities. In a study on community forestry in South Asia, Agarwal (2001) reported that men frequently view women's involvement in the committee as being without purpose; men think women lack the knowledge and institutional capital to be able to give helpful suggestions regarding forest resource management. The other factor that challenges

women's participation is a male bias that works among the government officials and village heads. In the context of community forestry Agarwal (2001), Cornwall (2003) and Evans et al. (2017) showed that, though there is an emphasis on a certain percentage of women being on the committee, women's participation and room to manoeuvre their agency largely depends on the kindness of village head and forest bureaucrats, who are usually men and discourages women from becoming involved in resource management through various overt strategies such as discouraging women coming to the office or reprimand them or intimidate them. For Evans et al. (2017), the household is the place where gender norms are learnt and internalised, reinforced and modified, and in the community sphere these norms are determined and solidified into everyday concrete practices. Both Evans et al. (2017) and Samndong and Kjosavik (2017) found that one of the deciding factors in female participation is support (or, rather, lack of support) from their male counterparts, who think that women's participation in development activities with NGOs will undermine their authority and influence the women to disobey them, which results in conflicts within households and often ends up in domestic violence. The authors also found women's bold voice and insurgent role in the community meetings can also have repercussions at household level, and that violence carried out at domestic level is an organised response by the men at the community level. Here, power issues overlap with family relationships, households and community.

The fourth factor that challenges participation consists of social norms of proper behaviour, values, traditions and customs that are internalised into the body and shape the perceptions and attitudes of the women, perpetuating the existing power structure (Choudhury et al., 2016). However, women can also act consciously, want to avoid

trouble with men and maintain peace, which hinder women from claiming their position in decision-making arena (Choudhury et al., 2016). Cleaver (1999, p .607) finds this position of non-participation is a “rational strategy and an unconscious practice embedded in routine, social norms and the acceptance of the status quo”. Regarding women’s overt compliance with male leaders Cornwall (2003, p. 1331) mentioned that this strategy gives women “room to manoeuver: the hidden transcripts of” them. However, the key point is such strategic self-muting of women also has a disempowering effect on norm articulation, since it encourages and conserves the social relations and power structure that result in hegemonic inequality (Choudhury et al., 2016).

Proactively allocating women a place in co-management committees may therefore be a necessary condition to open up space for women’s voice but is not sufficient in itself, as women’s opportunity to influence decision-making depends on how and whether they are able to represent their interests, whether they are able to raise their voice and whether anyone listens to them (Cornwall, 2003). A fifth factor on which women’s voice and influence in the decision-making arena depends is personal endowments and attributes — personal property, financial capital and political connection to exercise agency (Agarwal, 2001).

Participation is also related to attitudes towards conservation, knowledge and skills. Difference in perceptions stem from gender differentiated roles in the society, where women are mostly involved in their reproductive role (nourishing and catering for their

household) and men take part in the productive activities, which gives them opportunity to learn about the boundaries and location of resources and to control economic activities, such as income from selling the forest products (Samndong and Kjosavik, 2017). Knowledge of resources significantly influences how women and men create their networks to get access to the resources. Samndong and Kjosavik, (2017), in their study on a forest conservation project in the Congo, showed that women have limited access to and control over forests and maintain their access mainly through relationships of patronage, marital status or family support from husbands, fathers or sons. The circumstances of women in their private space and what decisions about resource management they are able to take at household level are significantly connected with how their role and voices will be accepted or valued in public spheres. The authors (2017) point out that, although women gain access to forest management committee, they are not included in decision-making, or any negotiations or agreement making process. Local norms about showing respect and being obedient and submissive to men also influence women's behaviour in the public spaces.

Participation of women in co-management is furthermore dependent on how gender difference and division of labour are reflected in the national legislation. From fisheries literature it is found that, due to gender norms, women's involvement in fisheries is mainly passive, such as fish trading, cleaning and drying fish, making nets etc (Ahmed et al., 2008; Deb, 2015). In the context of Malawi fisheries, Hara (2008) found that, despite some women being gear owners, they are excluded from the committee as they are not directly involved in fishing activities and fall beyond the definition of 'fisher' adopted in national legislation. Roscher et al. (2021, p.80) argued that women's

involvement in the decision-making process and their rights of access for fishing and non-fishing activities have to be clearly described and protected by the fisheries co-management plan at all levels.

As is clear from the above discussion, the key point is that co-management does not occur in isolation but is embedded in a wider set of social relations. Jentoft et al. (1998) identified one of the necessary conditions for co-management as being creating new structures and institutions that need to be understood first as socially constructed and changeable. The new structures that are often formed for resource management may alter or challenge existing informal institutions and institutional settings (Nunan, 2006; Lewins, 2007). Lewins (2007) further added that introducing new forms of decision-making and conflict resolution may work as a channel to reinforce existing power differentials and inequity.

3.3 Lukes' Three dimensions power and Gaventa's Power Cube Framework

Power is conceptualised by different scholars in different ways. Some observe power as being held by actors through their status; some see power from the perspective of strength — holding and exercising power over the weak; and others view power as "embodied in a web of relationships and discourses" (Gaventa, 2006, p.23; Raik et al., 2008). Foucault (1980, p.98) suggests "power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth." Mentioning Foucault (1980), Caldwell (2007, p.7) also argued that

power is everywhere and passes through the entire social body by a range of mechanisms and channels of localised power relations, each of which exerts its own relational forms of power. There are several conceptual framings available to understand how power operates and is exercised in both public and private spaces and how broader power relations shape institutions and management (Cleaver and Whaley, 2018). Over the past several years, the 'three dimensions' views of power by Lukes (1974, 2005) and Gaventa's Power Cube framework have been particularly influential in viewing how forms of power operate. Lukes provides a clear picture of each of the power dimensions at work and Gaventa (1982, 2006, p.24) provides a framework to understand the intersection of forms of power with the process of citizen engagement at local, national and global levels.

Steven Lukes (2005) sketches three conceptual maps to illustrate how the powerful secure the willing compliance of those they dominate. The first, which Lukes called the one-dimensional form of power, focuses on observable "behavior in the making of decisions on issues over which there is an observable conflict of (subjective) interests, seen as express policy preferences, revealed by political participation" (Lukes, 2005 p.19).This includes visible and definable characteristics of political power—the formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions and procedures of decision-making (Gaventa, 2006). The two-dimensional view of power focuses on "the ways in which decisions are prevented from being taken on potential issues over which there is an observable conflict of interests" (Lukes, 2005, p.25). This view relates to control over the political agenda — the power to decide what will count as a political issue, what kind of decisions will be taken and which issues will not be within the agenda (Gunn, 2006,

p.706). It thus criticised the earlier one-dimensional view that power is a matter of control over active decision-making, ignoring the hidden issues in any political conflict with the potential significance of non-decision making (Gunn, 2006). These dynamics function on many levels to exclude and undervalue the concern of the powerless or less powerful group (Gaventa, 2006). Lukes' (2005, p.28) third dimension of power is a "thoroughgoing critique of the behavioural focus of the first two views". This view of power considers that potential issues can be kept out of politics, not necessarily through an overt decision but "through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through [an] individual's decision" (Lukes, 2005, p.28).Power in this case is exercised in a more subtle and invisible way. Social forces and institutional practices shape the psychological and ideological boundaries of individual preferences and this shaping process works to validate and continue pre-existing systems of power (Raik et al., 2008). So, potential issues are not only set aside from the decision-making table but also from the minds and consciousness of the different actors involved. The third face of power focuses on deeper social conditioning—a sociological process influencing individuals to think about their position/place in the world and, through this power, shaping their beliefs, self-esteem and acceptance of the status quo and even their own superiority and inferiority (Gaventa, 2006, p.29).This socialisation process perpetuates exclusion and inequality by defining them as a natural, acceptable and safe. The third dimension of power therefore goes beyond the observable essence of power and accounts for the social and cultural practices that transform the way people perceive themselves and those around them and how they visualise future possibilities and possible alternatives (Gaventa, 2006; Raik et al., 2008).

Gaventa (2006, p.25) in his Power Cube framework incorporated Lukes' three dimensions of power — named visible, hidden and invisible — and argued that these three forms of power need to be understood in relation to how spaces for engagement are created and the levels of power (from local to global) in which they occur. In the Power Cube framework, 'levels' refer to the different layers of decision-making authority (local, global and national levels)and 'spaces' reference the political arena for participation, sharing information, making decisions or taking actions (Gaventa, 2006; Njaya, 2007; Cullen et al., 2014). Gaventa (2006) explores three different spaces that constrain or enable participation — first, 'closed spaces', where decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion. Gaventa (2006, p.26) also defined it as a 'provided space' as different types of elites (bureaucrats, experts, or elected representatives) take decisions and provide services to the people without allowing for broader consultation and involvement. The key point is different initiatives are taken in this space to secure legitimacy for intended policy directions. Second, 'invited spaces' (mentioned in Section-3.2.2) involve creation of new spaces "into which people (users/citizens or beneficiaries) are invited to participate by various kinds of authorities" (Gaventa, 2006, p.27).And the third is 'claimed or created spaces', referring to spaces claimed by less-powerful actors from or against the power holders and what Cornwall (2002, in Gaventa, 2006, p.27) refers to as 'organic space' that emerges "out of sets of common concerns or identification". Cornwall (2002, p.17) also refers to these spaces as "sites of radical possibilities" where those who are excluded find a place and a voice and these spaces may also be created by the affluent, to secure their interests. In these different spaces, participation can

influence and shape “power relations in three ways; visible, hidden and invisible” (Gaventa 2006, p.29).

Gaventa (2006) introduced the Power Cube framework as an analytical device to understand the ways in which power operates. According to Gaventa (2006, p.30), “the dynamics of power depend on the type of space in which it is found, the level at which it functions and the form it takes”. The framework can also be used along with other approaches to reflect on and to analyse how strategies for change in turn alter existing power relations (Gaventa, 2006). The Power Cube identifies what is continuing at all levels and spaces. Gaventa (2006) emphasised that the Power Cube approach is not checking each box, as the importance, dynamics and interconnections of the dimensions differ contextually. Gaventa’s framework is used in different studies. In a study on power dynamics within Innovation Platform (IP) (a multi-stakeholder platform) for natural resource management in the Ethiopian highlands, Cullen et al. (2014) used Gaventa’s Power Cube framework. The authors investigated whether the new mechanisms for stakeholder engagement act as real shifts in power, unfolding spaces where the citizen voice can have an influence, or just re-legitimise the status quo. According to Cullen et al. (2014) who creates the space and has the control over stakeholder’s representation is important for who possesses power within the space and whose or which agendas are pursued. The authors found that development projects achieve some short-term success in instituting invited spaces for wider participation in the decision-making process but these invited spaces still functioned within the boundaries set by the most powerful actors — the government representatives. According to the authors, the government has an interest in appropriating the platform

space for their own purposes to benefit from external expertise. The selection of NRM issues is a critical point for intervention. The authors identified hidden power in the way of advancing own agenda of the government actors. Their study showed that both the community leaders who were selected by the local government representatives and the farmer representatives who were selected by local leaders based on relationships and political patronage were always supportive of those agendas that were consistent with the demand of the government representatives and not necessarily representing the agenda or demands of the wider community. The authors identified that negative perceptions prevail regarding the farmers among the government actors, which undermine the self-confidence of the farmers representatives, with many of them internalising this narrative. The authors addressed this internalisation of government narratives as an invisible power whereby people see their situation as unchangeable or inevitable and observed that the projects are significantly influenced by different forms of invisible and hidden power that are not easily challenged (ibid). In another study by Whaley and Weatherhead (2014), in the context of lowland agriculture and water governance in England, the authors identified the government's exercise of hidden power, which creates distance and mistrust between the farmers and government. The authors question the ability of government agencies to share power, as they have previously exercised visible power over farmers to regulate their behaviours.

In a study of Malawi fisheries, Njaya et al. (2012) applied Gaventa's Power Cube framework, along with decentralisation framework, to understand the visible, invisible and hidden power relations at the local level. Section-3.2.2 referred to how the invited space for fisheries co-management – the BVC — was formed according to the interests

of the fisheries officers. The authors observed that commercial fisherfolk and traditional leaders both had hidden agenda and interest to grasp maximum benefit. By colluding with Department of Fisheries, commercial fishers imposed a gear restriction rule, which was not targeted to conservation but to exclude potential competitors. The authors also noted that the traditional leaders are interested in fisheries co-management not for the potential political empowerment of their community or a desire to improve resource management but to receive political and financial benefit by being involved with these initiatives. In another study in Lake Chilwa, Njaya (2012) showed that the traditional leaders on Lake Chilwa are engaged in the co-management process, not for the sustainable utilisation of the fisheries resources but, rather, the financial benefits including regular provision of "cha-kwa-mfumu" handouts (money from fish catch portions given to the traditional leaders on a regular basis), penalty fees charged on illegal fishers and receiving project-supported meeting allowances that they get from participating in the co-management meetings. The influence of these customary leaders on the community depends on the hegemonic power 'legitimated' through their social status (Njaya et al., 2012, p.662). Njaya et al. (2012) observed that the nature of their power is invisible because it is culturally and socially-embedded in the customary institutions.

It is found from these studies that, in fisheries co-management, the most powerful and key actors are, therefore, not necessarily the fishers but those who pull the strings through various channels of power. The key point is that power can operate in different ways by different stakeholders who use the participatory space to push their own agenda. Visible forms of power can be easily identified, but the hidden and invisible

forms of power are not so easy to uncover and, by their nature, they will be difficult to address (Cullen et al., 2014). Dealing with power dimensions and understanding the ways power operates have significant implications for how co-management is planned and managed in practice.

3.4 Patron-client relations in fisheries management

3.4.1 Patron-client relations

The patron-client relationship is a dyadic and largely instrumental tie in which an individual with higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his or her own influence and resources (knowledge, skills, direct control over personal property, indirect control over the public property, access to public offices) to give both protection and benefits, for a person of lower status (client) who responds by offering labour services and economic support and political services (campaigns, votes)to the patron (Scott, 1972). The resources that cement the dyadic ties are multiplex — instrumental and economic on the one hand and promise of solidarity and loyalty on the other (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1980). Inequality is common in this dyad and dependent on the relative power, wealth and status of the patron. The degree of compliance that a client gives to his/her patron is a direct function of degree of imbalance in the exchange relations (Scott, 1972). However, a client's affiliation with their patron is not always entirely a coerced decision or an outcome of unrestricted choice. A client becomes a patron's subject on four points: first, the client may reciprocate with a service that is much needed by the patron for restoring the balance of exchange; second, to secure the needed services; third, the possibility of coercing the patron to provide services due to the absence of other

autonomous organisations; and, fourth, the patron's domination over vital services such as land and employment (Scott, 1972). These four means of acquiring clients give patrons the capacity to mobilise a group of supporters when they need. The continuing pattern of reciprocity and mutual expectations are backed by community values and rituals that create trust and affection between the partners (Scott, 1972, p.94). Another distinctive quality of this relationship is a "whole-person" relationship or a strong multiplex relation (tenancy, friendship, past exchange of service, family tradition) that covers a broad range of potential exchanges (Scott, 1972, p.95). The patron holds the power of resource distribution and aims to generate a feeling of personal obligation among client and advance own power. Kaufman (1974) said that, although asymmetry, reciprocity and informality form the definitional parameter of this exchange relationship, it can differ significantly in terms of duration, scope and intensity and the type of resources that are involved. Regarding the nature of the association between patron and client, Scott (1972) mentioned two types of linkages —first, patron-client cluster, in which people (clients) who are not close kin come to be tied directly and, second, patron-client pyramid, which is mainly enlargement of the cluster, a "vertical extension downward of the cluster in which linkages are introduced beyond the first order" (Scott, 1972, p.96). A critical point of this relation is how the patron barters economic, social and political concessions for support to control the arena. The most crucial issue that Eisenstadt and Roniger (1980) identified is unconditionality, and Scott (1972, p.102) explains this as points out it as absence of institutional guarantees for an individual's security, status and wealth. A patron with a strong position is more likely to employ sanction or withdraw benefits, while a relatively weaker patron is more likely to offer incentives or promises to reward a client with benefits he does not currently enjoy

(ibid). But, in every instance, superior control over resources is used to gain the compliance of followers. The characteristics mentioned above are a somewhat contradictory combination of elements that are the key features of the patron-client nexus, these being: first, an atypical combination of inequality and power asymmetry, with apparently mutual solidarity, articulated in terms of personal identity and interpersonal sentiments and obligations; second, a combination of potential coercion with voluntary relations and persuasive mutual obligations; third, a combination of the emphasis on these obligations and cohesion to some illegal or semi-legal aspect of these relations (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1980).

3.4.2 Patron-client relation in fisheries management

The patron-client relation has long played a major role in structuring fishery dynamics. Clientelism is not "a blind personal loyalty that creates bonds between patrons and clients" (Sarker, 2008, p.1419). Literature suggests that there exists a rational economic calculation in establishing this dyadic relationship. The interpretation of this relationship is presented in a mixed way in different studies. While some highlight patrons' asymmetric relation with fishers, trapping fishermen in a perpetual debt situation, others observe this as a pseudo social security system, supporting the marginalised community to cope with seasonal vulnerabilities (Miñarro et al., 2016). However, the key trait of this relationship is that it shapes the social, cultural and economic behaviour of the fishing community and how it responds to various situations (Onyango and Jentoft, 2007).

Reasons that create conditions for developing reciprocal agreements between patron and client in the context of fisheries include i) uncertainty about access rights; ii) relative inaccuracy and slow dissemination of market information; iii) turn over from fishing; iv) price risks resulting from unstable supply circumstances; v) risk of loss of assets; and, vi) absence or shortage of formal insurance and complexities in accessing the credit market for small-scale fisherfolk (Crona et al., 2010; Miñarro et al., 2016). Patrons provide their clients capital on credit. Capital is advanced to provide priority access to products, and to secure the future supply of fish, which actually indicates a form of labour-tying loans, in which fishermen become tied to a particular patron (fish trader/boat owner) and their price over time (Crona et al., 2010; Nunan et al., 2018). Fishers accept the price of inequalities to repay their debts, resulting in a power imbalance, and become trapped in debt to their owners over time. However, for the fisherfolk community this credit-cum-labour-tying arrangement is more preferable to formal credit relations in several aspects — access to the resource, loan availability, easy delivery, payment flexibility, unintimidating application procedures and zero interest (Crona et al., 2010; Ruddle, 2011). Credit buffers income disparities of the fisherfolk resulting from climatic conditions and seasonal fluctuations in fish catch and provides direct economic benefits or incentives to the fisherfolk to invest in maintenance and purchasing gear to diversify livelihoods, which is crucial for the everyday survival of fishing households (Crona et al., 2010; Ferrol-Schulte et al., 2014). In a study on personal networks of types of fisherfolk, Nunan et al. (2017) found that social and economic relations within the fisher folk network (boat owners, boat crew and fish traders) depend on provision of credit, access to market, income, advice and social support, which together form the basis of social cohesion within the fishing

community. In the study on small scale fisheries in Zanzibar, Ferrol-Schulte et al. (2014) find that patrons offer two important assets to their clients — first, financial assets, which save the fishermen the trouble of collective action to apply for government funding schemes, thus lowering transaction costs and, second, social support that flows in the form of food support, when catches are low or fishermen cannot work(Ferrol-Schulte et al., 2014).Patrons also provide their clients with social support through assisting financially at the time of illness or to cover expenses resulting from the loss of any active family member (Ruddle, 2011). According to Ruddle (2011), for some fishing families, maintaining a business relationship with patrons are regarded as a family tradition.

Indeed, the relational ties between patrons and clients are not always only economic, driven by credit arrangements or for gaining informal financial assistance. They are also deeply embedded in and regulated by a large set of informal institutions, ethnicities, religious beliefs, socio-cultural norms, kinship and neighbourhood (Onyango and Jentoft, 2007). Values and norms are significantly important for fishing communities as they define and shape identities, beliefs, the behaviour of the fisherfolk community, and guide the local power structure in the management and use of the resources (Onyango and Jentoft, 2007). This is mutually reinforcing and contributes to developing a trust relationship between the patron and clients and generates a feeling of “moral duty” among the fisherfolk towards their patrons (Adhuri et al., 2016, p.202; Miñarro et al., 2016, p.74). Wilson (1980, in Crona et al., 2010) said that the institutional structures created through reciprocation influence the nature of the market information and affect market-efficiency.

Access to market and income are two critical benefits that clients receive from their personal network with patrons (Nunan et al., 2018). Patrons determine where to fish and how to fish and provide a flexible and round-the-clock marketing service to their clients (Ruddle, 2011). The market is a major driver in governing the type and amount of fish purchased by the patron. Patrons respond to market fluctuations by recruiting skilled fishermen, providing them with the essential specialist equipment for targeting high-valued species, purchase the most marketable species from the fisherfolk goods and link them to the highly valued fish trade, thereby reducing the time and effort required by the fisherfolk community to market their catch (Crona et al., 2010; Ferrol-Schulte et al., 2014; Miñarro et al., 2016). The informal institution of the patron is essential in the context of fisheries management due to its linking function; it channels the flow between the market, fishermen and fish-stock (Crona et al., 2010). Miñarro et al. (2016) added that, to respond to market demand, patrons often encourage the use of illegal fishing equipment, simultaneously protecting their fisherfolk-clients from legal prosecution through their connections to government officials. Patrons act here as a boundary or bridging organisation, efficiently linking actors across different social domains and hierarchy levels (Crona et al., 2010). For Nurdin and Grydehoj (2014) and Miñarro et al. (2016), a number of direct actors (owners of fishing businesses, infrastructure, equipment and fishers) and indirect actors (investors, buyers, suppliers, police officers and public officials) are involved in the patron–client dynamic, forming a system of de facto governance based on power, credit and access to market relations, which is recognised as an important driver for fisheries.

The influence of the patron over their clients therefore is not one-off but continuous and regular (Wong, 2010). In fisheries management, patron-client relations act as an informal institutional arrangement through which access to fish and the fish market is enabled or denied. Socially-embedded institutions, along with economic rationalities, influence the composition and functioning of the network of the fisherfolk community and facilitate the patron to capture the resources. Fisheries co-management often aims to empower those with less-power, the end users, by involving them in the management process, but this raises the question —can this happen while the patron-client relation remains very strong?

3.5 Elite capture of co-management

Elite capture over community-based or co-management projects has gained significant attention in the literature. Elite capture is a process where local elites manipulate decision-making arena and agendas, capture the distribution of resources and grab disproportionately a large share of benefits, which negatively impacts the non-elites/ marginalised (Wong, 2010; Persha and Anderson, 2014; Musgrave and Wong, 2016). Dasgupta and Beard (2007) noted that the sources of power of the elites in the context of community-driven development are land holdings, family networks, service status, assets, political and religious affiliation, personal history, and individual personality. Manoeuvring these sources, elites are able to use their intricate networks to occupy various locations of authority and can scale up their power from community to regional and national level (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2000). What makes these elites more powerful and enables them to hijack the benefits is that they less often exert their influence by coercion and more often by moral claims, have the capability to mobilise,

and “invest in their already-owned social, political and economic capital” (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007, Wong, 2010, p.1).

Dasgupta and Beard (2007, p.245) identified four factors that relate to elite capture — first, the design of the project second, pre-existing community contexts in terms of heterogeneity, community cohesion, and social hierarchy; third, the community’s collective action capacity; and fourth, the broader social, political and economic context. In the co-management arrangement, chiefs, traditional leaders, headmen and others are frequently chose as the appropriate local authorities, but Béné et al.(2009) argued that customary authorities are not essentially supportive to democratic principles as they often inherit their earlier positions, and their degree of accountability hinges on their personal quality and local, social and political historical context. In a case study on elite capture in a community-driven development project in West Africa, Platteau (2004) described the role of the leader in appropriating the project fund and manipulating the use of funds, and how ordinary members of the association defended their leader on grounds of his social status. The author found that every member of the association had their own agenda of taking benefit from the project, and the ordinary members of the association thought that, as a leader, it was justifiable to get more benefits than other members, and that it was highly unfair of the foreign NGOs to humiliate their leader by depriving him of all logistic support. The author argued that abuses of power are tolerated and supported as long as the patron is able to meet the demands made by his clients. In a study on a communal solar home project in Bangladesh, Wong (2010) showed how the local elite (Sardar) exerted their influence and regulated committee member’s behaviour being excluded from the project.

Exclusion from the committee made local elites feel that their dominant position had been undermined. The author found that, rather than creating direct confrontation, the local elite exerted their influence in the newly created committee through control of resources (boat-hiring, fishing nets, loans). The local elite's power in this case depended not only on their ability to control resources and their distribution but also on social position, and social acceptance by the villagers in terms of the respect and honour (invisible power) which helped them infiltrate in the committee and to play an advisory role. However, their inclusion ultimately eroded the project's objective. To advance their own agenda of gaining financial benefit from the project, the local elite manipulated and destabilised the micro-credit system of the project, bribing committee members, threatening others and refusing to repay the loans, which also motivated other members to do likewise and not to repay their loans. In the study on the Malawi fisheries, (mentioned in Section-3.2.2 and 3.3), Njaya et al. (2012) showed how the traditional authorities, although excluded from the Beach Village Committee (BVC), exerted their influence over the existing BVC, influence BVC to enforce regulations, to take action against offenders and ultimately forced the BVC to depend on these traditional authorities. The authors identified several factors that aggravated elite control, such as limited participation of actual resource users (boat crews), overlooking the customary power of traditional leaders (village heads, group village heads and traditional authorities), and poor institutional support from the DoF to BVC.

However, it is not only the local elites who manoeuvre their existing opportunities to benefit from the newly introduced co-management arrangement and strengthen their political, social or economic status (Béné et al., 2009). Mentioning Abraham and

Platteau (2000), Dasgupta and Beard (2007) noted that community level governance is particularly vulnerable to elite capture because participants enter into the process from different positions of power, asymmetrical social positions, unequal access to economic resources, different literacy rates and varying levels of knowledge of political protocols, and procedures. Therefore, different types of elites may persist at the community level; economic, political, policy and social elites can influence the co-management through using different forms of power and institutions. Béné et al. (2009) pointed to the case of Niger and observed that where fishing communities are isolated and have no organisational and institutional competence, devolved power mostly ends up in the hands of the local actors of the decentralised administration, in collusion with traditional leaders. In the context of a community forestry program in the Nepal's Terai forest, Iversen et al. (2006) addressed the combination of the high value of resources and weak, inadequate institutional control mechanisms that creates opportunities for local elites to siphon off a substantial share of benefits generated by the resource. The authors found that a hidden economy (hidden transactions and hidden subsidies), and collusion between the forest authorities and the vested interest groups, play a significant role in making the resources more vulnerable to elite capture. Sheely (2015) pointed out that capture in participatory planning institutions takes place when governing elites or local civil society organisations fill-up planning meetings with their supporters, excluding the broader community from the decision-making process with the result that the meeting outcome represents only the preferences of the mobilising group rather than the community more broadly.

Evidence from the earlier literature (Sections-3.4 and 3.5) suggests that, despite the large volume of studies on patron-client relations in fisheries management and elite capture of community-based or co-management (Platteau, 2004; Iversen et al., 2006; Dasgupta and Beard, 2007; Béné et al., 2009; Crona et al., 2010; Wong, 2010; Ruddle, 2011; Njayaet al., 2012; Nurdin and Grydehoj, 2014; Schulte et al., 2014; Nunan et al., 2015; Sheely, 2015; Miñarro et al., 2016), little attention has been paid to the patron-client relationship in fisheries co-management. It is important to note that institutions play a significant role — they control the decision-making arena, access to resources and markets, and, in the context of fisheries co-management, credit. Recognition of power dimensions and institutions and interactions between institutions in influencing the functioning and performance of fisheries co-management is still under-investigated.

3.6 Institutions and institutional bricolage

3.6.1 Institutions in natural resource management

Institutions are the fundamental elements of natural resource management and influence the whole decision-making process, in terms of whose voice matters and what sorts of practices are accepted, regardless of formal decisions and rules (Nunan et al., 2015). Institutions are made up of formal and informal constraints that configure human interaction and have particular enforcement characteristics (Berkes, 2004). Leach et al., (1999) suggest that institutions should not be considered in terms of their rules per se, but in the light of a regularised pattern of behaviour that emerges from the underlying structures or sets of ‘rules in use’ (Leach et al., 1999). In this context, much attention is therefore given to the relatively stable and structural aspects of institutions, whereas

human behaviour can also be influenced by aspect of the institutions that are not always written down — the norms and beliefs (Scott, 2001). As Rocheleau (2001, in Cleaver, 2012, p.15) mentions, institutions are not “things” — rather, they are the consequences of human actions, continuously reproduced through people’s interaction with one another. For Scott, ‘‘institutions consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour’’ (2001, p.51).A regulative aspect of institutions hold the assumption that rule compliance is in the best interest of the actors, and involves rule-setting, monitoring or reviewing others’ conformity to the rules, and sanctioning activities with rewards or punishments with the intention of influencing the future behaviour of the actors (Scott, 2001, p.52). Scott’s normative pillar, made up of evaluative and obligatory dimensions, holds that institutions are not only judged by their instrumental performance but also need to be evaluated in relation to moral values (Scott, 2001). Normative institutions include both values and norms that are morally governed, impose constraints on social behaviour, identify and prescribe how things need to be done, and outline legitimate ways to pursue valued goals, empower and enable social action as well as confer rights, responsibilities and duties (Scott, 2001, p.55). Finally, the cognitive dimension of institutions refers to traditional beliefs that are culturally supported and taken for granted as “the way we do these things” (Scott, 2001, p.57), and rarely questioned since perceived as “both objectively and subjectively real” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967 in Scott, 2001, p.58).

In natural resource management, one of the ways to conceptualise the functions of institutions is to see them under two schools of thought — Mainstream Institutionalism and Critical Institutionalism (Cleaver, 2012, p.8). Mainstream approaches are the

combination of the New Institutional Economics (NIE) approach and Common Property theory (CPR) (Lewins, 2007; Cleaver, 2012). In New Institutional Economics, institutions are considered as encompassing the formal rules, conventions and informal codes of behaviour or norms that regulate human behaviour (North, 1990 in Mehta et al., 2001). The most important contribution of the NIE to the analysis of institutions is making a formal division between "organizations as structures and as rules (cultural, social, and economic) that shape performance and give them meaning" (Lewins, 2007, p.201). The Common Property theory shows how rules can be purposively crafted to produce collective action. Here, institutions are considered as 'rules of the game' and collective action is taken as a rational option that can prevent individualism, free-riding and environmental ruin (Ostrom, 1990 in Mehta et al., 2001; Lewins, 2007). Central to mainstream institutionalism is identification of "design principles" (Ostrom, 1993, p. 1907) that are key to the functioning of institutions and to ensuring sustainable management of resources: 1) clearly defined boundaries of jurisdiction over resources; 2) proportional equivalence between benefits and costs; 3) collective choice agreements; 4) develop a system carried out by community members to monitor resource users' behaviour; 5) use of graduated sanctions for rule violators; 6) provision of a mechanism of accessible, low-cost means for dispute resolution; 7) minimal recognition of rights to organise; and 8) nested enterprise (referring to nesting of local institutions with other levels of decision-making and organising governance activities in multi-layered management of resources in a large and complex system). Institutional design in fisheries research and policy is largely dominated by rational choice theory (Jentoft, 2004). However, an important problem with the application of CPR theory is that individual choices are not always made with individual gain in mind; instead, choices

can also be responsive to fulfilment of social obligations, cultural conventions and the enactment of routines (Jentoft et al., 1998). What these approaches emphasise is the prescriptive focus of institutions, crafted to address a specific dilemma of natural resource management, and overlook the issues of linkages, where the diverse institutional domain overlaps and is beset by indistinctness because of the non-interactive divide between the formal institutions and informal institutions (Mehta et al.,1999; Lewins, 2007; Cleaver, 2012).

In contrast, Critical Institutionalism (CI) observes institutions as bureaucratic and socially-embedded institutions and complex. This 'complex-embeddedness' (Peters 1987 in Whaley, 2018, p.139) stems from the fact that institutions are situated within particular political and economic structures, and historical practices, closely allied with social life-kinship and social networks, relations of reciprocity and patronage, constantly entangled with and materialised by people's systems of meaning and culturally accepted ways of doing things. According to Hall et al. (2013, p.6), CI is built on three key principles: "i) the complexity of institutions entwined in everyday social life; ii) their historical formation; iii) the interplay between the traditional and the modern, formal and informal arrangements". Institutional blending takes place when customary institutions imitate state bureaucracies (adopting official stamps and constitutions) and formal institutional arrangements turn fuzzy, as they become operationalised through social relationships and social practices like patronage (Cleaver, 2012). The novelty of this approach is, firstly, that it supports investigation into institutions beyond as well as within natural resource management and draws attention to the interaction between the bureaucratic and socially-embedded institutions through a

dynamic process of ‘institutional bricolage’ and, secondly, it endorses deeper exploration of the manoeuvres continuing within the system in support of elite interests (Nunan et al., 2015).

3.6.2 Bricoleurs and logic of action

The theory of institutional bricolage emphasises the critical role of actors in shaping and reshaping institutions, defining them as bricoleurs (Cleaver, 2002). According to Cleaver (2002, 2012), bricoleurs are not just rational agents and economic resource appropriators who respond to institutions in an expected and clear manner — rather, Cleaver (2012) conceptualises them as conscious and unconscious social actors, deeply embedded in networks of relations, bounded by norms, beliefs or traditions, shaped by routine and practices, and also having the capacity to analyse and react to situations that confront them. An important characteristic of the bricoleur is possession of authoritative resources. Individual bricoleurs can apply different levels of influence over the shaping and functioning of institutions, due to their social positions (ibid). A multitude of factors — authority, reputation, economic status and assets, knowledge, kinship, religion, politics and aspirations, or personal characteristics such as eloquence, strength, and honesty — can influence the process of shaping or reshaping institutional rules (Cleaver, 2002). The more authoritative resources an actor possesses, the more he or she can call on a variety of attributes and reshape institutions — a practice through which a bricoleur’s norms, beliefs and rules are transferred to the community (de Koning, 2011) and established as the practical norm of resource governance. These norms could be formed both strategically and through reflection and through a tacit “feel for the game” (Cleaver and Koning, 2015, p.11). According to Cleaver (2012, p. 49), bricoleurs

continually assemble elements of various institutions from the "institutional stock" of resources, which includes "policies, citizens' entitlements, discourses about rights, development or conservation" and employ them to various situations. Here, power shapes institutional functioning in invisible and hidden ways through ideologies, beliefs and norms. Bricoleurs draw upon these different socially-embedded institutions to make certain that things are done in the right way, and this normative aspect of an appropriate way of doing things not only involves culture and norms but also authority, confirming existing dominant views and relations of authority, giving legitimacy to these actions, and compelling people to conform to the rules (Cleaver, 2012). The incentives for conformity to normative controls are likely to include intrinsic as well as extrinsic rewards (Scott, 2001). Legitimacy connects external or bureaucratic institutions with socially embedded norms and values and so, if an external institution is to be allowed, it needs to have a moral legitimacy that Berger and Luckmann (1967, in Scott, 2001, p. 46) describe as "legitimating justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives".

3.6.3 Institutional Bricolage

Cleaver (2012, p.45) describes institutional bricolage as "a process in which people consciously and non-consciously draw on existing social formulae [....] to patch or piece together institutions in response to changing situations." In this process, old arrangements are modified and new institutions are invented which are hybrid in nature and inevitably uneven in functioning and impact (Cleaver, 2012). Borrowing well-worn social and cultural practices and relationships offers a quick route to entangling new arrangements into the social fabric (Cleaver, 2012). There are three ways through which

new configurations become familiar, naturalised and legitimate —first, tradition that often drawn on both unconsciously and consciously; second, leakage of meaning from one institutional setting to another, and the leakiness of institutions enables the flow of legitimising symbols and discourses across domains; and the third is the "right ways of doing things" (Cleaver, 2012, p.48).

de Koning (2014) further elaborated the processes of naturalisation of institutions and categorised these and identified three processes through which bureaucratic institutions are introduced in the local settings. The first is aggregation, the process of combining socially-embedded institutions (traditional beliefs, community norms), expectations, needs and wants and bureaucratic institutional elements. Here some elements of bureaucratic institutional rules become entwined with socially-embedded arrangements. One of the key features of the aggregation process is the creation of multipurpose institutions. The second process is alteration, which involves adapting or reshaping of both socially-embedded and bureaucratic institutions. In this process, the bureaucratic institutions can be reinterpreted, rules can be bent or negated to make them better fit with the prevailing socially-embedded institutions. Ignoring or neutralising bureaucratic institutions does not mean they are rejected — rather, it implies that they are considered by actors as not applicable. In the alteration process, socially-embedded institutions can also be tweaked to better correspond with the current situation. The third process of institutional bricolage is articulation, which refers to asserting traditions or everyday practices with greater legitimacy, as opposed to the new arrangement (de Koning. 2014; Cleaver and Koning, 2015). This articulation process relates to the actors' deeply embedded understandings of the 'right way of doing things' (Cleaver, 2012, p.48).

Local actors continually and discursively make claims on traditional beliefs and social norms to neutralise the impacts of bureaucratic institutions (Cleaver, 2002; de Koning, 2011). An outcome of the articulation processes is that the newly introduced bureaucratic institutions are frequently actively rejected (de Koning, 2014).

It is argued in some literature (Lecoutere, 2011; Walter and Ukidi, 2017; Sirimorok and Asfriyanto, 2020) institutions that are created through the processes of bricolage are adaptive, resilient and socially-embedded. Bricoleurs with their control over social and economic resources certainly play a leading role in combining institutional elements. But the question here is which institutional elements bricoleurs are used here and why. It cannot be always said that this bricolage can result in positive outcome for the less-powerful. Powerful people can also manipulate this bricolage process to capture most of the benefit.

3.7 Analytical Framework

After an extensive review of the literature, an analytical framework hasbeen developed. This analytical framework has developed to inform the research design, data collection tools and for analysing the data. Gaventa's (2006) Power Cube framework provides the foundation for the analytical framework for this research. The study adapts the Power Cube by drawing on the literature about elite capture and by conducting an institutional analysis of how these relations interact with introduced fisheries co-management. Using this framework, the research sets out to define co-management as a space for participation, examines how people are inducted into co-management, and identifies the

factors those mediate or challenge the participation of different groups in co-management, and who, in practice, controls the space. The research identifies forms of power (visible, hidden, and invisible) and how patron-client relations affect co-management and responses to co-management. The research looks at different levels: Who are the actors? What are the institutions (bureaucratic and socially-embedded) that inform norms, practices and behaviour? What processes of institutional bricolage follow within levels and why? These three dimensions — space, level and forms of power — are interrelated within the cube and influence the structure, functioning and practices of co-management as presented in the following figures:

Figure 3.1 Original Power Cube framework by Gaventa (2006, p. 25)

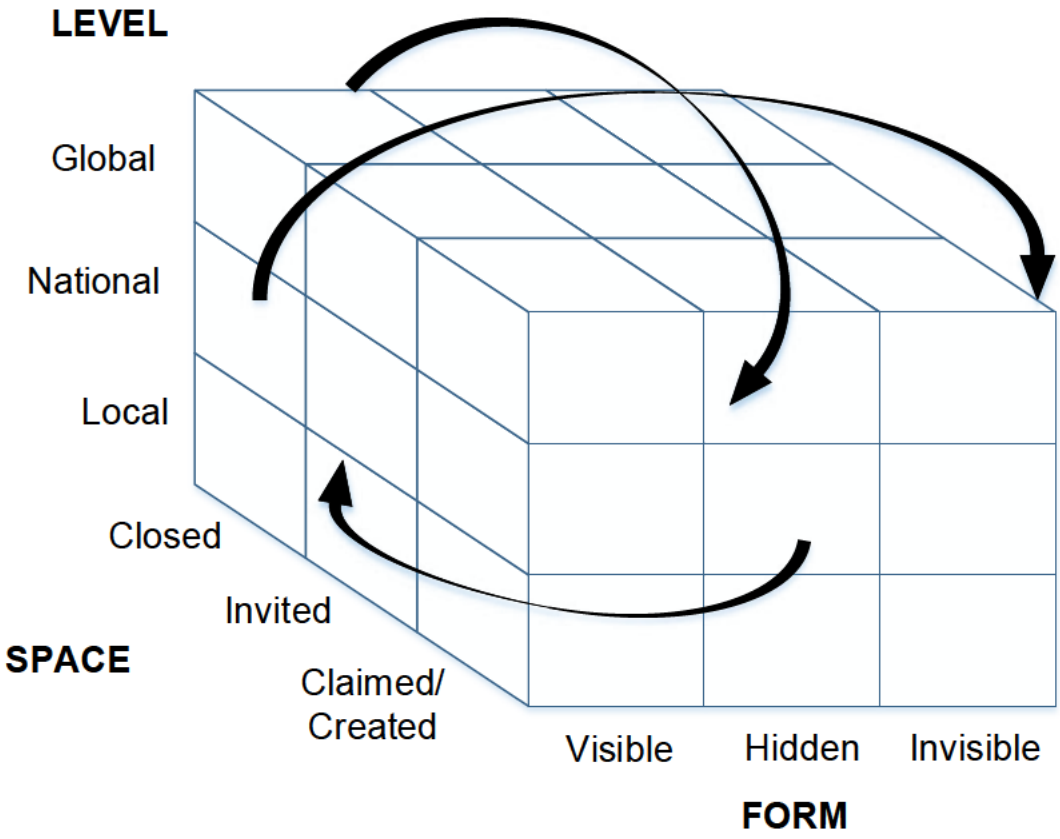


Figure 3.2 Adapted version of Power Cube framework

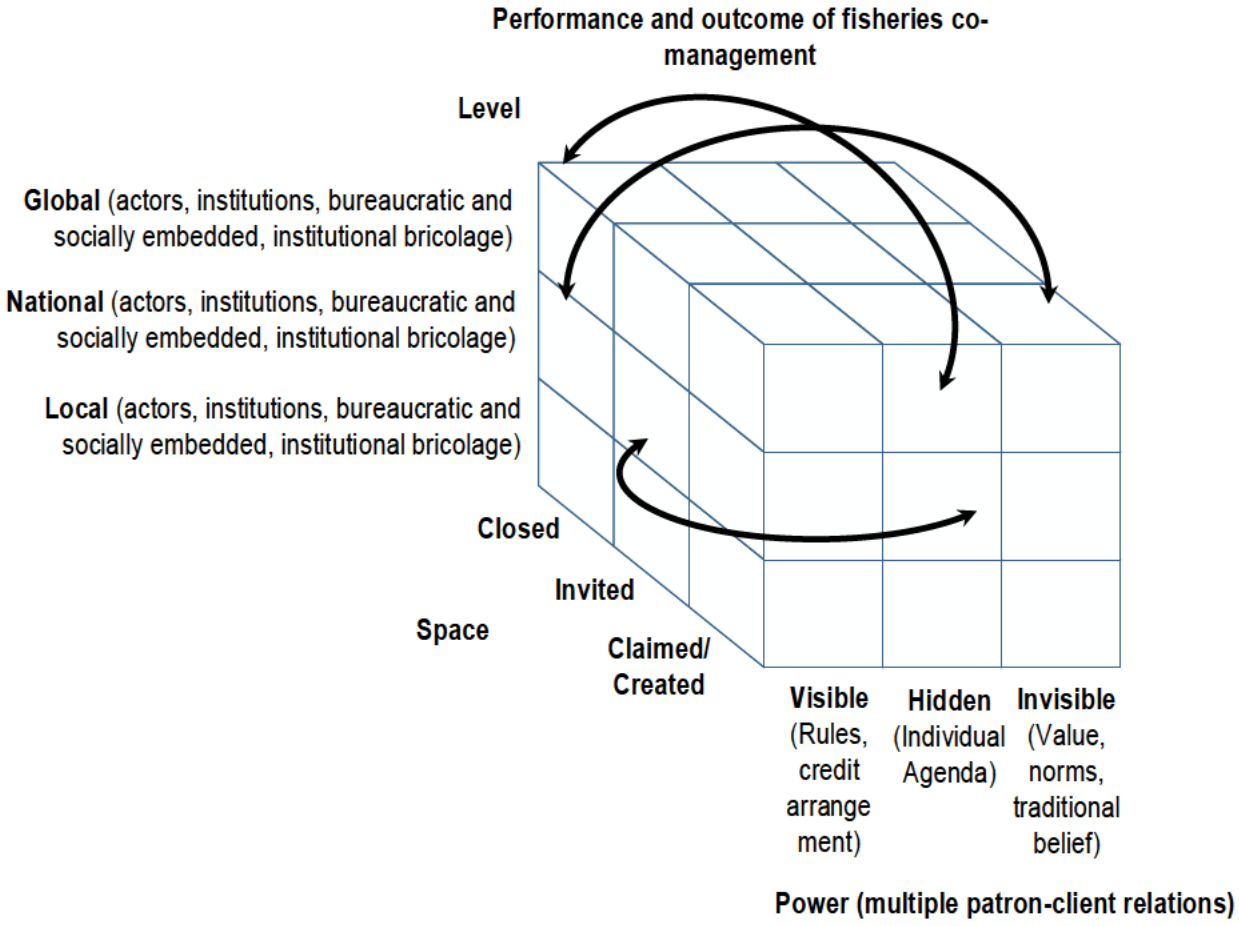


Table 3.1Analytical framework

Space	Levels	Power
1. Space for participation in co-management a. How are officialised spaces created – e.g., resource management committee–where citizens can engage, and can potentially influence decisions and relationships that can affect their lives and interests? b. Types of actors involved in co-management - Norms of engagement - Where and why do they come from? - How are they maintained and shared over time? - What implications are there from these norms? - Perceptions and motivations of actors in participation. **2. Decision-making** a. Procedures of decision-making within co-management committee at the community level (Issues discussed, setting priorities of co-management	**1. Actors** c. Actors/players in co-management at each level. d. How do actors interact and with what frequency? e. What are the barriers and opportunities for interaction within and between levels? 2. **Institutions (Bureaucratic institutions, socially-embedded institutions**) a. How are institutions used? - Assembling different elements of institutions through aggregation, alteration, articulation process). b. How do the institutions interact and affect each other? c. Why do some actors create or combine different institutions? - To secure legitimacy and conformity of the rules, institute dominant view/ maintain dominance over the community and resources etc.	**1. Visible forms of power** a. Rules, authority, structure. b. Rules for waterbody management. c. Rules of fishing. d. Who determines the rule?How the rules changed over time?Who modified the rules? **2. Manipulation of decision-making arena** - Advancing individual agenda by controlling discussions in meeting arena and take charge of the meeting), elite's networks, hidden force, influences (external/internal) **3. Power is embedded in socio-cultural practices, people's behaviour and perceptions** a. Dependencies of fishing community. b. What is exchanged in the relation? c. Who are the elites? What makes and maintains them as

activities). b. What are of the views and interests about how the fisheries are managed? c. Connectedness of actors under co-management with actors in outside. **3. Information sharing and access to information** a. Room for different opinions to be heard in the meeting Whether co-management committee meeting placed timely? Whether every member in the committee informed earlier about the time, place and agendas? Who sets the meeting agenda, opportunities for the committee members to make arguments about issues discussed? Whether there is ample time to hear everybody's opinion, To what extent differences in opinion are heard? Are notes taken about the discussions and decisions made? b. Patterns of interactions among actors How frequently do committee members meet?		elites? How do they interact with non-elites and why? d. What patron-client relations are found in the study communities? What makes them patron-client relations? What does each party bring to the relationship and how are patron-client relations maintained over time? e. What are the implications for livelihoods, natural resources, politics and social context of these patron-client relations?

How do people behave in the meeting e.g., style of talking in the committee meeting, sitting arrangement etc.? Does everyone get the opportunity to talk? To what extent and how do the women get opportunity to talk? c. Mechanism of information disclosure to community/resource user groups.		

This analytical framework has been developed to examine the following research question(s).

Main Research Question

How do patron-client relations shape the structure, functioning and practices of co-management?

Sub-research questions

a. Why do patron-client relations continue to be significant in fisheries and how are patron-client relations maintained over time?

b. How is co-management influenced by existing socially-embedded institutions?

c. How are patron-client relations reflected in the structures and practices of co-management?

3.8 Conclusion

The literature review has discussed key concepts and literature findings related to the research question: How do patron-client relations shape the structure, functioning and practices of co-management? Following the review, the core gap in fisheries co-management literature has been identified. It is apparent that most literature on patron-client relations in fisheries management focuses on the extent of benefits that both parties achieve, the flow of resources between them, and social and power relations within fishing communities. The co-management arrangement at the local level, under which most of the actors operate, includes fishing communities, government agencies, NGOs etc and involves different forms of power and institutions to work within this level. Literature on co-management addresses the presence of informal power structures and discusses the roles of informal or traditional power structure in mediating access to and benefits from fisheries resource (Nunan, 2006; Njaya, 2007; Hara, 2008; Béné, et al., 2009; Njaya et al., 2012; Nunan et al., 2015). There has been less research on patron-client relation in fisheries co-management that sheds light on an institutional analysis of how strongly embedded social and power relations within fishing communities interact with formal rules and affect the structures and practices of fisheries co-management.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the philosophical assumptions that underpin the research, the research design, and the methods adopted throughout the study. The chapter explains the instruments of data collection, the procedures taken in data collection, providing details for the case and informant selection and also explains how the data was interpreted in accordance with the research questions to assist in the drawing of conclusions (Yin, 1994). To conduct this research, a multiple-case study research design and qualitative approach was adopted. This chapter is ordered according to the following structure: 4.2 presents the research philosophy; 4.3 provides the explanation for selecting the case-study research design, including a justification of case selection and the participant selection process; 4.4 explains the qualitative research approach, and gives details of the data collection procedures; 4.5 presents fieldwork experiences; 4.6 discusses data analysis procedures; 4.7 covers there liability and validity of the data collected; and 4.8 presents the measures taken for ethical consideration and positionality of the researcher. Finally, the chapter presents the limitations of the research.

4.2 Research Philosophy

This research takes an interpretivist approach, based on qualitative phenomenology. The centre of the interpretivism philosophy is that “the world we see around us is the

creation of mind", indicating individual's use of particular language, different symbols, and expressions to construct what a specific social phenomenon means to them (Williams and May, 1996, p.59). In interpretivist's judgement, knowledge is attained through a strategy that "respects the difference between people" (Grix, 2004, p.64) and through understanding of individual experience of subjective interpretation (Williams and May, 1996, p. 60). Social actors may place diverse explanations on social events from their perspectives and experiences and knowledge of their world. These different explanations and understandings are likely to influence their actions and the nature of their social communication with others (Saunders et al., 2007). The ontological position for this study therefore is subjectivism, which holds that a social phenomenon is created and shaped by the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors — in other words, reality is socially constructed (Saunders et al., 2007). Neuman (1997, p.69) states that "social reality is based on people's definition of it."

Having taken this ontological position, the study is interested in that epistemology that involves collection and interpretation of actors' viewpoints, experiences and their different interpretations about co-management to understand how socially-embedded institutions within fishing communities shape the structure and practices of fisheries co-management. This process of understanding *(*Verstehen) the subjective reality of the social actors, and interpreting the meaning that lies behind human beliefs, thoughts and motives, aims to understand the social world from within rather than from without (Schwandt, 1986; Hollis, 2004; Saunders et al., 2007). The knowledge gained regarding a social phenomenon holds the trait of being culturally derived and historically situated (Scotland, 2012). The core advantage with an interpretivist approach is that it helps to

grasp diverse viewpoints, which leads to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon from different angles and exploration of the related complexities in their unique context (Scotland, 2012).

4.3 Research design - case study research design

This research conducted institutional analysis to explore how strongly embedded social and power relations within fishing communities interact with bureaucratic institutions and affect the structures, functioning and practices of fisheries co-management. The research, therefore, investigates "a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin, 2003, p.13) holding the idea that contextual conditions (historical, social, political, ideological, cultural etc.) are highly pertinent to fisheries co-management. This research looks at design and institutional practices of a co-management system, how patron-client relationships shape fisheries co-management— and explore the phenomenon in-depth. The choice of qualitative case study research is consistent with the view that it is conducted in a natural setting and targeted at understanding the nature of existing processes in a formerly little studied area from the perspectives of different actors, and at contributing to generating a deep insight about the phenomenon being studied (Andrade, 2009). To understand how the social reality of co-management is constructed by the actors who are concerned with co-management, and to generate an in-depth understanding about the practices of diverse institutions, as well as a comprehensive picture of social and power relations within fishing communities in all the complexities of co-management, this research used flexible methods of data collection that were responsive to the social context. The key advantage of the case study design is that, unlike other types of research design, it offers different forms or

ways in which case studies can be structured to explain a complex phenomenon (de Vaus, 2001).

Yin (1994) argues that the choice of research strategy depends on the nature of the research question, the investigator's extent of control over actual behavioural events, and the degree of focus on existing events in contrast with historical events. According to Yin (1994), a case study would be the preferred research strategy when the research questions enquire how something happens — because 'how' questions deal with operational links required to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidences. The literature review for this study (Chapter-3) highlights the gaps in fisheries co-management literature which have not yet been yet focused on — namely, factors relating to patron-client relations within fisheries co-management. In order to address the gaps, the study developed the research question: How do patron-client relations shape the structure, functioning and practices of co-management? This research question involves investigating why patron-client relations continue to be significant in fisheries and how they are maintained over time. How is co-management influenced by existing socially-embedded institutions? How are patron-client relations reflected in the structures and practices of co-management? These questions focus on how power is manifested within institutions and what interaction there is between institutions. They aim to uncover the aspects that lie at the heart of fisheries co-management.

4.3.1 Multiple case studies and case selection

A multiple case study research design was adopted to conduct the study. In a multiple case study research design, each case is considered as a single case that is shaped by many contexts, and the relationship between contexts and cases are interdependent and reciprocal (Mabry, 2008). By inspecting the context, circumstances and their effects on each case, researchers can gain a more rounded picture of the larger phenomenon since different cases feature different aspects of interest (Mabry, 2008). There is no ideal limit for case selection — rather, the number of cases is linked with how selected cases will explain social life or the phenomenon being studied (Ishaq and Bakar, 2014). Multiple-case study research design is powerful and credible and provides additional insights and explanations, since it allows the analysis of a phenomenon within each setting and across settings (Baxter and Jack, 2008) and the exploration of differences within and between cases (Yin, 2003). For this study, a multiple case study research design was adopted to generate a rich and cumulative picture of fisheries co-management.

The waterbodies in Bangladesh are diverse — they include inland open and closed waterbodies, and coastal waterbodies. Co-management, under different donor-funded projects, has been adopted in some of these waterbodies since 1990. Each project followed its own approach based on nature of the waterbody. A number of CBOs were established under these projects. In the institutional arrangements, the lowest tier is CBO, which is formally linked with two tiers of local government administration — district administration and Upazilla Parishad. The experiences of co-management in different waterbodies differ in terms of community participation and power relations between stakeholders.

Field work for this research was undertaken in the northeast region of Bangladesh. Taking Bangladesh as a case study, two donor-funded projects, which introduced co-management in the inland waterbodies of the northeast part of Bangladesh, were chosen for this research. Case selection for this study was guided by the following factors.

The first factor that guided case selection was relevance to this study. Between the two projects, Project-1 introduced fisheries co-management in three inland waterbodies situated in the northeast, the north side of the capital, and the north-central. On the other hand, project-2 introduced co-management in two areas: the northeast inland waterbodies and the coastal area. The coastal site co-management projects were not considered in this study since they were related to biodiversity conservation rather than fisheries management. Coastal fisheries co-management has only been implemented since 2014, and this is an ongoing project (Islam et al., 2020). Completed fisheries co-management projects with active CBOs were the second key criteria for case selection, as this study aims to understand the management practices and relations among the stakeholders. In choosing cases, the accessibility of the site for the researcher (see Section-4.5) was considered and this was the third criteria for case selection.

The fourth factor for case selection was whether the cases are consistent with the research problem (Ghauri, 2004). Fisheries co-management has long been practiced in parts of the inland open and closed waterbodies under different projects. This study investigated how power and social relations within communities shape fisheries co-management, so projects were chosen that adopted community-led approach, involved

the local community and a wide range of stakeholders such as fisherfolk, women, farmers and elite in managing fisheries. There were some projects which introduced fisher-led and women-led approaches. Under the fisher-led approach, a number of groups were formed involving only fishers and then a resource management committee was formed representing these groups to take management decisions (Kabir et al., 2013). Under the women-led approach several groups were formed by involving only women and then a Beel Management Committee (BMC) was formed involving female group members, and some male members; fishers, landowners and Union Parishad Chairman, where women group members took the lead in resource management (Kabir et al., 2013; Sultana et al., 2002). These projects were not considered for three reasons; first, women-led CBOs were not related to fisheries co-management rather linked to community-based fisheries management. Second, fisher-led CBOs involved only fisherfolk community. Since this study aimed to understand how patron-client relations within fisherfolk community influence fisheries co-management, these projects were not considered. Third, the fisher-led CBOs and women-led CBOs had become dysfunctional following the project's end and this is one of the reasons for choosing these two projects: project-1 and project-2. The problem with choosing a project with a dysfunctional CBO is it is hard to find lists of the respondents and contacts of respondents of dysfunctional CBOs. If the fisher-led CBOs were active following the project end, then these CBOs could have been chosen, and a comparative picture could have been sought.

In the first case-study site, project-1 established 8 CBOs. The study purposively selected 2 CBOs. CBO-1 was chosen since it had actively managed the waterbodies. The

remaining 7 CBOs claimed lease extension from the government, which means waterbodies were given to those CBOs under co-management, but these waterbodies were not renewed by the government when project-1 ended. So, these 7 CBOs filed a lawsuit to secure the waterbodies. Out of these 7 CBOs, CBO-2 was chosen. In the second case-study area, project-2 established 28 CBOs; however, not all the CBOs were given authority to manage the waterbody, and some were found to be dysfunctional during fieldwork. Since the study aimed to research how these CBOs had been formed, how they managed waterbodies, and how patron-client relations influence co-management structures and practices, the study selected active CBOs and those that have the authority to manage waterbodies. In the studied areas, 3 CBOs out of 9 CBOs were given authority to manage some waterbodies and were active, and these 3 CBOs were selected for the study. In the studied areas, 5 CBOs were chosen out of 36 CBOs, taking into consideration the capacity of a single researcher, since qualitative data were collected entirely by the researcher. The availability of respondents and the location of villages or remoteness were also factors when choosing the CBOs.

4.3.2 Participant selection

The participants for this research were chosen based on two criteria: involvement with fisheries co-management and participants' knowledge and perceptions about fisheries co-management. Participants were selected from the CBOs, credit groups (case study area-1), local government officials in the respective Upazilla, NGO professionals, local elites (Union Parishad Chairman, leaseholders or moneylenders) and from local fisherfolk in the studied areas.

Purposive, stratified and convenience sampling methods were used to identify individual participants. For key informant interviews, participants from the CBOs were selected purposively in relation to their position (president, member secretary, treasurer, general members). The participants from this group were approached through personal contacts with local NGO professionals related to fisheries co-management. Other participants were local government officials concerned with co-management arrangements (Upazilla Nirbahi Officer/ Upazilla Fisheries Officer), and professionals from NGOs related to fisheries co-management projects. Permission to conduct the research in both the cases —project-1 and project-2 — was obtained from concerned public authorities — District Commissioner, Upazilla Nirbahi Officer and respective NGOs — prior to data collection. These permissions allowed access to informants in the communities, local government offices and NGOs. A letter was first sent providing information about the nature of the research, the information that participants would be asked to provide, the time needed for the interview, the methods of the interview and the procedure that was to be followed for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of the data.

In the first case study area, informants from the credit groups (CG) were selected through stratified sampling. These credit groups consisted of men and women from poor households, and fisherfolk. Therefore, the selection of participants from these groups took the gender of respondents into consideration to ensure that women were included in the sample as well as men. These credit groups were associated with two federations of credit groups (FCGs); FCG-1 and FCG-2. A list of male and female credit groups and the names of the members were collected from FCG offices. There were eight CGs

(6 male and 2 female groups) associated with FCG-1. These eight CGs were consisted of 120 males and 45 females — hence, using stratified sampling[11], 4 male from 120 male and 1 from 45 female were selected. On the other hand, 5 separate CGs (4 male groups and 1 female group) were associated with FCG-2. These five CGs consisted of 150 members (120 males and 30 females) — so, in this case, 4male from 120 males and 1 female from 30 female members were selected through stratified sampling. Informants from the local elite category (Murubbi, Mohajon, and leaseholders) and local fisherfolk were selected on the basis of who was conveniently available for the study.

The number of participants in this study was dependent on several factors — the research purpose, richness of the information during the fieldwork, practical constraints, and data saturation point. Saunders and Townsend (2018) state that sufficiency with regard to the number of participants in qualitative research is dependent on the research purposes, quality of data obtained, the researcher's own consideration about numerical credibility and their philosophical standpoint. As this research focused on depth, richness, and certainly not generalisability, the sample size of the informants was kept small in both cases. A total of 55 interviews were conducted. The breakdown is as follows.

[11][Total sample size × Number of male or female] /Total number of CG members=Sample size for male or female

Table4.1Selection of participants

Case study 1 (Project-1, total CBOs=2)

Participants	**CBO-1**	**CBO-2**	**Total**
Local government officer (Upazilla Nirbahi Officer/ Upazilla Fisheries Officer)	------	-----	1
NGO staff	-----	----	1
Community-Based Organisation (related with waterbodies management)	Executive Committee (EC) = 3 Males EC = 1 Female General Members=3 Total=7	EC = 3 Males EC = 1 Female General Members=3 Total=7	14
Federation of Credit Groups (FCGs)	Male = 4 Female =1 Total = 5	Male = 4 Female = 1 Total = 5	10
Local elites (Leaseholders, moneylenders, respected person in the village, Union Parishad Chairman)	2	2	4
Local fishermen	1	1	2
Total			**32**

Case Study-2 (Project-2, total CBOs=3)

Participants	**CBO-3**	**CBO-4**	**CBO-5**	**Total**
Local government officer (Upazilla Nirbahi Officer /Upazilla Fisheries Officer/ UpazillaSomobay Officer)	----	-----	----	1
NGO staff	----	---	----	1

Participants	CBO-3	CBO-4	CBO-5	Total
Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)	Executive Committee (EC) EC=3 males EC Female=1 General members=2 Total=6	EC=3 males EC Female=1 General members=2 Total=6	EC=3 males General members=2 Female=0 (no women was involved in the CBO) Total=5	17
Local fishermen		1	1	2
Local elite	1	1	(All of the local elites in that village are the member of the CBO)	2
Total				**23**

4.4 Qualitative approach in case study method

This study holds the view that every actor linked with fisheries co-management understand and place different interpretations about co-management from their own viewpoints and own experiences and knowledge of the world which, in turn, influence their actions. To find and understand the meaning of an action requires participating "in the life worlds of others" (Schwandt, 1986, p.193), understanding the historical, social and cultural context which the community inhabits, and how the actors use different languages, symbols and expressions about co-management from their own subjective lens. According to Saunders et al. (2007), the researcher's choice of philosophy, how one understands the world and the purpose of the research, suggests the researcher's choice of data collection methods. For this study, therefore, qualitative data was collected as it deals with meanings that are mediated through language and actions and can hold an extremely rich spectrum of cultural and social artefacts (Dey, 2003).

Choosing the most suitable data collection method allows the researcher to gather enough evidence and draw the inferences essential to make significant decisions about the findings (Opoku et al., 2016). For this study two qualitative methods of data collection — in-depth key informant interviews with people who ‘‘directly experienced the phenomenon of interest’’ (Patton, 1990, p. 104) and observation method — were used, in both cases, to generate deep and new layers of understanding about fisheries co-management.

4.4.1 Key Informant Interviews

Interview is a socially constructed and negotiated event. In this process, the interviewees “are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world” (Smith and Osborn, 2004, p.53). Both interviewee and interviewer, through this process, construct a reality anchored in the “social, structural, historical, cultural and circumstantial contexts in which it exists” (Herzog, 2012, p.208). For this research, the experiences, beliefs and perception of actors directly involved in fisheries co-management were collected through in-depth key informant interviews. The key informant interview tool was adopted for this research because it gives detailed information on the research issues, as the informants have long experience and profound understanding in that arena.

A total 55 informants in both cases were interviewed during a field visit of nearly 4 months, between November 2019 and the end of March 2020. Interviews with individual participants were conducted at a time convenient for the participants and in a

place that was familiar to them and where they would feel comfortable. It was, however, borne in mind that familiar places can also sometimes be distracting due to the presence of other people and the constraints of daily surroundings. In this respect, Gillham (2000 in Herzog, 2012) suggests giving an explanation to the interviewee about the pros and cons of each location to help them make the best judgment for themselves. I also applied the same and most of the respondents preferred their familial place, some preferred work station (for example shop, Haor), The duration of key informant interviews was approximately 1 hour and was non-directive in nature. Informants shared their experiences, perceptions, related complexities, their behaviour and interactions with others, in the context of co-management. Questions for the key informant interview were informed by the analytical framework (Interview guide, Appendix-4.1) and these questions investigated why patron-client relations are significant in fisheries, how these relations are maintained over time, how they interact with fisheries co-management arrangements and influence fisheries practices and design. Interviews with different informants began slowly, with light conversation, involving some simple and introductory questions to "get the ball rolling" (Johnson and Rowlands, 2012, p.106), and to establish a rapport with informants and to gain access to them. Follow-up questions were also asked by the researcher for further description of the detail.

One of the key advantages of the in-depth informant interview is that it provides researchers the opportunity to probe answers, and this is particularly important when the researcher adopts an interpretivist epistemology, where the core concern is to understand the meanings that participants assign to various phenomena; the opportunity to probe these meanings adds significance and depth to the data (Saunders et al., 2007).

Moreover, follow-up questions also lead the discussion into areas which may not been considered earlier but are significant to addressing the research questions (Saunders et al., 2007). Along with the information given by the interviewee, the researcher also identified what takes place around the interview, before and during it, and included this as an important finding about the social structuring of the interviewee's reality. For example, during interviews with women in the second case study site, a male member was always present and used different signs like eye movement, different body languages to regulate women respondents regarding where to talk, not to talk and where to stop.

All the 55 interviews were conducted and recorded by the researcher herself. Where recording was not possible due to restrictions from informants, notes were taken. Soon after the completion of an interview, field notes and recordings were transcribed into a Word document by the researcher herself. It was initially planned to schedule 2/3 interviews in a single day, to allow time to transcribe recordings, make additional notes and organise initial findings, but due respondent's time restrictions, unavailability of the respondents, this schedule could not be strictly maintained. Transcription was conducted by the researcher herself, as it assisted reflection on the context of the interview and provided an opportunity for the researcher to become familiarised with the data.

4.4.2 Observation

Observation is another tool chosen for data collection in this study. Observation is used when a research topic is unexplored, and little is known, to illustrate the behaviour of

people in a particular setting, and to understand the meaning of a setting or context in a more detailed way (Balsiger and Lambelet, 2014). To collect information, a researcher may engage in different types of observation —complete observation, complete participation, participant as observer, and observer as participant (Saunders et al., 2007). For this study, during the entire data collection phase, complete observation was employed. Under complete observation, a researcher is only present at the activity or event to observe it — he/she cannot show the purpose of his/her activity to those they are observing, nor take part in any event (Saunders et al., 2007). The merit of this instrument is that it helps to develop an insightful understanding of the details of local culture and how the community behaves and interacts with each other. In both cases, complete observation was undertaken in two areas. First, at the wholesale (weekly) fish market area to investigate power, cultural norms of the fish market, the local culture for setting fish price, and the cultural dependence of the fisherfolk community. Information that was recorded during observation included: Who is participating in the market? Who controls the market? How do the fishermen (marginalised) participate in the market? To whom do the fishermen sell their catch? How are the fish prices determined? How do fishermen behave (style of talking, arguments) in the marketplace and how do fishermen interact with fish traders? 4 fish markets were observed during fieldwork. In the study site-1, 2 fish markets were observed on 25.11.2019 and 03.12.2019 and in the study site-2 the other 2 markets were observed on 28.01.20 and 13.01.2020. Complete observation was also undertaken at the meetings of the CBOs, which involved observing who was participating, whose agenda was moving forward, how the actors behaved, whose voices counted and how opinions were established. In the second case-study site 2 CBO meetings were observed and no meetings were observed in the first

case-study area (see Section-4.9). In taking observation field notes every detail of that particular setting/event was incorporated. These notes were descriptive jottings of what was happening in that context, what had been seen or not seen. For this research, these observations generated a rich source of information about the social and power relations within fishing communities.

4.5 Fieldwork experience

I obtained ethical approval for the fieldwork on 07.10.2019 and then proceeded according to my fieldwork plan. At first, I sought permission from the local government administration (Upazilla and district) and NGOs. In this case, I did not face any problems since my personal communication was a strong asset in this case. I knew some local government officials who studied at that time at the University of Birmingham, who helped me to link with UNO(s) of the respective Upazilla. Besides this, I did fieldwork in the first case study area for my Master's thesis, so I had prior fieldwork experience on this site. Since then, I have known some NGO staff who worked with fisheries co-management, so I communicated with them. The respective NGO in the first case study site helped recruit community volunteers, provided me with the current lists of CBO members and their present contacts, and helped me communicate with NGO staff in the second case study site. As I came to the first case study area earlier, I had some communication with some fisherfolk and village leaders. These prior communications were helpful during fieldwork to access the studied villages.

Even so, some challenges arose during the interview process in some study sites. One such challenge was that, while interviewing local fishermen about their daily livelihoods and how they manage access to the waterbodies, they were curious to know what kind of benefit (e.g., public grant) they might receive through this research or whether any new project would start. Sometimes they were unwilling to answer questions when they found no benefit. At such moments, I changed the topic for a while and asked questions about their lifestyles and work before returning to my main questions. They also showed unwillingness when questions asked on managing waterbodies' access, involving CBOs and complexities in getting credit from CBOs or FCGs. A fear was noticed among them that sharing this information with me may hamper their relationship with leaders in the future. I ensured the confidentiality of the information at the beginning of the interview, but I needed to ensure it several times during the interview. I allowed sufficient time to show sympathy and attention when the respondents described their personal experiences. Another challenging issue was rapport-building with local village people. There were times when, before asking any interview questions, people of a village would ask me about my personal and professional lives. They were very curious about these issues. At such moments, I was careful to answer all their questions with patience because these matters are sensitive and, if not handled properly, can break trust. During interviews, participants were encouraged to give a complete description of their experiences, their thoughts, feelings, and memories concerning co-management with a description of the situation in which the experience occurred. I used similar sitting arrangements during interviews to encourage participants, so they did not hesitate to share experiences with me; for example, fisherfolk and women respondents offered me a chair to sit on, but I sat with them on the mat or tool or on their bed. Usually, general

people made distances with fisherfolk due to their class status, but these attitudes of mine were appreciated by the most. Each respondent is different from the other, and so I adjusted accordingly with them.

4.6 Data analysis

For this research, thematic data analysis was followed, with a focus on discovering and analysing themes embedded throughout interviews and observation data. A theme, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is a pattern that captures something significant and interesting about the data. In order to undertake thematic analysis, in the first stage the interview transcripts were closely read and re-read to familiarise myself with the entire body of the data. Initial codes were identified and then matched with data extracts that demonstrated that code. Coding was done manually by making notes on the texts. In the second stage, the initial codes identified across the data set were examined and organised under potential themes. Three themes were identified: i) patron-client relations in the studied area; ii) elite capture of co-management structure by Panchayat; and iii) strategies for maintaining elite control and capture. The third stage involved reviewing, modifying, or developing themes generated in the second stage. This phase included two levels of review. First, all the collated extracts for each theme were read and observed to see whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern; and second, the entire data set was re-read to be certain that the themes were a close fit in relation to the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2006). One issue that was also considered during this phase was that themes should be coherent and distinct from each other. The last stage of analysis involved writing up a final statement outlining the meaning inherent in the participants' experiences. This stage involved defining and further refinement of the

themes presented for analysis and an analysis of the data within themes, identifying the story told by each theme. At this stage, care was taken to distinguish clearly between what the informants said and the researcher's interpretation of it.

4.7 Validity and Reliability

Certain methodological issues need to be considered while carrying out case study research. Case studies are often criticised on the grounds of validity and reliability. Validity refers to the correctness (Maxwell, 2005) and the reasonableness of data-based interpretations to "the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences" (Messick, 1989, quoted in Mabry, 2008, p.9). Reliability refers to consistency — the extent to which data collection procedures used can be repeated with the same result. In case study research, researcher bias is seen as a significant threat to the internal validity of the design as, in conducting interviews and observations, the researcher becomes a part of the study and, therefore, their presence can affect the dynamics of the cases being observed (deVaus, 2001; Maxwell, 2005). However, one of the key advantages of case study research design involves the triangulation strategy of information collection from a diverse range of individuals and settings using a variety of data collection methods. In this research, information was collected through both the key informant interview and observation. Using multiple sources of data collection reduces the risk of systematic biases arising due to use of one specific method (Maxwell, 2005). In this research, the interview questions were open-ended, which gave opportunity to the informant to freely express their viewpoints and beliefs and to give their independent response to the topics. Interviewees' perceptions guided the conduct of the interview. In ensuring validity, the researcher reported exactly what the informants stated from their own knowledge and

experiences. The researcher shared a written summary of key findings with individual interviewees before leaving the study areas and also asked them to give their feedback. In using the observation method, the researcher took descriptive notes of specific events. In addition, CBO constitutions, the National Wetland Management Act, published government reports, policy documents, and reports published by NGOs were examined. This procedure strengthened the entire validity of this research as documents play an "explicit role" (Yin, 2003, p.87) in data collection for case studies to obtain an in-depth understanding of the context and provide reliable information in a study (Yin, 2003).

4.8 Ethical considerations

In this study, information was collected from multiple sources — key informant interviews and observation —in which the close proximity, access and rapport a researcher requires in order to develop understanding (Marby, 2008) can give rise to a greater range of ethical issues (De Vaus, 2001). According to the University of Birmingham's Code of Practice for Research, all those undertaking research by recruiting human participants will require ethics approval from the University Research Ethics Committee and comply with all requirements such as maintaining confidentiality, respecting the reputation and right of the participants, following procedures to avoid risks of the researcher and participants, ensuring participants voluntary participation. For this research all essential steps were followed to comply with the ethical guidelines of the University of Birmingham**.**

The ethical issue of deception and failure to obtain informed consent is critical in case study research (De Vaus, 2001). For this research, necessary consent from the participants was sought before the onset of each interview. The interviewee was informed about the purpose of the research and given a clear account of measures to be taken to maintain confidentiality of the data, in writing or verbally, or both, as appropriate. Participants were informed verbally and through the consent form that their participation was voluntary that they could withdraw from the interview if they wished or decline to answer certain questions. They could also withdraw their consent to participate in the research within two weeks of the interview taking place or of a meeting being observed — and, in this case, all the information and data collected from him /her would be destroyed and removed from study files. Once understanding was fully secured, and I was confident that the informant had understood the relevant information about the research, consent was sought. Getting written consent was, in some cases, challenging — particularly when selected participants are not literate. In such situations, verbal consent of the informants was taken and recorded. Permission was also sought regarding recording of the interview prior to the interview session and, where audio recording was not possible due to the restrictions from the interviewee, answers or points were written quickly and then elaborated on those on the same date so that no important piece of information was lost. In the case of observation of CBO meetings, I asked for consent from all present. If consent was not given, the meeting was not observed. In fish markets, it was not possible to ask consent from all present but permission from the relevant authority to be there was secured. No identifying information about anyone present was recorded. In this research, all informants we retreated fairly and ethically. No financial compensation was paid to the participants

under this research.

Confidentiality and anonymity of data was ensured through assigning codes to notes and transcripts. The researcher recorded the names of the participants and then the interview data was kept separate from the list of names and codes. As the number of participants in certain positions in an organisation was small, some participants could be potentially identifiable in published versions of the research. In these cases, permission was requested from the individual for their position to be referred to. Where permission was not given, no identifying data is included in this thesis or other publications. Confidentiality is also maintained in relation to referring studied projects (project-1, project-2), CBOs (CBO-1, CBO-2, CBO-3, CBO-4, and CBO-5), credit groups (CGs), Upazilla (Upazilla 1, 2) and waterbodies (1, 2).

This research focuses on social and power relations within fishing communities, investigated the social, economic and political context, and identified social, cultural values, beliefs, norms, rules, and practices, which are politically and culturally sensitive issues. In this case, the risks of physical safety and psychological or mental safety of the interviewees could arise and, so clear safety plans and processes were outlined and maintained accordingly. These processes included interviewees being asked to decide the place and time, where and when they feel comfortable to share their experiences. Here I considered the issue that a location for interview that seems quiet and comfortable to me might not be safe for the respondents to share their personal experience. The privacy of each participant was maintained highly and so no data

gained from a particular participant was referred while in conversation with others. Along with physical safety of the participants, the psychological or mental safety of the respondents was considered, and so I avoided asking questions which could create a feeling of discomfort or embarrass participants. In cases where participants showed unwillingness (see Section-4.5) to answer, I changed the way of the questioning from direct to indirect, such as what is the practice of accessing the waterbody in their village or what mechanisms other people follow in getting access to the waterbody etc. Sometimes, some respondents appeared unwilling to answer questions through non-verbal cues such as looking down at the floor, avoiding eye-contact or fidgeting in their seat. When this happened, I stopped the conversation/discussion topic and changed the subject. The participants were not forced to tell their experiences. The research activities were authorized by necessary respective authorities (District Commissioner and Upazilla Nirbahi Officer) in Bangladesh. For personal safety, I took precautions about travelling and the time to travel. I avoided travelling after dark and travelled with a local inhabitant, who was a community volunteer and knows the area well. Recruitment of the community volunteers was carried out with the assistance of the NGOs, though community volunteers were not involved with this research and no financial compensation was paid to them under this research.

I was born, raised in Chittagong (port city) and worked in Dhaka (capital of Bangladesh), where I witnessed a different culture, and lifestyle, which is less religious. I never faced any mobility restrictions and/or dress code related restrictions (wearing Burkha, covering head). But these are very sensitive issues in such village area which is highly religious and where social control is extremely high. I had some prior work

experience in some of those studied areas so had prior knowledge about what people expect from a woman and what they accept, such as elderly people in the village do not like using sunglasses and they considered it as a bad manner. On the other hand, to the fisherfolk and women, using sunglass is a symbol of aristocracy and so a class-related sense may come to their mind, which may create distance between the interviewee and interviewer. I therefore introduced myself in culturally acceptable ways, followed proper dress codes, covered my head, and wore full-sleeve and loose dresses. These attitudes enabled my interviewee to think of me as religious as well. But in some studied CBOs following proper dress codes was not sufficient condition always for getting access to the respondents. As a female researcher, I thought that there would be no problem in interviewing women, but challenges arose in two CBOs. In this case, access to the female participants was gained through male CBO leaders (see Section-4.9). Overall, I was cordially and respectfully accepted in the studied areas and treated differently to the women of that studied area. Though women in those areas are not allowed to talk in front of outsiders and cannot move to the public places, I was allowed to go to the Haor area and Bazar for observation and whenever I communicated with male interviewees, given my identity, they never denied giving me time to talk. Several reasons work behind treating me differently; Firstly, having higher educational attainments and professional identity enabled me to achieve more social mobility. However, these attainments may also have another impact, where the participants might assume that I have a higher socio-economic standing. I tried to minimize how this might impact on the interview. Where interviews were conducted in the respondent's house, I sat along with them on the floor or on the bed, removed my sandals and left them by the door as a gesture of respect. Through these measures I tried to demonstrate that even

though I was a stranger to them, culturally and socio-economically I was not. The second reason for treating me differently was that I was an outsider, would not stay there for long time and so religious restrictions were not applicable to me.

4.9 Limitations of the research

For this research, a qualitative research approach was taken. In Chapter 8, the issues identified in the findings are based on the key informant interviews and observation. There are a number of limitations of this research. The first limitation is the under-representation of the experiences of women. There were difficulties in the case of interviewing some female respondents in the second case-study site. Women in that area are not socially allowed to come in front of any unknown person. Leaders of the CBOs made arrangements for conducting the interviews with female respondents, but were present during the interviews. This made the women shy and reluctant to talk in front of their Murubbis[12].In one CBO, there was no female member included from the cultural perspective and so no data from women members were collected from that CBO.

The second limitation is lack of information about the meeting arena — how the actors behave, how opinions are established. One of the methods of data collection was the observation of CBO-meetings. Though the related NGOs and CBOs were informed earlier about meeting observation, I hardly managed to observe any meetings in some sites. For example, in the study area-1, the CBO leaders were not willing to give me access to the meeting. The reason given was that there were some internal conflicts

[12]Senior most respected person in the village.

among the organisation's members regarding mismanagement of the beel and misuse of the fund, and they didn't want to disclose this issue in front of me. Irregularities in arranging meetings were another reason for the difficulty in observation. Most CBOs were found not to arrange regularly Executive Committee and General Committee meetings.

The third limitation was disruption in data collection due to Covid-19. The fieldwork was scheduled for 6 months, November 2019 to May 2020 but was actually carried out from November 2019 to end of the March 2020. In Bangladesh, the first suspected Covid cases were identified in the second case-study area so it required ending the data collection as early as possible.

Chapter 5: Patron-client relations in the studied areas

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present qualitative data that will answer a portion of the analytical framework — how power is embedded in socio-cultural practices, people's behaviour and perceptions. In this chapter, Section 5.1 provides an overview of the social, economic and political context in the studied areas. Section 5.2 presents the findings about patron-client relations and asks why do patron-client relations continue to be significant in fisheries and how have these relations been maintained over time. Data for this study were collected from 8 villages under 2 Upazilla.

5.1.1 Social, Economic and Political Context

This section begins by discussing the social context — the social norms, regulations, and culture that prevail among different groups (fisherfolk, non-fisherfolk, women, ethnic and religious groups- Hindu and Muslims) in the studied society, and how these groups interact with each other through these norms. The section describes who is in what position of the society, how social norms and rules influence and decide the opportunities of different groups and subsequently guide behaviour. Second, this section discusses the economic context of the studied area to show who has accumulated wealth, the economic conditions of fisherfolk communities, and who has access to power at local level administration and how representation in a community is linked to the social and economic context.

5.1.2 Social Context

5.1.2.1 Fisherfolk-an underclass fishing community in the studied areas

Religion and Caste

Fisherfolk communities in the studied area belong to the Muslim and Hindu religions. In Upazilla-1, the Hindu community constitutes around 41% of the total population whereas the Muslim community is 57% (BBS[13], 2020). In contrast, the Hindu community in Upazilla-2 is only 15% and the remaining 84% Muslim (BBS, 2020). Hindu fisherfolk in these areas came from two low caste Hindu communities — Namashudra and Patni. In Bangladesh, caste is not recognised in documents but in the Hindu community it is a core feature of social structure and, for the fisherfolk participants' caste follows them in their daily lives like a shadow. In the Hindu community, occupation is hereditary and linked to religion. In the Hindu caste hierarchy, among different occupations such as priest, business owner, farmer, the position of fisherfolk is the lowest. Caste allocates spiritual purity and determines the social and economic rights that an individual can enjoy, where the individual will live, what foods he or she can take, whom they can marry, access to opportunities for employment, the possibility of mobility, ownership of resources, and social status (Kadel, 2014).

Higher caste groups enjoy distinct privileges and rights in society through different social norms, mores or traditions. Fisherfolk respondents who are from Hindu religion shared that, in their society, individuals born into the Brahmin caste are usually priests

[13]BBS—Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

and scholars and those born into the Shudra caste are involved in fishing and agriculture. Norms maintained in higher castes are associated with moral values and higher caste members view themselves as holding higher moral standards and values. It was found from interviews that a Hindu Brahmin is guided by the belief of 'purity'. Maintenance of purity is not only limited to who prepares the food but also who touches that food and the cooking utensils. They believe accepting foods from others will increase their risk of pollution; therefore, they strongly follow the norms of purity. One respondent mentioned:

> I am Chakraborty (Brahmin). I need to follow my religion. Brahmin does not take or touch foods or water outside and even not a single cup of tea in outside or anyone's house. We have restrictions in religion. (EC-2, CBO-2, Interview dated 03.12.2019)

According to him, if the Brahmins do not maintain this norm of purity, they will be rejected by their caste fellows. Members of different castes do not even eat together because this will lower their status. Regarding the morals of this separateness, the respondent further mentioned:

> Brahmin never do fish or farming or not relates with fishing business. I am not saying fishermen caste is fallen into untouchables group but from religious point of view they are seen as inferior in the Hindu society. They are identified as lower because of their work. Fishing is regarded in our society as lower grade work. Those who are involved with these types of work their behaviour is different to us, much inferior in terms of behaviour. Smells of fish come from their body. Fishing is a dirty job, mud and dirt cling to their body, to their clothes and it is also not possible for them to maintain cleanliness while working in water. That's why they are not pure. They do not even wash their hands properly before taking their meal. (EC-2, CBO-2)

Brahmin is considered to have utmost purity and the level of purity declines successively. Fishing for the upper-class Hindu is regarded as disgraceful work. According to the respondent, it is disgraceful because of the nature of the work, as it

requires no higher knowledge or any kind of education. He also pointed to the level of interaction with those who are involved in such jobs. “When anybody does any disgraceful work...we the upper-class try to keep a distance from them.” He also pointed to the clothes the fisherfolk wear

> When anyone comes in our house with good dress up, like the service holder, who always wears clean dresses, we offer them to seat within our house. But the issues of fishermen are different, wear a ‘Lungi’[14], which does not go with a decent society. (EC-2, CBO-2)

Expression of social status is intricately bound up with everyday actions. During the interview, it was found that Hindu women who are from the fisherfolk community provide daily labour for higher caste Hindu families where they carry out daily cleaning work like coating the house with mud or cow dung and cleaning clothes — but they do not have any permission to enter into the kitchen. The moral notion of status and purity also guides the marriage system in the Hindu community. In Hindu society, the inter-caste marriage is seen as a typical norm violation. Caste hierarchy also regulates the mobility of fisherfolk in the public space. In this regard, one respondent (Fisherfolk-2) said that people from the lower caste never receive an invitation to the program of the higher caste — there are strong restrictions in their religion and their presence would pollute the holiness of the caste system and of that program, touching upon the value of morality. It is found that there is always a ‘Dhormo Voy’[15] at work inside the Hindu fisherfolk. They know the title ‘Sarkar’, ‘Das’ will not be changed, and they cannot switch to another profession, hence breaking the rules like cross-caste marriage will result in exclusion from the caste and from the society. A sense of self-continuity was observed among the Hindu fisherfolk community.

[14] Lungi –A garment similar to Sarong
[15] Dhormo Voy--fear of religion

Caste practices are not only specific to the Hindu community. In the studied areas, the Muslim community has been upholding some cultural practices over such a long period of time that they have become almost caste-like. In Bangladesh, Muslims who take up fishing as profession are called 'Mahimals'. Within the Muslim community, different overlapping conditions such as profession, title, land ownership, housing condition, the type of dress one wears, language used, education, patterns of compliance or obsequious behaviour of an individual, all determine in which social position he/she will be assigned. Although Muslims in Bangladesh do not admit to a caste system, it was found that fisherfolk and non-fisherfolk are strongly divided into different classes with strong restrictions on inter-caste marriage and mobility in public places identical to the Hindu caste divisions. How strongly the idea of class segregation prevails in the society is reflected in the words of respondent GC-2, CBO-1, who mentioned that higher class people do not break relational rules. He said:

> 'Mahimal' and 'Talukdar/Chowdhury' will never be engaged in any family relation...This is what has been going on for so long. If it happens, society will never accept it. Because, Talukdars are higher-class people whereas a fisherman for them is 'Chotolok'[16]. (GC-2, CBO-1)

Regarding the status of 'Mahimal' in society, fisherfolk respondents said that people immediately look at them differently when they introduce themselves or mention their profession as 'Mahimal' in a public place. Because of the status issue, 'Mahimals' are never invited in any program of the Muslim non-fisherfolk. It is thought that this will lower the status, position of the non-fisherfolk and respondents mentioned that programs will be immediately postponed if any fisherfolk is invited or is present there. This is the custom that was taken from Hindu religion and has been followed over a

[16]Chotolok—Lower class people

long period. Occupation, poor housing conditions and landlessness identified by the respondents are key reasons that push fisherfolk to be in the lower-class position in the society. Some of them have owned land but the amount is very few. Those who came through in migration caused by floods and droughts built a small house on the land of their relatives and fellow fisherfolk, and many people live together in one room. Many families share a pond for bathing and washing clothes. Fisherfolk participants spoke of experiencing an overt differentiation through different practices.

> We are Mahimal, 'chotojaat'[17]. If people can identify that we are Mahimal, a different feeling instantly comes in their minds that we only can realise. They make a distance from us, they think our clothes are dirty, therefore sit separately in tea shops or on public transport. In a taxi we sit with the drivers and they sit separately in the back seats. We have to leave our seats when they come... A non-fisherfolk rarely enters our house, and feels hesitant to sit on our bed. Even if I go to their house they also make distance. We can understand the distance they make, make separate seating arrangements, separate area. (GC-1, CBO-1, Interview dated 15.11.2019)

During the interview it was apparent that changing one's social position is not easy or even possible. Identifying a group with their traditional occupation reflects on the continuation of their social and economic realities, and a near absence of diversification of occupation as well as economic life (Jodhka and Shah, 2010). One respondent (GC-1, CBO-1) reported that he has a shop in the local market but, due to belonging to a fisherfolk family, he cannot change his 'Vaggo'[18]. People treat him everywhere as 'Mahimal'. These cultural practices in Muslim society have created an impression among the fisherfolk that it is rarely possible to move to the highest position in society.

[17]Chotojaat---Lower-class group in a society.
[18]Vaggo-Fate

Education

Education rate among the fisherfolk is exceptionally low. According to BBS (2020), in Upazilla-2 52.4% people received primary education and only 3% secondary education; and in Upazilla-1 this was 48.3% primary and only 5% reached to the secondary, none of whom achieved a secondary education certificate. A number of push factors work here. First, fisherfolk have their views and preferences. In the studied areas, most of the fisherfolk prefer to involve their sons in their ancestors' profession from a young age. Second, an ideological limitation works among them. The fisherfolk think there is less opportunity to rise to upper levels by studying because wherever they will go people will represent them as fisherfolk. Third, early marriage of both boys and girls also influences the low education rate. Respondents mentioned that one of the key reasons for early marriage is 'Dowry'. 'Dowry' and early marriage have existed from ancient times in the rural areas of Bangladesh and these studied areas are no exception. Fisherfolk have always been passing through a very hard economic situation, so dowries work here as a source of income and financial security. A fourth push factor is an overt discrimination that fisherfolk's children experience at school and influences them to be less interested in further education. In this respect one respondent said

> Normally there is no restriction in going to government school or college. But in that school children of the higher-class/caste come to study. They sit away from our kids and in the front bench; they do not even talk to our kids. (GC-1, CBO-1)

Respondents also mentioned that no one will call the fishermen's children to take a seat on the front bench because if the teacher does this then different types of questions will raise. The teacher may be asked by the powerful people in the village why their children are neglected in the class. Along with these overt differences, a covert

difference is also maintained by the fisherfolk's children. A sense of shyness works within them from their childhood while communicating with others. This is because children who come from a higher social status wear clean clothes and their accent is different from the fisherfolk's children, who usually use those accents and words they learn from their home. That's why they always stay separate and play and share food with the children of their own community.

5.1.2.2 Non-fisherfolk community

In the studied areas, people who possess larger agricultural land by inheritance, are involved in different businesses, and possess wealth belong to the non-fisherman community. The non-fisherman community member is not linked directly with fishing activities but works as a financier, or other fish related-businesses. People mark this group section as 'Shommanito'[19] in the society and they hold the position in the Panchayat[20]. There are two things that place a person according to social status — 'Bongsho' i.e. family title an individual holds, and the wealth he/she possesses. In the studied areas, people with family title of 'Chowdhury' and 'Talukdar' maintain a separate living standard. A feeling of distinctiveness was found to work among them. One respondent mentioned that:

> 'Talukdar'never count their own money by themselves. Instead they appoint someone who does this job for them and even when they are going to any shop they never pay money — instead, that assistant pays. (GC-1, CBO-5, Interview dated, 03.03.2020)

[19]Shommanito-respected people
[20]Panchayat-An informal governing body (discuss in chapter 6)

Counting or touching money is undignified for them and lowers their social level in front of others. When anyone from these respected families goes any place, people offer them a wooden chair to sit on and take care of them with honour. In the studied areas, the status, honour and power these families have been enjoying over a period have deep roots in pre-colonial times, i.e. the Mughal period (1526-1857), and the colonial (1757-1947) 'Zamindari' systems. It was found from the literature (*Social structure in Bangladesh*, no date; Khan, 2011) during the Mughal period, Zaminders were responsible for determining the tax on land and its payment. Under this system, a number of groups were created for rent collection named 'Talukdar', 'Bhuiyan', 'Chowdhury' who were responsible collecting taxes from cultivators, and maintaining law and order in the Taluk.[21] Because of this, they enjoyed substantial power, wealth and honour. In the colonial time period, with the introduction of the 'Permanent Settlement Act 1793', this rent collecting class became the owners of the land for perpetuity and the cultivators were dependent on their mercy. The act fixed the maximum limit of land holding at 33 acres per head. During this time, a class of 'Mohajon'[22] emerged to whom these cultivators moved out of financial hardship and were taken advantage of by being charged ever-increasing interest rates. These 'Mohajon' classes were often Zamindar or tenure holders. At the same time, another new social class named 'Joatdar', a wealthy peasant class, emerged in rural Bangla, who used to take lands from *Z*amindars under lease. These new classes gradually became prosperous by exploiting cultivators on the one hand and on the other hand ensuring their children were educated, involving them in government services, and professions.

[21]Taluk ---An administrative district for taxation purposes, typically comprising a number of villages
[22]Mohajon---moneylender

The land policies introduced from the pre-colonial period to the present day have continuously heightened the status of the landholder (Chowdhury, Talukdar) class and landed intermediary class based on land rights, giving them greater control over the society (*Social structure in Bangladesh*, no date; Khan, 2011).

5.1.2.3 Women in the studied areas

In Upazilla-1, male and female constitute 11,814 and 11,217 respectively and in Upazilla-2, male and female constitutes 11,145 and 11,102 out of 22,247 (BBS, 2021). Though there is a slight difference between the number of males and females in both sub-districts, women's public involvement was shallow. A clear demarcation was found between spaces occupied by men and women. Men are more visible in public spaces such as fish markets, roads, shops, the Bazar[23], Haor, etc where more social interaction is needed, whereas women are seen in the private sphere doing household chores and homestead gardening. In the studied areas, women are not allowed in the market or to go and sell any product there and in other public spaces. Regarding women's autonomy to go to public spaces one male respondent said:

> In our village, we are not allowed women to go to any public gatherings or religious programs like 'Mehfil' or 'Islamic Jolsha'. Here many men will come to this place from different areas, will sit next to her, and try to talk with them. This will distract a man and instead of listening to Islamic discussions, they will feel more interest in our women. Isn't it disgraceful for our woman and the village? (GC-2, CBO-4, Interview dated, 02.02.2020)

Outside of the house, a woman's movement is restricted in time, purpose and also in distance. The participant further mentioned that these Islamic programs are usually held

[23]Bazar--Market

at night and, due to security reasons, women are not allowed in these villages or to stay outside. People do not consider those women who stay outside after evening to have good character. Respondents mentioned that if women/girls move openly everywhere, and particularly in the evening, people will talk differently about them and will tease them, making it difficult for an unmarried girl and her family to arrange a better husband and a better family. Women in the studied areas are spatially secluded from fishing operations in the Haor. However, some female CG respondents, who are from fisherfolk families, reported that they are actively involved with pre-and-post fishing activities such as repairing nets, making fishing instruments, removing fish from nets, fish-drying. According to female respondents, there are four reasons why they do not fish in the haor — first, the time of fishing; second, the nature of work (fishing is a physically-demanding job and is viewed by the family and by the society that women are weak and physically not competent enough to do this job); third, the security issue; and fourth is the social rules of public space movement of the women that they observe from their childhood. According to the female respondents it is bad for a woman's honour if she openly moves everywhere, works alongside men without covering herself, and talks with strangers.

In the studied areas, women are usually allowed to visit in their neighbourhood when covering their head instead of wearing a 'Burkha'[24], but if they are required to go beyond the neighbourhood they have to wear a 'Burkha' and need to get permission from elders and from their husband and even then can only move accompanied by a

[24]Burkha-- A long, loose garment covering the whole body from head to feet, many Muslim women wear this in public place.

male relative. Women use a veil in front of their in-laws and when other village people come to their house they use a curtain and serve the food behind the curtain. Both women and men view this gesture as following Islamic rules properly. It is expected by the society's Murubbi that a woman's presence and appearance should be gentle. To one male respondent (EC-2, CBO-1), women in this society are seen and considered as like 'Mati' (ground), meaning when anyone hits the ground strongly it does not give any reply or make any sound. A woman of good character is like that. She doesn't speak loudly. Being caring and softly spoken are regarded as symbols of good character for women. According to a female respondent, this is a system that she learns from her childhood and if she breaks this rule the village people will call her ill-bred and this will hamper her honour. Both male and female respondents believe that the honour of the family depends on a woman's conduct. Covering her head in front of in-laws, seeking permission from her husband, taking care of him and never calling him by name are considered essential elements of good conduct in a woman. One respondent pointed toward what the woman in his society believes:

> If there was a provision in Islam to give Sajdah[25] to anyone after Allah then it would be the husband. So they shouldn't be disobeyed. If they are disobeyed, we have to be accountable after death to Allah (EC-3, CBO-2, Interview dated 03.12.2019).

.The social instruction of wearing the 'Burkha' is less rigidly followed both in Hindu and poor Muslim families and in fisherfolk families because many are working women, work as community volunteers), give daily labour in construction works or to neighbourhood families or work with their husbands and sons, so have fewer opportunities to always wear the 'Burkha' due to the nature of their work. Moreover,

[25] Sajdah –Sajdah is a position in Muslim prayer where the forehead touches the ground. It is mentioned this is the position where Muslims are most near to his Creator.

cost is also a factor mentioned by women respondents. Therefore, in wider society it is broadly assumed that women of lower status do not use the ‘Burkha’. Women, who so use it have greater status and are highly honoured.

The restriction on female mobility influences women’s education rate. In the view of the respondents, the lower education rate for women is caused by two factors — first, male attitudes to female education; second, the age at which young women marry. In the studied area, girls are given education only for raising a general level of awareness, not to pursue a career of their own. According to a male respondent:

> What will they do after studying? After finishing her study certainly she will not be a big officer rather will take care of households. So what is the point to spend money for her? As far the education is free on behalf of government for the girls, if they can reach to that stage it is enough for her (EC-2, CBO-4, Interview dated 08.02.2020)

According to many male respondents, once women had no right to go outside of their house but now there is a primary school everywhere and their daughters are getting permission to go to the school and this is enough for them. In some studied areas, girls are given private tuition at home if there is no separate girls’ school. Early marriage is another factor that constrains women from pursuing education beyond the primary stage. Regarding the marriage age of a girl, one woman respondent (EC-4, CBO-1) said the custom of their society is that when girls reach puberty then the family and the Murubbi start looking for a groom and arrange a marriage. According to them, there are no restrictions for boys. Early age marriage is practised here for two reasons — first, security reasons (i.e. unmarried girls are viewed as less-secured) and, second, earlier marriage gives them a longer reproductive capacity. In the in-laws’ house and in

society, a woman's position depends on her endowments, her father's property that she holds or may get, and on the number of sons she can give birth to. In the Hindu religion, according to the law of inheritance, women cannot claim the property and get any share in homes and land. This issue shapes a woman's conduct in her in-laws' house.

5.1.2.4 Ethnicity-Muslim and Hindu community in the studied areas

The Hindu community in Bangladesh is a religious minority but the internal migration of Hindu communities in different villages around Haor-1 and Haor-2 at the time of the liberation war in 1971 and later periods resulted in the highest concentration of Hindus in Upazilla-1. In every studied village, the Hindu community tends to live in a separate Para[26]. Religious restrictions and their religious practices are the main reasons to live separately.

According to a Hindu respondent (GC-3, CBO-1), Muslim and Hindu families cannot live together in a Para within a village. Because the Hindu community possesses the belief that if a Muslim lives next to his house then their religious programs will not be practised correctly. According to him:

> We have restrictions in religion. Because other than their (Muslims) religious festivals they slaughter cows in front of their house weekly or monthly, cook that meat. But for us we worship cows. Slaughtering cow is a sinful act in our religion (GC-3, CBO-1).

If anyone from the Muslim community enters their house, they clean it twice and wash all the dishes. If they do enter into a Muslim's home, they avoid taking any food

[26]Para--Small human settlements within village.

because they believe that, as meat is cooked in that house, it is not right to take food there. This relates to their ideas of holiness.

One Muslim respondent (GC-1, CBO-1), from the same religious perspective, said if any Hindu individual lives in any Para with Muslims, they will play 'Shankha' to do the worship and set up sculptures of their God. These will hamper the Muslim community in doing their five times prayer as well as maintaining holiness. Therefore, in the studied areas, the traditional practice is to live in a designated place in a village, which is mainly determined by the Murubbis. The Murubbis define who will use which area, which pond and when or what time, etc.

Though religious restrictions exist, the Hindus in these villages aspire to keep good relations with the Muslim community. The Hindu community invites the Muslim community into their programs which is rare in the Muslim communities. Bangladesh was formed as a secular democratic country but, over the years, a number of issues have driven a strong majoritarian tendency. Firstly, attitudes of the Hindus towards Muslims. One Muslim respondent (EC-3, CBO-2) mentioned that his ward member (a Brahmin) "Chokhupor e kore hate" (keeps eyes up/shows attitude for being a Brahmin). Muslim respondents claim that when any Muslim goes to their house they entertain him/her, but when he/she leaves they clean all their utensils and the entire house. The second reason is the Vested Property Act of the Bangladesh government. Under this act, the Bangladesh government decided to appropriate the property of the Hindu owners who went to India from 1965 to 1969. Hindu respondents mentioned that although they got

the legal papers for reclaiming that land, they failed to take possession of it because Muslims had been living there after the liberation war in 1971. In cases such as these, respondents said Murubbis in that area always take the Muslim family's side. So there is a pressure that works on the Hindus. The Hindu fisherfolk class, in this case, became double victims — one for being in a lower-caste and the other is for living in a society with a majoritarian tendency. A Namashudra fisherfolk respondent mentioned that when they fish in a group, they usually use Faron[27] for fishing, but they need to involve the 'Mahimals' from village-1 in their group, otherwise they steal their equipment. He also mentioned that 'Mahimals' from village-1 receive several benefits from the non-fisherfolk Muslim lessee of their village — they obtain access to the best beels in Haor-1, and their gear is not stolen. In village-7, according to one respondent (Fisherfolk-6), there are 300 'Mahimal' families, and the other 60 families are Namashudrafishers. He reported that, to avoid complexities when they go for group-fishing in the Haor, they involve 'Mahimal', so that if they face any problem then Muslim leaders, Ward member, or local MP will be more likely to help them.

5.1.3 Economic Context

Fisherfolk are the marginalised poor group in the community. It was observed in the studied areas that most fisherfolk live in poor housing conditions. The majority of the houses in the studied areas are very closely connected, made of mud with roofing of tin shades or with a kind of weed-leaves locally called as 'Chan.' The number of 'Pucca

[27]Faron--Local fishing gear.

houses'[28] is very few in the studied areas. According to the BBS (2017), the percentage of 'Kutca'[29] houses is 75.2%, while for 'Pucca' houses it is 5.3 %. Only those who are wealthy and have inherited property, or who have relatives living abroad, can afford to own a Pucca house. Regarding the availability of sanitation facilities, Islam and Rahman (2011) said only 26% of households have sufficient sanitation facilities. On the other side, 74% of households use only open-latrines, built near the homestead, either on the one side of a pond or ditch (Islam and Rahman, 2011). Most families use tube-wells for drinking-purposes but, due to poor sanitation facilities, the fisherfolk community always suffers different health-related complexities, particularly water-borne diseases (diarrhoea, typhoid).

According to the land holding classification given by BBS (2020), 83% of the landowners of the studied areas fall into the category of small landowner (0.05-2.49 acre), 14% fall into the medium owner category (2.50-7.49 acre), and 1.71% fall into the large owner category (7.50+ acre). Regarding study area-2, Khan (2011) mentioned that 57.8% are in the landless class, owning only 4.7% of the land while 15.1% own 70.6% of the land in the area. In the studied areas, most fisherfolk have only a tiny piece of land. Sometimes they will give their land to a fellow fisherman's family or relatives to live in on monthly payment-basis. Due to financial hardship some fisherfolk families mortgage their land to the better-off fishers, or any well-off people in that village who take fingerprints on a stamp and provide the money and when they become able to repay the money, the land is then returned to them.

[28]Pucca house---Pucca housing refers to dwellings that are designed to be solid and permanent.

[29] Kutcha—A house built with mud.

Fisheries and agriculture are the two main livelihoods for the people who live in the area. Major fishing-related activities are capturing fish, trading, drying and net weaving. In a research on study area-2, Rana et al. (2010) showed that the average annual income from the fisheries sector is about 45,000 BDT (473$) while Islam and Rahman. (2011) showed this to be 52,286 BDT (550$). Out of this, income from fish catch-related activities and fish trading are 13,570 BDT (143$) and 30,000 BDT (316$) respectively, providing information on the poverty level of those fisherfolk related to fish catch activities. Besides fishing-related activities, respondents reported that people here depend on the Haor for collecting aquatic vegetation, and fuel wood, cattle- grazing, bird-poaching and duck-rearing.

Fishing is the foremost and only source of occupation for the Hindu fisherfolk and 'Mahimals', but the fisherfolk cannot be involved in fishing all year round. In Upazilla-1, fisherfolk can get access the leased waterbodies from April to September by providing a toll to the leaseholder. In Upazilla-2, fisherfolk can fish only in the open access area, as they do not have permission to use the leaseholder area (discussed in later section). In the lean season[30], fisherfolk can be involved with daily labour in construction sectors, in the agricultural fields of well-off fisherfolk, doing homestead gardening next to their house, or making local fishing gears[31].According to fisherfolk respondents, the cost of making fishing gear is exceptionally high because the materials required are beyond their reach. According to them, to make a bunch of 'Faron'[32], the material's cost is nearly 1600-1700 BDT (17-18$), and at the local market, the price of

[30]Lean season --(September to February)
[31]Local fishing gears--'Faron', 'Dori', 'Bosni', etc..
[32]Faron—Fishing-gears

a bunch of 'Faron' is 2500 BDT (26$). The profit from selling a bunch is meager, only 800 BDT (8$). One respondent (Fisherman-2) said a seine net of 100 to 200m costs nearly 10,000 BDT (105$). The average maintenance and repair costs of seine nets are about 3000 BDT (32$) per year. If they give this net to someone in rent, they can't earn more. Some fisherfolk rent out their boats to their fellow fisherfolk but say they can't charge high as they are their people and know their economic situation. It was found from the interviewed fisherfolk that due to high input cost and low-profit margin, they are unable to save money.

In Upazilla-1, poor fishermen take out credit from different microcredit organisations when they are in economic difficulty. But, according to the fishermen, they generally invest that credit either in making fishing gear or in other non-fisheries activities (livestock, poultry). But it is hard to make any steady income on a daily or weekly basis resulting deferred instalments. In this case, they move to their 'Mohajon' for borrowing more money to clear these credit instalments. The fisherfolk community is socially and economically highly marginalised in the studied areas. Their low socio-economic status critically impacts how they get access to power, which will be discussed next.

5.1.4 Political Contexts

This part highlights the issue of who is representing the community at local government level, who has access to political power and how power is maintained. In Bangladesh, the smallest local government unit is Union Parishad (UP), made up of 9 wards[33]. Each

[33]Ward--Village

Union Parishad has a chairman and 12 members, including three female members who are elected through direct election with the mandate of the community living in these 9 wards. The UP Chairman is also involved in Upazilla Parishad as a member. To represent a community some GC respondents put emphasis on two elements — first honour and second on an air of authority. As one respondent said,

> It must be someone whom everyone obeys in the society. Now no one respects me, obeys me, but I stand in the election then certainly no one will support me.... (GC-1, CBO-1)

The honour of a person depends to a great extent on the family he/she belongs to. In the studied areas, family title or lineage plays an important role in local level representative selection. Candidates here mostly come from the same family. Respondents also mentioned attachment of a person to the community in selecting a representative. One respondent said

> In our village, we all respect our chairman. He is selected three times... Till today no one comes back from his house with an empty hand. Whether it is family-related or area-related he does not let any troubles move to the court. He solves them. He gets this characteristic from his forefathers. They were also the Chairman of this Union. His grandfather donated land for constructing the road of this village, and making a school. Here he is known as 'Jomi Data'.[34] (Fisherfolk-1, Interview dated 12.11.2019)

Which family a person belongs to and what attributes he/she carries — such as knowledge, personality, reputation and title — highly affect people's perceptions. In selecting representatives, the village Panchayat also plays an important role. One respondent (EC-4, CBO-1) mentioned that when anyone thinks about standing in the UP election, he/she has to share this first with the Panchyat members in the village. In this case, Panchayat members first discuss the issue among them and then call a village

[34]Jomi Data--Person who donates land for community services.

meeting. The Panchayat chief presents the issue and tells inhabitants to vote for her/ him and other Murubbis support it. According to respondents, wealth also plays a key role in local-level elections. People generally respect those who possess much wealth, and reputation, wealth, and money are necessary to carry on a campaign during an election. The election campaign is not only limited to making rallies, publishing posters, or meeting many people but also depends on incentives the candidates offer. Some respondents said those who stand for this political position know very well who needs what and that's why, before the election, someone gets money or someone gets daily necessary goods like oil, rice etc. Many respondents (GC, fisherfolk, CG) also pointed toward the personal link of these local-level leaders with national leaders, which also plays a role in winning the election.

Since several issues — like respect, wealth, knowledge, Panchayat recommendation, and personal network — are considered important in choosing a representative of the community at the local level, the poor fishermen community who have lived here for generations can hardly ever become involved. Regarding the problem of a fisherfolk class in getting a position in the Union, and Upazilla level, one respondent said:

> Higher-class people do not make relationships with us. Our dress and behaviour are not like that of upper-class society. None of our fishing community can be found in the higher positions in the District and Upazilla level. There are several committees formed at the Ward and Upazilla level but no one from our fisherfolk community is involved there. (Fisherfolk-1)

Fisherfolk respondents said in the steering committees at the local level, the Union Chairman and Upazilla Chairman include the names only of those people they like.

School headmasters, Imam, wealthy people of the village, leaders of the ruling political party in the ward and union level are selected as members of this Ward level committee.

5.2 Patron-Client relations in the studied areas

Patron-client relations were seen as dyadic in the literature review (Chapter-3, Section-3.4.2). Client's affiliation with patron here is neither purely coercive nor an outcome of unrestricted choice. Section-3.4.2 mentioned that in four ways a client becomes the patron's subject. In a society, an individual may have more or less power in relation to different people and in different situations (Nunan et al., 2020). The essential characteristics of this relationship are, first, which resources (material and non-material) the influential employ in this relation, and second, how they barter different economic, social, and political concessions to control the arena. Third, how different support services shape social, cultural, and economic behaviour, perceptions of the less-powerful group, and how to respond to various situations. Power is, therefore at the core of how the relationships between less-powerful and powerful will be created and maintained over time. This section splits into two sub-sections; with sub-section 5.2.1 discussing why patron-client relations continue to be significant in fisheries and the subsequent sub-section 5.2.2 discussing how these relations are maintained over time.

5.2.1 Why do patron-client relations continue to be significant in fisheries?

This study identified three forms of patron-client relations that exist in the studied areas — financial relations, access relations, and social relations. These three forms of relations are discussed below.

5.2.1.1 Financial relations

In the studied areas, the lean season is the hardest time for the fisherfolk as the fish availability declines in the open access area of the waterbody and so their income drops. Fish breed during the months of March and April so no one can fish at that time. Unavailability of fish, livelihood, food insecurity and financial hardship instigate developing financial relations between fisherfolk and 'Mohajon'. This is apparent in the following interview extracts.

> Everything depends on fate. Sometimes the total catches amount to 1000 BDT (11$) and sometimes it is only 200 BDT (2$). Sometimes I do not have any income and there is nothing to cook. I can't even manage a one-time meal for my family. Many starving faces are in my family. How could I feed them? (Fisherfolk-1)

> How can we sustain without 'Mohajon'? We are poor. For us if says to put our hands in the fire, we will put our hands there. (Fisherfolk-2,Interview dated 23.12.2019)

During the monsoon, fisherfolk can fish in the open-access area, but to fish in the leased area they need to pay a toll to the leaseholder. To continue both fishing operations and fishing-related business, the key need for poor fisherfolk is working capital. In Upazilla-1, fisherfolk prefer to borrow informal credit from 'Mohajon'. Credit is given by 'Mohajon' on several conditions: first, money will be lent at an interest rate; second, fisherfolk cannot move to another 'Mohajon' until completing the lending period and borrowed amount has been cleared with interest; and third, fisherfolk have to sell their entire catch to that 'Mohajon' in the fish market. These conditions certainly undermine the autonomy of the fisherfolk, but they view it as a kind of responsibility from their end to maintain conditions and sustain the relationship. 'Mohajon' helps them financially in their bad times so for the fisherfolk what is important at the time of

borrowing money from ‘Mohajon’ is to be self-effacing and to supply the services the ‘Mohajon’ demands. One respondent mentioned:

> During the last flood, most of the Haor adjacent area of our village was completely flooded. We had to leave home to save our lives. When we returned to our house we did not have any food. The government provided food assistance but nothing had reached us except for some ‘Chira’[35]and molasses.How long can you survive by eating these? I went to our ‘Mohajon’... At the time of our extreme need who cares for us except ‘Mohajon’? Because of his assistance, we are still surviving. (Fisherfolk-1)

The obligation of fisherfolk towards their ‘Mohajon’ was also found while interviewing, where he said:

> I must follow his terms of the loan. If I don’t repay his amount, he will be disappointed and will not go to lend me money next time. I have no other way.

Fisherfolk do not want to disappoint their ‘Mohajon’ The reason, as another respondent (Fisherfolk-2) mentioned, is the flexibility of the ‘Mohajon’ in lending money arguing that “We can ask for a loan anytime, any days....he never denies giving us a loan. If we request for another loan before repaying the earlier, he will give that to us” and this extra-lending depends on how much of the previous loan been repaid and he adds then the new one to the previous one. The power ‘Mohajon’ experience in this relationship relates not only to the provision of credit but also to how he treats his fisherfolk clients and how the fisherfolk also value their relations from the viewpoint of faith. One fisherfolk respondent from village-1 reported the human qualities ‘Mohajon’ possess and affirmed that ‘Mohajon’ shows sympathy to them. ‘Mohajon’ knows and acknowledges the uncertainty in fish catch and the financial condition of the fisherfolk

[35]Chira—flattened rice

— hence, if fisherfolk are late in paying instalments ‘Mohajon’ does not ill-treat them. He said:

> ‘Mohajon’ never shows any anger to us nor tortures us. The availability of fish is not the same throughout the year, so income could vary. If we failed to return money in time he never harasses us, rather he adds the amount in the following month. We know if we are late he will not file a case against us. (Fisherfolk-1).

The study found that the way ‘Mohajon’ consider and treat this relationship assists him to hold their clients over a long period. One fisherfolk respondent reported that it is not difficult to find a ‘Mohajon’, saying that “If profit (interest) is given, then another ‘Mohajon’ could be found but I usually do not change my ‘Mohajon’.” It was found from other fisherfolk respondents also that they do not want to change their ‘Mohajon’, since it is a matter of long-time relations which they do not want to break. To the fisherfolk community, compared to the formal lending institutions — such as NGO or the Government — a ‘Mohajon’s financial service is much more flexible in terms of collateral requirements and time for loan repayments. Several NGOs are in operation in Upazilla-1 and use the technique of ‘peer group pressure’ for the collection of loans from the groups. One woman respondent mentioned that needy families cannot reach the NGOs, and are sometimes victimised by the jealousy of their neighbours.

> In a neighbourhood everyone is not same. Not everyone wants and wishes for my betterment, and advancement; instead they want me to stay behind. (CG-5)

When the question of inclusion and loan sanction arises, many group members avoid poor fisherfolk in their group by mentioning their incapacity for loan repayment, income uncertainty, and the fact they have no fixed assets — in other words identifying them as ‘assumed loan defaulter’. One respondent (CG-5) also mentioned the risk of

losing honour in taking credit from NGOs. She shared her experience of feeling dishonour in front of the society.

> If I meet all the eligibility criteria for a loan they will give me the loan....but if I failed to repay the 'Kisti'[36], they will take all of our assets we have. This makes us ashamed in front of our 'Samaj'[37].(CG-5)

Fisherfolk respondents said they sometimes took loans from microcredit organisations but, to pay the weekly interest and to avoid harassment, they depend on their 'Mohajon', and borrow money from him. One respondent (Fisherfolk-1) reflected that poor people never have much money so, for them, honour is the only asset they hold. They feel safe and socially secure borrowing money from 'Mohajon'. Fisherfolk respondents mentioned that they cannot get access to government banks as it requires mortgages followed by 'Ghush' (speed-money).

Flexible attitudes of 'Mohajon' towards fisherfolk, obligations and faith determine the financial relationship between 'Mohajon' and fisherfolk. According to fisherfolk respondents in Upazilla-1, 'Mohajon' do not force anyone to borrow money from them — rather, other circumstances, such as seasonality, food and livelihood insecurities, and securing honour influence fisherfolk to depend on 'Mohajon' and their support, creating a liability among the fisherfolk. This gives 'Mohajon' the power to set interest rates against the loan. Scott (1972) said when the needs of the clients are particularly huge and stiff competition exists among patrons, then the cost of patron-controlled services will be less, so there is a chance for fisherfolk to bargain and earn a few more benefits. But this has not happened here. Fisherfolk respondent from Upazilla-1 said there is no

[36]Kisti--weekly instalment
[37] Samaj--Society

set interest rate that 'Mohajon' charge — it depends on the 'Mohajon's consideration as well as personal relation.

5.2.1.2 Access relations

> To use the waterbody, we need to secure it from the government under the lease. Does the government directly give us the waterbody at a lower price? The government gives leases only to some rich people. If the government would give us this lease at a lower price, would the rich get a chance? But the government wants revenue, and their officers also need money, so they give the lease to them. (Fisherfolk-2)

> Government gives us fishermen identity cards. But this card is of no use/useless. (Fisherfolk-1)

> The government says 'jal jar jola tar'[38]. The government has given many rights on paper to the fishermen. Our politicians verbally give us all the rights and opportunities...address us as 'vai'[39] publicly and say we are the main driving force of the country's development. But only we know what pain, sorrows, and sufferings we hold inside to us (Fisherfolk-3, Interview dated 12.02.2020)

These above-mentioned quotes point toward the very slim chances of fisher folk getting genuine access to the waterbodies in the studied areas. It was mentioned in the National Wetland Management Act-2009 that the policy "jal jar jola tar" (Article-5, GoB, 2009) will be followed to prioritise the real fisherfolk community in the leasing process and beels will be leased out only to the FCOs. But it is hardly maintained in reality. Access to waterbodies is shaped by different factors — financial capacity, political identity, links with political leaders and local government officials. These factors determine who possesses which power in the context of accessing waterbodies.

[38]Jal jar jola tar--who owns the net owns has the right on the water body
[39]Vai--brother

Leaseholder and fisherfolk respondents in study area-1 acknowledged that the first stumbling block for the fisherfolk to access to the waterbody is forming a FCO, which is costly for financially poor fisherfolk. To form a FCO, each member initially has to apply for membership with 10 BDT (0.10 $) and then a monthly membership subscription fee of 20 BDT (0.20$). Forming a FCO requires opening a bank account in the co-operative's name. One respondent (Local Elite-4) said leaseholders initially take a little more money from the members to increase the deposit; however, the amount is not fixed, and depends on everyone's ability and willingness to pay. He commented that, generally, fisherfolk never have that much money so their financial participation cannot be equal in this process. The FCO president in this case, bears most of the expenses. The person making the highest financial contribution is given more power to determine who will fish, where and how to fish, and how the income will be distributed among the FCO members. According to a fisherfolk respondent, it is advantageous to them from the view of their minimal financial involvement, income security and flexibility of gaining access to the arrangement. One respondent said that:

> To be a member of the FCO there is no fixed requirements to be followed. Anyone can enter here at any time. We do not force anyone to pay monthly subscription. Who is able to pay monthly can have more savings (Local Elite-3, Interview dated 09.12.2019)

A different view was found from another respondent (Fisherfolk-3), who mentioned that, along with wealth, personal favouritism works in the formation of FCO. He reported that there are some wealthy and influential people, who formed FCO with people under their control, mainly involving their relatives, core followers (political group or within village) and 4 or 5 fisherfolk in that area. To form FCO another

important factor is connection and support of the local-level leaders. A respondent said that:

> Government made rules on providing lease only to the FCOs and to make FCO we need to register our organisation first with DoC[40]. Managing the official approval is not so straightforward. It requires speed-money and political connection. Moreover, not everyone within the society wants Hindu fishermen to form co-operatives, and secure larger beels. Our ward member helped us to form this FCO. She and our Upazilla chairman both are from our Hindu religion....their recommendation to Somobay officer eased the moving of our file (Local Elite-4, Interview dated 15.12.2019)

According to the fisherfolk respondents, if they are able to form a cooperative but do not have enough financial capacity to submit the tender for a lease, as the lease price is high, this is a second obstacle for them and makes them dependent on powerful financiers. A fisherfolk respondent mentioned that:

> Leasing is out of our reach now. Large waterbodies are taken away by rich people at a higher price. The Upazilla Chairman of our adjacent Upazilla alone secured the larger and most potential waterbodies in Haor-2 from the government under the lease. None in this area can compete for bidding with him. The beel he secured, the annual rent of those waterbodies are more than 1 Crore BDT (104,911$). Where do we fisherfolk get such big amount of money?"(Fisherman-4, Interview dated, 14.03.2020)

One well-off Hindu fisherman also mentioned the price and rent issues and added:

> There are some leaseholders who increase the price of this waterbody by taking them under a year's development scheme. (GC-1, CBO-2)

According to the NWMA-2009, one FCO can secure a beel of more than 20 acres from the government, either for 3 years or for 6 years under a development scheme. To get a beel under the development scheme, the FCO need to submit a project plan to the MoL.

[40]DoC-- Department of Co-operatives

In this case, the system is whichever price is higher in the previous 3 years leases, the new price will have to be a minimum of 25% more than that value. Fisherfolk respondents from Upazilla-2 reported that rich people submit their file to the Ministry by showing 30% or 40% increased value on the previous one.

The third obstacle for the fisherfolk to get a beel under the lease is finance management. One respondent (Local Elite-3) mentioned that each member has to spend a minimum of 10,000 BDT (105$), which may vary according to the size of the beel, the lease amount and other associated costs. In Upazilla-1, leaseholders manage a maximum portion of the lease amount through borrowing from 'Mohajon'. Local elite (Leaseholders) respondents from study area-1 mentioned that whatever amount they want, the 'Mohajon' will give it to them. But 'Mohajon' do not give these large amounts without any kind of assurance. Long term relations, previous history of loan repayment and trustworthiness play key roles in transactions of large amounts but, equally, it is important for the 'Mohajon' to be sure about that the FCO will get the lease. In this regard, one respondent added:

> If 'Mohajon' is not sure about the lease issues, why he will give you such a large amount of money? (Local Elite-4)

To get a beel under the lease, respondents emphasised the importance of good relations with local government officials, but a different view came from a respondent (Local Elite-4) who claimed good relationships do not give a guarantee that the beel will be leased out to that FCO, since the government officials may fail to bargain with higher and local level politicians who are members in UFC. This is also apparent from a local government official's (Upazilla-1) comment:

> ...every member has a list of choices, when we sit in the meeting. Higher and local-level politicians send me a list of names earlier...I have to consider their requests.....To manage them, I tell them about what could be the bid-price, so request them to tell their clients to declare a highest-bid. (Local government official-1, Interview dated 22.12.2019)

Both leaseholder and fisherfolk respondents accepted that in getting access what is most important is connection with local-level leaders who have access to the power. Since poor fisherfolk have less or no connection with local government officials and political leaders, they are deprived of the large amount of loan benefit from 'Mohajon'. Sometimes fisherfolk managed to secure lease through their local-level representative/ political leadersbut the process is different. One respondent explained this:

> ....In this case, if the lease money is 150000 BDT (1577$), he says he spent extra 100,000 BDT (1051$) for processing and securing the lease from the Upazilla. Then we repay 250000 BDT (2629$) by harvesting the waterbody (CG-2)

Connection with political leaders has become one of the core factors in getting a waterbody under lease since 2005 with the amendment of the National Wetland Management Act-2005, where higher-level and local-level politicians have been involved in the UFC (Chapter-2, Section-2.4.1). In study area-1, some leaseholders also manage their lease through a representative of the FCO in UFC. One fisherman respondent said there are 47 FCOs in CS-1, controlled by just 4 leaseholders. These 4 leaseholders are also members of the District and Upazilla level fisheries committee. This affiliation with UFC gives them power to participate in the leasing-related decision-making and ability to bargain for their own controlled FCO's. The responsibility of a leaseholder to his FCOs was manifested in an interview as follows:

> There are 10 FCOs in Union-2 under me....I look after their beel leasing related matters — i.e. who will submit tender for which beels.... I secure the beel

> for them. If I request to our politicians and UNO in the UFC meeting then they do not disagree. (EC-3, CBO-1, Interview dated 22.11.2019)

But leaseholders also reported that political connections do not always work to get access because local and higher-level political leaders like to support their core followers rather than fisherfolk or other leaseholders.

The presence of wealthy as well as politically influential people blocks poor fisherfolk community from participating in leasing. In the study area-2, it was found that powerful people make alliances to keep control over the waterbody. In this alliance, a rich financier has the maximum share. Fisherfolk respondents from study area-2 said they can apply for small waterbodies, which are approved by Upazilla office but, in this case, they also face obstruction. According to them, before the auction starts, it is decided who will get the lease. In this process, the FCO president, who has more money purchases each FCO president and secretary present there earlier in the auction and then sets the bid price. Fishermen respondents said that in such a case they had no alternative but to accept the agreement as the rich could bid for the highest price, well beyond their reach.

To access waterbodies, support from wealthy and politically influential people is necessary in both studied areas. They work as a bridging organisation between fisherfolk and the government. Sources of patron power come from economic power and their ability to make use of the political networks. Though government gives the highest priority to the fisherfolk and FCO, their very chances on the waterbody are continuously influenced by their financial hardship, social status, and lack of access to

power. These issues on the one hand compel them to depend on their patron and, on the other hand, create social and economic obligations to their patron.

5.2.1.3 Social support by local level leaders and 'Murubbis'[41]

In the studied areas, the relation between fisherfolk and the non-fisherman Muslim community is centuries old. All relations have a history and a reason for them. Past ties, tradition of the villages, and ritual practices contribute in creating cooperation and trust between them. Some respondents (Hindu) mentioned that the community is highly grateful and dependent on the Murubbis in that area for their existence. They saved them from the attack of the Pakistani military in the 1971 Liberation War. Many of the relatives of the Namashudra caste fled away to this area and got shelter here. He mentioned:

> The most respected family in our village is 'Chowdhury' paribaar. When liberation war started and the Pakistan army set village after village on fire, Altaf Chowdhury (pseudonym) then saved our village. Our Hindu families are saved because of him (CG-1).

He further added that, though village-1 and 2 have a Muslim majority, the Hindu community does not face any obstacle to organising their rituals. The Hindu community appreciates their Murubbis' activities in establishing social cohesion. The Murubbis in this village donate money to celebrate their biggest festival — 'Durga Puja' — and if any problem occurs in the village regarding observing religious events, they tackle those issues.

[41]Murubbi-The older person in an area, who is most respected.

In the studied areas, the Muslim fisherfolk community is considered the lowest social status (Section-5.1). They have some mobility restrictions in going to public places, but they shared that, in the case of going to Mashjid (Mosque), there is no obstacle, except the need to follow some social discipline. One respondent mentioned:

> ....Mashjid is 'Allah'rghor'[42]. Everyone has equal right to go there. But we do not sit in the front row of the mosque. Because whoever are the members of the Mashjid committee are our elders. We move away when they come. This is what we have been seeing since childhood and is what has been taught to us. It is not only applicable within Mashjid but also in other meetings arranged in the village. Our elders followed this to show respect to them and later that became the tradition. If we do not follow the rules properly, they make us correct (CG-2).

In every studied area there is a Mashjid committee. The Mashjid committee members are also a part of village Panchayat (discussed in Chapter-6). In the studied areas, Panchayat members are usually influential and wealthy landowners. To the village people, and particularly to the fisherfolk, they have immense importance. A respondent mentioned, "If anyone of us is in trouble, then they care for us. We seek help from them" (Fisherfolk-2).The major problem fisherfolk face is in arranging marriage for their daughters, as they are regarded in the society as 'Chotojaat'. Panchayat Murubbis in this case helped them in several ways. Fisherfolk in the studied areas are backed by the longstanding tradition followed over generations of 'Pachayat er dawat', which indicates the need to inform and invite the Panchayat members in fixing all marriage-related rituals and decisions. In this case, Panchayat gives the decision, and everyone carefully listens to it and follows it. One participant explains the reason for involving Panchayat as follows:

[42]Allah'r ghor--Holy House for worship

> They are the elders of our neighbourhood. Whether it is groom's family or bride's family the practice here is everyone collects information about the family, about the character of the bride and the groom, first from the Panchyat member. When there is a wedding-related conversation beginning in any house, we keep our Murubbis. They give a decision about the size of the bridal party to accompany the bridegroom, the amount of dowry and fix 'Moharana'[43]. They also sign as witness of the marriage (Ukil-Baap). A bride will be fortunate enough when a Murubbi takes her side by settling a higher 'Moharana' for her. This also raises her dignity in the groom's family. (GC-2, CBO-1)

Participants mentioned that decision about 'Moharana' depends on the relationship of the bride's or groom's father with Panchayat Murubbis. A good relation helps to get the decision on dowry and 'Moharana' in every family's (both bride's and groom's) favour. Though there is a strict legal restriction on dowry and early marriage, Panchayat members support it and assist village people out of a sense of obligation. One respondent said:

> The girl's family wants it. She has grown up in front of us. We know her age well. If we can't help the family what kind of Murubbi are we? (EC-1, CBO-1)

According to them, the benefit of early marriage in the fisherfolk society is twofold. First, fisherfolk are poor so, through a dowry, the groom's family benefits somewhat financially. Second, fisherfolk belong to the lowest social class and because of this they experience numerous marriage-related problems. Early marriage gives relief to the bride's family. If the girl is older and if anything wrong happens with her, for example physical harassment, then either no one wants to marry her and people make bad comments to her, or her family needs to pay a greater dowry. In this case, therefore, Murubbis help themto benefit both. Fisherfolk participants mentioned that Murubbis also play an important role in maintaining peace within the community. People respect

[43]Mohrana---Security money for women.

decisions taken by the Panchayat. Respondents mentioned that people usually want to solve issues through their Panchayat, thinking of the cost of litigation and fearing that all the support that Murubbis provide will be withdrawn.

Panchayat Murubbis also perform an important role in resource distribution. During interviews it was found that, in the studied areas, no wealthy person or an outsider can distribute material and non-material resources among the poor — if they wish to do so,they must go through the Panchayat. For example, during Muslim celebrations every well-off Muslims provides 'Zakat'[44]to the less-powerful group. However, the existing system of studied areas is that 'Zakat' needs to be handed over entirely to the Panchayat. Then Panchayat chief will distribute that money among the poor according to their consideration.

Social protection provided by the patron to the fisherfolk takes many forms. Fisherfolk firmly believe in 'Vaggo' (luck) and depend on the Imam[45] of their local village's mosque for the betterment of their fortune. They believe Imam possesses some spiritual power. For this reason, rich fisherfolk who are able to secure the lease follow a particular ritual — for example, they will never start fishing before 'Sinni', a ritual where on the Friday after the Jumma prayer the Imam of the local mosque, the fisherman and some elders in the Para gather in the beel. The Imam recites some Dua, Sura, from Quran Sharif, does a Munajat[46] and says a prayer seeking blessings from the

[44]Zakat--Islamic tax

[45] Imam—The person who leads prayer in the mosque—most respected person.

[46]Munajat is a zikir prayer and heart groan, begging for forgiveness from Allah.

almighty Allah. After that, they start fishing. They believe that if they do not follow this ritual, they will not be financially benefitted by that waterbody.

It is evident that establishing unity, stability and co-operation are the primary goals for social relations. Traditional authority, wisdom, knowledge and beliefs suggest a strong relationship between the non-fisherfolk Muslim community and other villagers. These values within the society to a great extent shape people's behaviour and how they act in certain situation.

5.2.2 How the patron-client relation is maintained over time

To the studied communities securing honour and ensuring security (access, economic and social) are the primary goals of financial, access and social relations. Values that contribute to making these relations continue to be more significant are faith, co-operation, respect, authority, social order, and livelihood security. But, to maintain these values over time, various practices must be advanced. Continuation and durability of patron-client relations over time depend on how the patron barters economic, social and political exchanges, the patron's ability to maintain affective ties, the extent of coercion, and the ability to serve multiple needs of clients simultaneously.

5.2.2.1 Rules and norms in access to the leaseholder's area

Fisherfolk respondents reflected on how they navigated unequal exchange relations by simply accepting the conditions. In Upazilla-1, both Hindu and Muslim fishermen manage their access to the leased waterbodies by providing a toll to the leaseholder.

Toll payment is an informal system to get access to the waterbody. FCO president and secretary determine the toll amount. This amount varies — first according to the position of the waterbody within the Haor. Waterbodies situated in the middle of the Haor have greater fish availability, so here toll is comparatively higher than other waterbodies, and second, on the use of fishing gears. The toll amount is high (1500-2000BDT, 16-21) for those who use 'Faron', 'Bosni' and 'Dori'[47] and boat. Leaseholder respondents in this regard said the toll varies because fish availability is high with these gears. One respondent said:

> I use boat to fish. I give a toll fee of 1000 BDT (12$) but it differs according to the size of the boat and number of people in the boat. If I take another person with me, then I have to pay 2000BDT (23$). (Fisherfolk-1)

Current net fishing is prohibited legally but most fisherfolk in the Haor use this gear as it is so efficient and, according to fisherfolk, their leaseholder does not impose any restrictions on them. This is helpful for them since they spend less time on fishing. In addition, if they need any enforcement-related support, the leaseholder helps them. In this regard, one respondent said, "I have no objection if they use the current net in my waterbody. The government may have this objection, but we have no restrictions" (Local Elite-3)

Fisherfolk respondents identified this relationship as the kind-heartedness of the leaseholder, since they give them the permission in their leased waterbody. Accordingly, they believe he has the right to charge any amount. The justification is that

[47]Faron, dori and bosni-local handmade fishing instruments

there are many leaseholders who have inherited waterbodies and leased waterbodies but do not give the permission to fish there, so complying with their access rules is necessary. The fisherfolk live with access uncertainty, so the 'kind-heartedness' of the leaseholder invisibly regulates their ideology to accept any kind of condition.

> This is his kindness and willingness that he gives me permission in his waterbody. Now whatever amount of toll he wants, and the rules he fixes for fishing we have to follow those. (Fisherfolk-1)

Paying tolls is not necessarily designed with the purpose of providing access security but can also be seen as increasing the economic power of the leaseholder. As one respondent said, "Taking toll for fishing is beneficial to us. Every year our FCO can earn 20,000 - 40,000 BDT (210-420) extra from this source, which we can deposit in our accounts and use at the time of leasing" (Local Elite-3).

The deference fisherfolk show in this relationship by complying with rules gives them opportunity to pay the toll flexibly, either at the end of the year or on a daily or monthly basis. The opportunity to get access and the flexibilities in toll payment ties fisherfolk with their leaseholder in a long-term relation. Fisherfolk provide the toll to the leaseholder for 1 year but, in reality, they cannot fish in the dry season[48]. Fisherfolk said that from April to September they do not have any time restriction for fishing. From September, the floodplains start to get dry and in the deepest place the water level goes down to 4-5 feet. The fishable water area gets slenderer. Within each leased area there exists a separate contractual arrangement. The deepest part of the waterbody is allocated

[48]Dry season--October to March

exclusively for those who set 'Dolkata'[49] and arrange artificial fish habitats. General fishermen can fish outside the area of 'Dolkata' called 'Chapra'. 'Dolkata' work here like a demarcation line. Regarding the dividing up of the fishing area, one respondent gave justification as follows:

> Not everyone can bear the cost of 'Dolkata' and nor has that financial ability. To make this 'Dolkata' it takes 15000-30000 BDT (173-346) depending on the size..... during lean season we stop all type of fishing within our beel. Otherwise when we break/remove the 'Dolkata' the fish will be scattered surround the area. We need to make some profit. Isn't it? (Local Elite-3)

According to the leaseholders, setting 'Dolkata' on a waterbody is essential. The moral justification is that 'Dolkata' works here as a shade to protect fish from excessive sunlight. Without 'Dolkata' the water will be warmed and reduce the possibilities of fish surviving. A different opinion was voiced by the fisherfolk respondents, who mentioned that due to 'Dolkata' the amount of catch cannot always be so high because underneath the 'Dolkata' the leaseholder provides lots of fish feeds, hence the fish cannot get away from that area, which results in less- catch and less-income for the general fisherfolk. But the FCO leaders can impose conditions and can take several steps in return of expenses on 'Dolkata' and leasing. One respondent argued that:

> When we secure the waterbody, 'Dolkata' has to be given. We have to do this to keep the fish in one place. Otherwise, everybody will start to catch fish, consume fish. Without 'Dolkata', the movement of fish is tough to control. Every leaseholder in this Haor does this. (Local Elite-4)

Fisherfolk respondents, though, mentioned disadvantages of 'Dolkata', simultaneously they also support this from the perspective of the ability of the leaseholder in securing the lease and providing them access.

[49]Dolkata--Brush piles

5.2.2.2 Distribution of income among FCO members

A critical issue is how the income is distributed among the members of a FCO. The process leaseholders follow is different in the two study areas but in each the way they distribute gives maximum benefit to them. One respondent (Local Elite-3) from study area-1 stated that, after securing a lease, leaseholders divide waterbody into different parts according to its size, make 4 or 5 groups involving 8 to10 members within the FCO, and sell those parts at a little higher price to each group. The president and secretary determine the price. Two reasons lie behind leaseholder's group-making and selling strategies — first to avoid complexities and to establish co-operation. According to the respondent

> It is not possible to fish in a place 40/50 members altogether. Moreover, the group member's relation may not be always good. Not everyone wants to fish with everyone (Local Elite-3)

He further mentioned that not everyone in every group can afford the money, since most of the fisherfolk are poor and so group leaders bear the costs and share their daily income according to the contribution and expenditure of members. The second reason is to increase the funds of FCO and utilise it later for leasing purposes or to help financially any of the members of that FCO.

In the study areas-2, the waterbodies are large in size and the lease value, rent and maintenance costs are beyond the reach of poor fishermen. In thesection-5.2.1.2 it was mentioned that, in Upazilla-2, politically influential and wealthy people make alliances to get control over the waterbody. The system practised here in income-sharing is that except the shareholders, other members of the FCO cannot get permission to access the

waterbody. Shareholders bear the annual rent cost. As an investor and paying annual rent, the shareholders can fish every year from December to February with hired fishermen, own boats and fishing gears, and the earnings are distributed among the shareholders. Only the earnings in the third year are divided into 17 parts and one part of the income is distributed equally among the FCO members. The remaining 16 parts are divided according to the shareholder's share in the waterbody. There are different views found regarding this distribution. One respondent (fisherfolk-3) said that it is advantageous because, due to financial insolvency, the fisherfolk cannot participate in the lease, and they get a part of the earnings though theycannot enter the waterbody. He further mentioned that shareholders also give fish to each member in the FCO as a reward along with income. But from another respondent it was found that this is not an equal system of exchange:

> Rich people earn huge amount of money from the waterbody but we can't even see that money. In Chaitra Sankranti[50] the shareholders earn daily nearly 50 lacs BDT (52,455$), and yearly they earn 8-10 Crores BDT (839,288-1049.11$), but our daily income is only 250BDT (3$). The fisherfolk members of the FCO cannot get entry into the waterbody. (Fisherfolk-4)

Without FCO, no one can bring a beel so there is a good reason for the fisherfolk to bargain about access but respondents said initially they are involved in an income share agreement (1% for large and 2% for small beel), which obstructs their capacity to bargain regarding access. Moreover, according to the fisherfolk, if they disagree with this agreement, leaseholders will use another FCO to secure the lease and they will lose the benefit.

[50]Chaitra-Sankranti—Last day of Bengali year.

5.2.2.3 Maintaining affective ties in sub-lease arrangement

According to the National Wetland Management Act-2009, a sub-lease system of any waterbody is strictly forbidden and considered an act that leads to withdrawal of the lease. But, in the studied areas, sub-leasing is widely practised. This is an informal arrangement where the original leaseholder secures lease and then sells it at a high price to individual well-off fishermen or to a group. This study found affective ties (Scott, 1972) is maintained with keens, supporters of ruling party leaders and people from their religion in distributing original and sub-lease. In study area-1, the original leaseholders are mainly non-fishermen Muslim involved with local-level politics who control the area in favour of the higher-level politicians. These higher-level politicians who are members of the leasing committee at the Upazilla and district level favour their followers when making leasing decisions. These followers then sell that lease to the fisherfolk group. But in this case they also follow affective ties. In this regard one respondent (Hindu) shared an experience

> ....Last year Kamal, the right-hand of theUP chairman, secured three beels and sold them as a sub-lease contract to us. In that group, 4 were Hindus and the other 8 were Muslim. When Kamal sold the beels, 'Mahimals' in our group suddenly decided not to fish with us. Soa 'Shalish'[51] was called to solve where we will fish. But when we went to our beel we found 'Mahimals' had already put 'Dolkata' there. We went again to the Kamal and told him that we would pay for the 'Dolkata' they set in our area, but he said to involve the 'Mahimals' in our group and fish the area together. Now, look at the decision. 'Mahimals' will fish in their area and also in our area. Isn't it showing biasedness to his 'Gyati Vai'[52]..." (GC-2, CBO-2, Interview dated 11.12.2019).

[51]Shalish-Social system for informal adjudication of petty disputes/ local conflicts by Murubbis or Shalishkar.
[52] Gyati Vai-- people from same religion

It was found that he could raise his voice but liked to avoid doing so. According to him, as he is Namashudra and fishing is his only occupation, he has to stay home without doing anything, if he cannot fish. So it's better not to complain about discrimination.

5.2.2.4 Access to market and income

Provision of credit is central in economic relations between 'Mohajon' and fisherfolk. Credit is advanced to fisherfolk for a secured future supply of fish. It was observed that the fish market in both of the studied areas is controlled by 'Mohajon'. Fisherfolk cannot sell their catches directly to the 'Paikaar'[53] — the 'Mohajon' carries out the auction process. Instead of considering the weight of the total fish catch, the system of auction practised here is according to each 'Khaola'[54]and crate. The 'Mohajon' determines a starting price and the price differs according to fish category, quality and amount of fish in the 'Khaola' or crates. In the fish market, fisherfolk are only price takers. One respondent said:

> There is no limit on the price. 'Mohajon' starts the auction. It depends on him. If the quantity of fish is low, the auction price starts from 300 BDT (3.14$) and this can range to 15000 BDT (157$) or more in our fish market (Fisherfolk-1).

But a different view is found from study area-2, where the fish market sits within the Haor and, whether the fish is large or small or costly, the price is fixed here according to each boat. The 'Mohajon' collects the fish from the boats, separates them in different baskets and then starts auctioning. The 'Mohajon' sets the limit of the range. In both of

[53]Paikaar –Fish trader
[54]Khaola –Basket, locally made with bamboos to keep fish.

the studied places, fisherfolk report they consciously accept the price and trust the 'Mohajon' about the fish price. One respondent stated that:

> 'Mohajon' has an idea about the amount and weight so he set the price accordingly. He will give me the price prevailing in the market. When there are similar categories of fish in the market, the price becomes lower. We have to depend on his 'kindly fixed prices' (Fisherfolk-4)

Fisherfolk also commented that sometimes 'Paikaars' try to make negotiation and sometimes they give a little less money to the 'Mohajon' but 'Mohajon' gives them (fisherfolk) the price settled at auction.

Fisherfolk respondents reported that they know they cannot make profit from their catch but they are incapable to do any bargain. It was observed in the fish market, when fisherfolk enter into the fish market with fish, the 'Mohajon' or his assistants' first count the number of 'Khaola' or crates. The fisherfolk said the bazar committee keeps a certain amount of money for per 'Khaola' and crates and this price is set by the bazar committee. One respondent stated that:

> When we enter into the market with our catch, it is no longer in our hands. 'Mohajon's assistants just drag it from us and start the auction. Everyone starts to take a share from it. Even the sweeper in the market picks fish for himself, which he sells later. We have nothing to say here. This is the system that has been going year after years (Fisherfolk-1)

It was observed in the studied areas' fish markets that, at the outset of the auctioning process, and even during the auction, the 'Mohajon' separates a portion of fish from every basket of individual fisherfolk, which is called 'Khabar mach'[55]. To fisherfolk, this is a kind of reward that the 'Mohajon' takes from every catch. This act by the

[55]Khabar Mach---Best fish in entire catch for Mohajon's consumption.

‘Mohajon’ certainly reduces quantity of fish before auctioning. But, this unwritten rule of the fish market has been complied by the fisherfolk community year after year and it was observed that they do not make any complaint about this rule. This exemplifies how the ‘Mohajon’ controls fisherfolk behaviour in the market with his power over the market and power over the credit that he has lent to the fishermen. At the end of the auction process, ‘Mohajon’ takes the money from ‘Paikaars’, keeps 10% of the money (4% is for conducting the auction and 6% is the interest of the credit) and gives the remaining amount to the fisherman and keeps these records of transaction in a notebook. ‘Khabar mach’ and 4% commission is equally destined for all fisherfolk who come to sell fish. The fisherfolk mentioned it as ‘Mohajon’s ‘Doya’, i.e. kindness that he agreed to sell their catches.

Fisherfolk who borrow money from the ‘Mohajon’ do not have the freedom to sell their catch in any market they choose — instead they have to choose the specific local market that their ‘Mohajon’ prefers. One respondent commented, “He gives us money, so we are bound to him to give all of our catches to him” (Fisherfolk-2). He further mentioned that:

> ....even it is not possible to keep some fishes for own. How can I hide fish? If I bring something in one house, it becomes news in all houses. Not all neighbours accept it in a good way. They may tell this to ‘Mohajon’, which will hamper my relation with ‘Mohajon’, he may hesitate to give credit later (Fisherfolk-2).

Fisherfolk do not want to break the trust because they feel insecure and think it's a long-term social relation. Continuation of a relationship in this case also depends on rewards given by the ‘Mohajon’ to fishermen. Fishermen respondents confirmed that when they

have a good catch the ‘Mohajon’ gives a reward to them of 250gm or 500gm fish for their own consumption and also reduces the entire amount (with interest) a little bit when they complete their borrowing period (a season). This benevolent act of ‘Mohajon’ helps them to maintain a dependency relation. One fisherman respondent justified their dependency on ‘Mohajon’ in this way — that he doesn’t demand anything else from them except the catch so it is their responsibility to respond towards his expectation of them. It was observed from the fish market that when the auction is complete then the ‘Mohajon’ sells his ‘Khabar mach’ to the ‘Paikaars’ at a high price. Fisherfolk, though fully informed about this, do not say anything since the ‘Mohajon’ also gives a tiny share from this to them and in this way he actually controls their behaviour and their voice in the market. A fisherfolk said:

> When ‘Mohajon’ completes the auction, he gives us some money (100 BDT-300 BDT, 1.04$- 3.14$) for breakfast. We go for breakfast. In the meantime he also sells his portion ‘Khabar Mach’. There is nothing to hide. If he sells ‘Khabar mach’ for 8000 BDT (84$), for example, then he can give us some from that for breakfast. (Fisherfolk-2)

Fisherfolk who are not borrowing money from ‘Mohajon’ are free to choose their market and can also sell their catch to their neighbours flexibly. In this case, they have some bargaining power and are not simply bound by the ‘Mohajon’s hand. But they consciously avoid having to think of a good price for their catch, the extra transportation cost, the time taken to find out about a bazar, the risks and thinking about the future. One respondent said

> Fish are a perishable item. If I am not selling it in this nearby market, then it will start to go rotten as the day progresses. Who will then buy my catches? Also, it doesn't matter in which market I will go because it is never possible to bypass ‘Mohajon’. Every fish market is controlled by ‘Mohajon’. So, it is better to sell here... It needs to keep good relation. I have two daughters. During their marriage I have to take his help. (CG-2)

The study found that ‘Mohajon’ gets profit from the interest of the lent money, his commission to conduct the auction, his own portion ‘Khabar mach’ and from the bazar committee, whereas, after deducting all costs, the fishermen are able to save a minimal amount.

5.2.2.5 Access to justice

To resolve conflicts within society, Panchyat conducts ‘Shalish’. ‘Shalish’ is an integral part of the Panchayat where informal arbitration by the chief takes place regarding different issues such as land and waterbody-related disputes, marriage-related issues, political or religious tensions, political conflict, etc. In the studied area, it was found that justice is highly linked to ethnicity and gender. One respondent (CG-10, Hindu) mentioned that during the last year conflict had arisen based on a football match held in their village and her son was injured there by a Muslim. She wanted justice from the village Panchayat. Panchayat did not refuse her justice, but she mentioned they continuously postponed and changed the date of the meeting. From the respondent’s view, a religion-based majoritarian tendency was at work here as she argued that “possibly our leaders do not think it will be good for them to punish a person of their religion, that’s why, in abstaining from taking a decision, they keep him in the upper position and make us lower in society.”

Female respondent from village-1 pointed toward access to judgment and said it is highly biased towards men. In ‘Shalish’, women cannot represent their complaints or opinion directly. If any incident happens, two representatives from Panchayat are sent to

hear women's opinions and then they present those women's opinions before Panchayat. So here justice depends on how the representatives' present a woman's opinion to the Panchayat. The respondent said that it often happens these representatives forget to tell everything they hear from the woman to the Panchayat and if the decision goes against them, wronged or discriminated, women cannot take any step and has no way to say that it is wrong. According to her, if a woman is accused of any incident, she is either financially charged or physically punished in front of others, and this punishment may also be in the form of stopping a meal — but a male, whether he is a fisherman or non-fisherman, will never be financially charged if the decision goes against them. Regarding why a male will not be financially charged, a respondent from elite group says:

> It can't be done, charging a man financially when the case is related with a woman, will lower our male-community, and that family's 'Ijjat' (honour) in front of this society. (EC-1, CBO-1, Interview dated 01.11.2019)

A systematic form of discrimination was found to be at play here as a means of prioritising patriarchy. The fieldwork identified a variety of arrangements spanning access, social and financial relations complemented by social and economic obligations, trust, respect, and wisdom. Though the benefits produced by this relation are uneven in nature, they support the patron most but it was found in fisherfolk, women negotiate with uneven benefits. It does not mean they are unwilling to do so rather consciously negotiate with different conditions imposed by patrons for maintaining relations and future benefit.

5.3 Concluding summary

In conclusion, this chapter has presented data concerning patron-client relations in the studied areas. Findings show that fisherfolk and women are placed in the lowest social position. Different social norms, rules, and practices constrained their social, economic, educational, and political opportunities. One crucial finding is the relations between these powerful and non-powerful are not always financial and reciprocal. To secure needed economic, access, and social services, these less-powerful groups depend on their patron, ‘Mohajon’, leaseholders, and Murubbis. The support patron provides here in their daily lives in marriage-related support, conflict resolution, saving honour, spiritual and showing affection and generosity, creating a feeling of obligation within the less-powerful to comply with their rules and condition. It is apparent that the less-powerful are trapped in these relations, and the benefits distributed here are unequal, but it is not a coerced relation. Less-powerful people know about the unequal nature of benefits. As they don’t have any choice they think it is appropriate to follow their rules and norms to secure future benefits.

Chapter 6: Elite capture of co-management by the Panchayat

6.1 Introduction

Chapter-6 applies the analytical framework to analyse how socially-embedded institutions influence responses by actors to the introduction of fisheries co-management as a bureaucratic institution and shape the space for participation; it also analyses forms and manifestation of power. This chapter responds to the research question: How is co-management influenced by existing institutions? The introduction of co-management does not happen in an institutional vacuum but enters a situation of multiple pre-existing institutions, which may resist, engage with, or influence the introduced institution. Bureaucratic and socially-embedded institutions are pieced together and navigated within and beyond the participatory space of fisheries co-management structures, influencing who participates and who can influence decision-making, thereby affecting ecological and livelihood outcomes. In the previous chapter, Sections-5.2.1 and 5.2.2 discussed the support the Panchayat gives to the studied community and their importance to the fisherfolk community. This chapter focuses on the influence of the Panchayat on co-management. To do this, the chapter is divided into 3 sections: the first section analyses how the Panchayat operate as elite actors in the case-study villages and how they captured co-management; the second section investigates the institutional basis of the Panchayat and how the Panchayat influences co-management structure; and the third section investigates how power is manifested in co-management.

6.2 Who are the elite and how do they capture co-management?

In Section-3.4.3 of Chapter-3, the literature review mentioned that traditional leaders who get authority from customary resource governance can occupy various locations of authority and scale up their power by using authoritative resources (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007; Béné et al., 2009; Wong, 2010; Njaya et al., 2012). This section, therefore, focuses on an analysis of who the elite in the studied areas are, what authoritative resources they hold and use, and how they have captured co-management.

6.2.1 Who are the elites?

In the studied villages, Panchayat committees were found to operate as elite actors. Panchayat governs the studied villages. According to the literature (Mahboob, 2003), the Panchayat system was abolished in Bangladesh before liberation in 1971, but it still exists informally, and the system is not a unique case in the studied places. Deb (2009) discusses the Panchayat system in the floodplain area in Bangladesh. But Mahboob (2003) suggests that the system is not widespread in Bangladesh and that many factors — absence of influential lineage, wealth, education, the influence of national politics, etc. — have contributed to this. Respondents could not accurately pinpoint the time of its formation in the studied areas. Someone mentioned that it is a century old. Some Murubbis said this system has existed since before independence, and fisherfolk respondents noted that this system has prevailed since their ancestors migrated here, probably at the time of partition, 1947, which indicates it is the oldest system practised in the studied areas. This informal social organisation can be regarded as elite because first, it is made up of the most influential people in the village.

Panchayat is headed by influential members of lineage in the village and members come here from the Murubbis of different Para whom respondents identified as 'Shommanito Bekti' (most respected person). Second, the chief and other members of the Panchayat play a significant role in the village governance system, perform the adjudicative function, maintain social stability and moral orders, and reduce tensions (Chapter-5, Sections-5.2.1 and 5.2.2). One respondent said in this regard:

> As to govern or 'Sashon' a family, a guardian is essential. The same is true in the case of villages. Panchayat is our guardian. (GC-3, CBO-1)

The Panchayat holds different authoritative resources (Cleaver, 2012) that allow it to maintain control over people. The number of members of the Panchayat can generally vary from 5 to 20. There is no specific position — for instance, president, secretary, treasurer, etc. — in the Panchayat. The chief of the Panchayat holds the right to take decisions on any issues, but if he wants, he may consult with other Panchayat Murubbis. The chief of the Panchayat enjoys power so long as he is physically capable or until he decides to surrender the position. The second important characteristic of the Panchayat committee is that it is highly gendered. There is no room for women in the Panchayat committee. Two reasons are at work here for not involving women — first, the strong social norms of women not to talk or go in front of elders and, second, the virilocal marriage system[56] supports considering women as less-experienced about village issues, its governance-related issues, previous stories about that village, incidents that happened earlier in the village, and decisions taken by Murubbis. A woman respondent in this regard said that women are not allowed to be a part of or member of the Panchayat system, but they can only be a witness in an incident. Women

[56]Virilocal marriage system — Under this system a woman resides with or near the husband's parents.

are not offered any chairs in the 'Shalish' of the Panchayat. The third characteristic of Panchayat is that it is highly class-based. Where mixed inhabitants live, the Panchayat is formed by involving only non-fisherfolk. Fisherfolk respondents mentioned that migration of their forefathers and their traditional occupation, which is considered impure and socially lowered, are the two reasons that place them in a disadvantageous position. These issues force them to accept being discriminated against in society by the powerful non-fisherfolk and restrict their involvement in the Panchayat committee. Therefore, ideas of purity and pollution need to be seen from the angle of the economic and political power of the upper class or caste members who produce such division (Singh, 2002).

Commonly, a village can have one to three Panchayat. Respondents shared the idea of two forms of Panchayat— first, based on territorial boundaries, where a Panchayat is formed for 200-250 families in a village and, second, religion-based Panchayat, since some studied villages contain Hindu and Muslim communities. Hindu communities maintain a different Panchayat since their cultures and religious practices differ. The Hindu Panchayat committee is not vertically dependent on the Muslim Panchayat. But in the case of any conflict between the two religious groups in the villages, they sought support from the Muslim Panchayat, or, for any judgment or social program, they invited the members of the other Panchayat. Respondents said this is mainly done to maintain good relations, since they are a minority group. The level of control a Panchayat has over people can vary according to religious identity. In Section-5.1 of Chapter-5, it was shown that a majoritarian view works in the Muslim community. Due

to ethnic identity and minority, the Hindu Panchayat and its leaders do not have control over people in the mixed society.

Respondents from Executive Committee (EC), General Committee (GC), and elite groups said that the Panchayat committee plays a proactive role in organising any social and cultural programs within the village and in resolving conflicts. The Panchayat calls a meeting and, in this case, they invite the families within its territory. Attendance of at least 40-50 people is considered 'Boidho' (valid), and decisions are taken here accepted as is agreed by all. Though it would seem decisions are taken collectively, most villagers rarely take part in the discussion and decisions taken. Respondents from GC and fisherfolk said that the Panchayat chief presides over the Panchayat meeting, passes orders, and the Panchayat has the power to decide all issues regarding the well-being of the area and community. According to the respondents, not everyone is allowed to talk in the meeting, and it is considered 'Ovodrota' (bad manners). Only the Panchayat chief and members can speak in the meeting, and others listen to them. According to respondents, these are not any written rules, just customs that have been maintained for generations. The moral order of the villages is high because there is a fear of social exclusion. Assaulting Murubbis and disobeying the judgments of Panchayat is considered the most hated offence, and punishment involves 'Ekghore/Samajchuto' (exclusion from community and Panchayat*)* and public shaming. This indicates two things — first, in the studied community, the capacity for collective action is limited by the moral and social order and, second, how the Panchayat, as the elite, keeps control over the community. Members of the Panchayat are firmly the elite in the villages and have several roles ('Shalishkar' i.e. adjudicator/ arbitrator, 'Ukil-

Baap' i.e. witness of marriage, resource distributor, discussed in Chapter-5, Section-5.2.2) that re-affirm this status.

During interviews, no direct relations between the Panchayat and local governance and legal system were found, but the respondents reported a couple of indirect relationships. For example, one respondent said:

> If the decision of Panchayat goes against anyone, that person can file a case in the Magistrate court. But he or she will ask first in the court whether Panchayat took any initiatives in this regard, the opinion of the chief of the Panchayat. If they find there has been no involvement of Panchayat or the decision given by the Panchayat is accurate, then the court will send back the person to solve again through Panchayat. That's why their judgment is so important. (GC-2, CBO-1)

The above example indicates how a formal body — a Magistrate court — acknowledges and gives importance to the judgment of an informal body. This amplifies the power of Panchayat members though they are not formally recognised.

Panchayat Murubbis hold many resources that give them authoritative power — authority, reputation, social position, religion, gender, occupational identity (non-fisherfolk), knowledge, experience, etc. With these authoritative resources Panchayat leaders have locked local people in hierarchical and deferential structures (Platteau andGaspart, 2003) and moral obligations. The studied projects aimed to increase the number of fisherfolk and women in the resource management committees, bring them into leadership positions, and improve their leadership capabilities. But the critical issue

is how far these aims can be achievable when the de-facto governance is robust and controlled by a group of social leaders.

6.2.2 How elites capture co-management

This sub-section presents data on what factors enabled the elite to capture fisheries co-management, how Panchayat interacted and influenced the newly crafted co-management in fisheries, and sets out to explain how co-management was captured. The potential for elite capture was enabled from the start by the informal expectation that any external organisation would first get permission to work in the village from the Panchayat. In both study sites, according to the NGO staff, the first challenging issue was to get entry to the studied villages since every village has a social order that is governed and maintained by the Panchayat Murubbis of that village. For that reason, NGO staff in both areas reported their communication with Panchayat members prior to introducing co-management and forming committees at the village level. For example, one respondent mentioned:

> We first looked for 'Panchayat Prodhan' of that village. Without his permission, it is not possible to enter the village. We conducted meetings with them and introduced them to the objectives of the project. When we were able to convince them that the project is beneficial then we were able to enter the village. (NGO staff -1, Interview dated 03.12.2019)

Another NGO respondent referred to the degree of control Murubbis have over people:

> It is not like that the general people of these villages will coordinate or come to us so easily whenever we call them. Here the villages are controlled by a group of Murubbis.....If we want to do any development related works in the village, we cannot do anything without informing and involving Panchayat Murubbis." (NGO staff-2, Interview dated 10.01.2020)

Another possible reason for elite capture was that the Panchayat chief and other Murubbis helped in introducing co-management in the studied areas. During interviews it was found that co-management was not equally accepted by some powerful leaseholders within and outside of the villages because once the waterbodies were under their control. Therefore, they had a fear that with this development intervention this exclusive right and control over the waterbodies would not exist anymore. Respondents in all study sites reported the spreading of false propaganda against NGO activities by some of these powerful leaseholders before the project started development activities. Panchayat chiefs had sufficient authoritative resources to mobilise other Murubbis. One respondent, who is chief of the Panchayat said in this regard

> The officer first came to our 'Chowdhury' house and talked with me. I found their plan was beneficial as in this way our beels will remain to us..... I then called some other Murubbis of Panchayatat my house....After that we talked with our villagers and then they entered into village, able to talk with my village people (EC-1, CBO-1).

From the NGO respondents it was apparent that avoiding Panchayat was not so easy. Certainly, in the studied villages, Panchayat has social power, but it was found that NGO staffs also highly prioritised them from the very beginning, which further amplified their power. The pattern of communication of NGO staff with Panchayat, regarding committee formation is important while investigating what facilitated the capture of co-management. In study area-2, the NGO staff and respondents from EC of the CBO-3, 4 and 5 reported that Panchayat members were given the responsibility to form the committee at the village level. Generally, in the Panchayat meeting, the Panchayat chief and other Murubbis take decisions first and later inform the community, and this was followed here. As one respondent said:

> They came to our village and visited to us, asked to form a committee and to give an announcement in the Mashjid about to present all villagers in the open ground of our high school on a certain day. On that day they will finalise the committee... Before that day a few of us sat down after the Maghrib prayer and took the decision about who could be involved. They finalised the committee that we made. (EC-1, CBO-3, Interview dated 20.01.20)

Two things are apparent from this — first, stakeholder identification in this case was just a formality and, second, the Panchayat Murubbis' choice got the highest priority. When local fisherfolk were asked why they did not become involved in co-management, they responded in surprise and one (Fisherfolk-4) said, "They (NGO/government) just come to them, to the 'Borolok' (rich people), no one come to us." Another respondent (Fisherman-3) said, "....they cannot reach to us.....We are poor, but our 'Borolokera' (richest people) are poorer than us. They distribute all benefits among themselves before coming to us. When any benefit comes for us, they promptly snatch them."

NGO staff clarified two reasons at play behind such stakeholder identification — first, the fixed time period for the project and, second, political influence, such as linkages between higher-level politicians and Murubbis. He mentioned that:

> We are given a fixed time frame, within which we need to complete work, fulfil the objectives. If they do homework from earlier about the committee formation, then different problems, conflicts cannot arise in that open meeting, which is very time consuming.....All projects are not the same. Some donors are fixed in their selection of beneficiary. But we know the exact situation is different. The way donor thinks to involve beneficiary and to do a work it may not always be possible to maintain that frame (NGO staff-2)

Question was asked why it was not possible and he highlighted the political influence that he experienced in the early stages that how some Panchayat chiefs and Murubbis who were also involved with local politics influenced actors' involvement in the committee. He said:

> ....Higher level politicians directly said to us to involve their people if we want to work here. Now some chiefs, who are also political party leaders in the respective Ward, contain a large vote bank. They have their own nominated persons. For this reason, we cannot involve all categories (NGO staff-2).

Therefore, in the study area-2, NGO staff maintained communication with Murubbis and prioritised them in committee formation considering the influence and time frame of the project. Murubbis utilised their power in forming the committee. A very limited number of fisherfolk were involved in the CBOs, but not as EC members, rather GC members. NGO staff chose not to interfere with the decision Panchayat took about committee formation. In the study area-2, capture of the co-management structure occurred at the outset of the project.

In study area-1, at the outset of the project, CGs (Chapter-2, Section-2.3.4) were formed by involving 15-20 members. According to the organogram of CBO-1 and 2 (2005), CG consists of members from the entire resource user community - fisherfolk, farmers, landless labourers and women, who live adjacent to waterbodies, depend on the wetland resources and 60% members of CBO will be from CG. These small groups were formed to provide access to credit. Here, membership is based on making regular personal savings. The study found exclusion of fisherfolk from CG happened at various stages. Local fisherfolk were asked why they did not become involve with CG. Respondents

highlighted the conditions of membership, and their financial and land-holding status. One respondent said:

> It's not for us....To get credit they say I have to show a minimum saving of 600-700 BDT (7-8$) or I should have something of my own. Where do I find this money instantly? The house I am living is not mine. ...How could I enter in this group? (Fisherfolk-1)

Thompson and Choudhury (2003) mentioned that CG membership under project-1 followed the NGO practice for credit and saving program in Bangladesh where members needed to have under 0.2 ha of land and under 8 years of education. This indicates that, although in the CG there was provision for involving people from different professions, it was not possible for extremely poor fisherfolk or their families to become involved in the CG. A similar finding is also apparent from a study of Khan and Ahmed (2017), where the authors reported local fisherfolk living in the surrounding vicinity could not become involved in project-1, which raises the question to what extent co-management is open to everyone.

During the fieldwork it was found that, for the fisherfolk, it is very difficult to get a leadership position. Respondents said that in every CG there is a leader, secretary and treasurer but these are not elected posts — rather, group members select them through a 'Ghorowa boithok[57]'. There was no exact criterion for selection, but the study found NGO staff maintained their own informal criteria from the beginning that a CG leader needs to have institutional capacity, time, and some leadership capabilities to run the group, which was apparent from one respondent's interview:

[57]Ghorowa Boithak—Informal meeting held at one's house with few people's participation.

> The officer told us that to run a group a leader needs to be honest and educated, and must have knowledge on account-related work, as they will scrutinise all loan applications of the group's members, will recommend to FCG for loan, and will be someone whose decisions everyone in the group will accept and will need to be able to give time for the group. (CG-4)

It was found that, instead of encouraging fisherfolk to take up CG's leadership positions, the NGO staff pushed them to think for alternatives. Respondents from CG reported that they selected their Murubbis from each Para as their CG leader and these were mainly teachers, Imam of the mosque, etc. The priorities of NGO staff and lack of institutional capacity pushed most of the fisherfolk to be excluded from CG leadership positions from the very beginning. CG respondents shared that there are very few CGs headed by fisherfolk, and that these are rich fisherfolk.

Fisherfolk exclusion not only happened in CGs but also from FCGs. To increase user group sustainability, CGs were united into FCGs, which manage the savings of the members and lend credit to the members. The leader, secretary and cashier of every CG became members of these FCGs. According to some respondents, FCG committee formation was done under the supervision of NGO staff, where their choice for non-fisherfolk Murubbi was prioritised. One respondent said:

> For the President post the NGO staff arranged a vote.... Me and Touhid Vai (Pseudonym, a Murubbi in a Para) both got the same votes but instead of deciding by toss the concerned NGO-staff requested me to give him the responsibility (CG-1).

The process indicates the likelihood of fisher folk to be selected in the EC of FCG was very minimal and this was made worse by the strong intervention of the NGO staff in

selecting office-bearers of FCG at the initial stage. Respondents identified FCG as "Borolok er shongothon" (organisation of rich people). Béné et al. (2009) identified lack of institutional and other capacities of the fisherfolk as their initial limitation and observed that, due to this, devolved power often ends up in collusion between agency and traditional leaders.

Fisherfolk exclusion is not uncommon in fisheries co-management initiatives taken in other countries. The literature (Nunan et al., 2012; Hara, 2008) highlights how lack of authoritative resource has disappointingly prevented fisherfolk from benefitting from fisheries management.

This study found that, though the guidelines of project-1 emphasised inclusiveness in member selection in the CBO, the reality was different. Respondents in the study area-1 shared that member selection in the CBO was initially made through 'Uthan Boithok'[58], where Murubbis and inhabitants of those Para's, and NGO staff, were present at the meeting. However, the process of member selection was found similar to the second study site. As NGO staff (Study area-1) reported, "We told Murubbis of every Para to make a committee who will manage the beel." During interviews with NGO staff and EC respondents, it was found that through each 'Uthan Boithok' 2 or 3 people had been selected from elite/CG/fisherfolk/other professions for representation in CBO by the Murubbis. One respondent (EC-1, CBO-1) said, "We had decided who are able and who will work in the project." This process indicates that, though member selection was

[58]Uthan Boithak---Meeting in Courtyard of anyone's house.

done in the presence of the inhabitants of that Para, it was the Panchayat Murubbis who controlled selection. Respondents from CG, GC and fisherfolk reported that Murubbis chose people from their own class and chose only those fisherfolk who were working in their controlled FCOs. They identified them as 'Nijer lok' (own people), 'Kaser lok' (nearer one), or 'Nijer bisshosto'(dependable). This was also found by Choudhury et al. (2016), in a study on a project-1 where they saw that, rather than involving people from all classes, the process excluded a particular section in the society. This biased method of member selection empowered the Murubbis (Discussed in Chapter-7) and created a different perspective about participation among fishermen. General fisherfolk think that since it is done in front of NGO staff they must also be supporting such an undemocratic process. They described it like this: "This is the system of how things generally happen." One respondent (GC-3, CBO-1) said, "Officer has taught them how to do this work, given them all responsibilities. Not everyone can enter if he/she wants to." Esman and Uphoff (1984) mentioned this process of member selection by the Murubbis as a shortcut way to mobilise people and Beard and Phakphian (2012, p.11) warn that this shortcut process can "create an environment ripe for capture by more powerful interests". Panchayat Murubbis in this case not only involve their own people but also instil their views about participation in co-management.

Respondents said that the selection of five office-bearers and other EC members was made in the office of the Union Parishad. Though the selection process rested on the members present, during interview with a NGO respondent it was found the process was regulated by the NGO staffs who mostly emphasised inherited leadership capabilities. As one respondent said:

> When we were working here, then there were not so many skilled people, for example able to speak in front of people. So, we asked village people to select such a person, who is able to guide them, can take them to the Haor, everyone listen to him, who will give priority of others' opinions and who will ensure participation of all in the decision-making (NGO staff-1)

This indicates that NGO staffs had preconceptions about whom they wanted to work with and therefore guided people to consider those capabilities that a Panchayat chief possesses that enabled and empowered certain local actors. A persistent attitude of bias on the part of NGO staff towards Panchayat Murubbis was found. This was found in the following interview extracts

> Every organisation must have a status. How could you make a fisherman the President of any organisation? Do they have minimum education or are they able to talk or can represent a group? (NGO staff-1)

A similar observation regarding the biased attitude of NGO staff towards traditional leaders was found in a study on a trans-boundary water governance project in Ghana by Wong (2010), where the author stated that ordinary villagers are not chosen by NGO staff for leadership positions since no one will obey them. Though some literature (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007) has highlighted the positive role of the NGO actors in trying to break from the pattern of elite capture, Baruah (2017), in a study on community resource management in Ghana, presented how they can perpetuate existing inequalities and contribute in the formation of elites.

However, unlike the study area-2, the co-management structure was not immediately taken by the Panchayat in the study area-1. One possible reason was the initial guidelines of CBO-1and 2, which strictly indicated the involvement of fisherfolk in an

office-bearer position. Being chiefs and members of the Panchayat, the Murubbis have access to different authoritative resources and they used those to capture leadership positions of the co-management structure. Their relationship with NGO staff was one important authoritative resource that they employed to amend the rule of committee composition in the original constitution of CBO 1 and 2. The rule was amended because Panchayat Murubbis saw NGO's norm of committee structure as a threat for their long-established system of social order and, through the amendment, fisherfolk lost their exclusive right from the EC. One respondent said:

> Though at the beginning I was President, the NGO staffs liked to communicate with Murubbis…Through communicating with them our leaders change that organogram. We lost the power then and after that it never came back to us. (GC-1, CBO-2, Interview dated 11.12.2019)

From GC respondents it became apparent that, in many ways, the Murubbis in the CBO-1, 2 influence the behaviour of the general members. One way that some respondents referred to is controlling access into their leased waterbody by increasing toll-fees and creating fear of losing access. Another way is to get a win in the CBO election the Murubbis within CBO involve other Murubbis of different Para to motivate general members of that Para. One GC respondent explained how the influence works:

> In the last election they set one Murubbi for every 5 members. Murubbis called us and asked to vote for Chowdhury, Saidulah (pseudonyms). Is it possible for anyone to disobey them and deny their request?" (GC-2, CBO-1)

Respondents also spoke about transactions of huge amounts of money as bribes before elections through their 'Bishhosto lok' (dependable people). As one respondent said

> .....Now everything is done through money. People vote for those who spend more money otherwise they don't vote (GC-1, CBO-1).

It was found during interviews that giving a bribe in return for a vote is very common and well-accepted. One GC respondent explained the logic for it in this way. “We the fisherfolk members do not get benefit from this organisation all year round. Now, if they offer some financial benefit through this election where is the problem”? Bribing for votes is certainly an abuse of power but Platteau (2004) argued that misuses of power are tolerated and supported as long as they are supportive to the marginalised people.

This study also looks at the women involvement process in the committee. Regarding women’s involvement, there was a common concern at work within every Panchayat leader that it will upset the social norms and practices such as ‘Ijjat’, ‘Purdah’ (See 6.3.2) that they established over a long period which are the prime sources of their unequal power practice. As Evans et al. (2017) mentioned, support from their male counterparts is an important factor in women’s participation, as men possess the idea that women’s involvement with NGO development activities will undermine their authority and influence women to disobey them. Differences were found in the responses regarding women’s involvement in the two different study sites, where male respondents neglected to involve them in the committee, since they thought it would decrease their ‘Ijjat’. For example, one respondent said

> Women’s involvement in our CBO was completely prohibited. Why should women sit where we elders are sitting? Now if a meeting is held outside of the village, in the Upazilla, we will go there but if we send our women it will be a matter of huge shame for our male community. This will make our male community to be socially degraded. (EC-1, CBO-5, Interview dated 02.03.2020)

In other case study sites, some respondents allowed women to be involved, but not as office-bearers. A NGO staff member said in this regard:

> Once it was beyond imagination that women will go outside. This is a religiously conservative area.....First the Murubbis of these villages didn't want to involve them. We were able to convince them with saying that their involvement will be economically beneficial for the organisation. Later they gave permission (NGO staff-1)

During interviews most of the male respondents pointed toward the financial benefit and one respondent (EC-2, CBO-4) said, "It is better to involve women. When women are in the committee of different government organisations, NGOs send different funding in the name of this organisation." Another respondent (EC-1, CBO-4) pointed towards individual financial benefit in this way: "They can get credit from the organisation. Her husband/son/brother will benefit through her." From these interview extracts it is noticeable that, from the beginning, women were not viewed as active and important actors of co-management and possibly these created a ground for exerting different levels of influence by elites. A male respondent (EC-1, CBO-1) said that, in the beginning of the project, it was said that women need to be given priority and hence they had given them an opportunity to seat in the meeting arena. To him, this opportunity is a sort of power given to the woman on behalf of them. Woman actually in leadership positions was just beyond their idea. They viewed them as just for disseminating their information, messages, goodwill to the community or for voting purposes. As he mentioned:

> Our women do not have enough idea about the outside world. They stay at home, what else can women do here? At most they can discuss with other women and share what the organisation does, what we are doing. In this way, other women will know about us and organisation. Moreover, when the election is held, they can cast their vote (EC-1, CBO-1).

Female members in the committee were chosen in a way that the Panchayat Murubbis could control. Family ties, kinship, higher class, and social network were mainly maintained during selection. This study found lower class women could not involved in CBOs. For example, one respondent (CG-5) mentioned that it is very tough to be involved in CBO since they are from 'Choto Jaat' and she said, "No, how I could go there? Will they take us? CBO leader will take them who are from their own network, own 'Jaati' (group)". Choudhury et al. (2016), in their study on project-1, also pointed toward the issue of the suppression of women from the poorer class. A female respondent (EC-4, CBO-2) said, "Every woman in this Para obeys me as their guardian. So, as a guardian, I have selected those women who have minimum education, to be able to sit with others." Another male respondent mentioned:

> The NGO staff told the organisation must include female members. But where do I/ we find them? So, everyone of our EC committee involved their relatives. For instance, I have included my sister in this organisation. I told her to bring another woman who is known to her, who will listen to her. Don't bring someone who is not from our side and always listen to us. (EC-2, CBO-4)

In the study area-2, there is a position on the EC committee, named "Shommanito Sodoshoo" (respected member). In this position, a woman from a respected family, particularly a President or Secretary's wife, was always selected. In a study on project-1, Choudhury et al. (2016) also showed the powerful invokes kinship and family ties to strengthen position and legitimise inequality through notions of honour and prestige. In the case of involving female members, maintaining Purdah was given the highest importance on Murubbis' behalf. This was done for maintaining control and culture. A woman respondent said:

> At first Murubbis of these villages did not accept our involvement in the project activities in a good way. Some made lots of negative/bad comments.....But when they found we are doing everything while maintaining proper social rules (putting clothes on the head, sitting separately and away from males, not talking with other men) then they stopped making bad comments (EC-4, CBO-1, Interview dated 21.11.2019)

The above analysis shows that, in the studied areas, the Panchayat members possess social power but in the context of co-management NGO staff made them the key actor by prioritising them from the very beginning and by creating "opportunities for distinction" (Kosamu et al., 2017) between Panchayat members and other villagers. Instead of working closely both with Panchayat Murubbis and less-powerful fisherfolk and women, they left the member selection process to the Murubbis and sometimes handled the selection process in a very biased way. This facilitated Panchayat Murubbis to utilise opportunities to frame the co-management structure according to their way, involving their own people and transferring their own ideas and views about participation to the community since they were legitimated by outside actors (Platteau and Gaspart, 2003).

6.3 Institutional analysis - What is the institutional basis of the Panchayat and the implications for co-management?

In Section-3.6 in Chapter-3, the literature review observed that institutions can be both bureaucratic and socially-embedded (Leach et al., 1999; Scott, 2001; Cleaver, 2012; Nunan et al., 2015). Both are equally important in the context of fisheries co-management and can reinforce each other. This section analyses the institutional basis of the Panchayat and how the Panchayat influences co-management structure. The

discussion first looks at how bureaucratic and socially-embedded institutions are combined; secondly, the roots of the socially-embedded institutions; and thirdly, how these socially-embedded institutions are manifested.

6.3.1 Interaction between bureaucratic and socially-embedded institutions

Cleaver (2012, p.13) defined socially-embedded institutions as "those based on culture, social organisation and daily practice, commonly but erroneously referred to as 'informal.'" In the studied areas, Panchayat is a socially-embedded institution with the local rule that fisherfolk and women cannot be members of the Panchayat committee. Panchayat has three characteristics. First, the basis for its legitimacy is that it is morally governed. Respondents from GC and fisherfolk highlighted that, though they are not involved in the Panchayat committee, they do not think that an important matter. To them the most important and desirable things are living in the village safely, peacefully, and avoiding any conflicts. Experiences of ethnic diversities, migration, and lower social status (Chapter-5, Section-5.1and 5.2) have influenced them to maintain good relations with Panchayat. In the studied villages, Panchayat is the body which takes or gives decisions for the well-being of the village and the community and provides less powerful groups different kinds of protection and supports, such as social, financial, enforcement, and law-related support in their daily lives (Chapter-5, Section-5.2). People accept, recognise and evaluate Panchayat for their quality of work and services and this provides legitimacy to the Panchayat in these studied areas. For example, one respondent (GC-4, CBO-1) mentioned that "We need Panchayat for our own needs, own benefits." According to the respondents, Panchayat Murubbis are 'Ovigotashomponno' (most experienced) and 'Gyani' (knowledgeable) — the way they solve any problem in

their daily lives or any conflicts, no one else can do it. Another respondent (Fisherfolk-1) said, “To us, Panchayat is the main, everything. The family, relatives, all these come later”. The second characteristic of Panchayat is its basis of compliance is social obligation. This study found that the support system of the Panchayat imposes constraints on behaviour and creates a submissive attitude among the villagers. Villagers think it is their social responsibility to obey, show respect, and comply with the Panchayat and its decisions if they are to live in the village peacefully and safely. The third characteristic of Panchayat is its basis of order is holding expectation about how less-powerful actors are supposed to behave. One respondent (GC-2, CBO-5) said, “If you want to stay in this village, you must obey Panchayat.” Respondents confirmed that avoiding Panchayat can result in withdrawal of all types of protective services the Panchayat provides, and also losing support from neighbours. Respondents in the studied areas all held a desire for secure and peaceful co-existence. This deeply embedded social value can shape the crafted bureaucratic institution, which is discussed next.

Fisheries co-management was introduced to the study area-1 through the project-1 in 1998 and the study area-2 through the project-2 in 2003. The involvement of the community in fisheries co-management under these two projects was discussed in Chapter-2 (Section-2.3.4). Both of the projects are Government of Bangladesh (GoB) programs, given approval by a National Steering Committee. Under these projects, the roles and responsibilities were divided between local government and CBOs in different studied sites. In the study area-1, CBO and FCG are registered as voluntary bodies with the Department of Social Services (DSS) under the Ministry of Social Welfare. In the

study area-2, CBOs are registered with the Department of Co-operatives under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives.

The CBOs are bureaucratic institutions with “formalised arrangements based on explicit organisational structures, contracts and legal rights” (Cleaver, 2002, p. 13). In the study area-1, according to the existing organogram of CBO-1, 2(2005), 60% of membership should be composed of FCG members, 30% should be from the different professions (farmers, business people, teachers, doctors, etc.) and 10 % from local elites. The organisational structure of CBO-1 and CBO-2 consists of GC and EC. An elected EC of eleven members and five to ten advisors governs the CBOs. Respective public representative (Union Parishad Chairman), social service providers in those villages, and government/non-government officials, ten such persons are appointed as advisors of this organisation. Advisors can attend all the meetings of the committee and can provide necessary advice on program formulation and implementation, but they are not entitled to give a vote. In study area-2, according to the organogram (2010), CBO-3,4 and 5need to be 38% fisherfolk, 24% farmers, 14% landless/ sharecroppers, 14% poor/daily labours and 10% from other professions (elite). Each CBO must have a 7-member EC, 21-member GC, and a minimum of 5 or 7 advisors who will govern the CBOs. In both cases, the elected EC serves for two years. Their role is to implement fisheries management-related activities directed by the local government and NGOs in their area of control. GC reserves the right to vote, both at the time of election and on the issues discussed in the GC meeting. In both case study sites, women were involved in the committee. Though there was no explicit instruction in either of the constitutions about the percentage of women involved, the NGO respondents confirmed that, in CBO-1 and

2, women's representation was 30% of all CBO members, and in CBO-3, 4 and 5 it was at least 25% of members. In both case study sites, the proportion of the fisherfolk in the organisations was kept at 50%-60% to empower the fisherfolk community. Regarding the inclusion of local elites and other professions, one respondent said:

> Elites were involved because the real fishermen may not be able to keep their control over the waterbody due to the external influence of leaseholders. Elites, in this case, will give them that support and protect the waterbody from external influence by saying that this is our waterbody (NGO staff-1.)

The space created for fisheries co-management was ‘invited space’ (Gaventa, 2006, p. 26), reflecting the top-down nature of implementation with clear guidelines on the composition of CBOs — who should participate, in which percentage, their functions in co-management, how the community will potentially influence decisions, improve their livelihoods, and influence the relationship rather than the space formed by the studied community. The literature (Cornwall, 2003; Njaya et al., 2012; Nunan et al., 2012) showed that invited space is not separate from the social space — rather, they exist alongside, can influence existing power relations, contribute to the reproduction of hierarchies, and limit opportunities for the marginalised to participate in management. External resource-bearing agents and project approaches have a tendency to see community people as “unproblematic and bounded units” (Cornwall, 2008, p. 277) and so desire to secure the participation of different professional groups (Nunan et al., 2012). During fieldwork, the number of fisherfolk in the organisation was low compared to the organogram. The Panchayat Murubbis in the villages mostly filled up office-bearer positions and the EC. Development initiatives introduced several new actors in resource management by different authorities, and particular positions were defined to hold specified responsibilities and to have differing access to resources. But,

in reality, roles can come out informally, and differentiated expectations can develop to guide the behaviour of a certain group (Scott, 2001).

This study aimed to understand the underlying norms and core values in the case of actors' involvement. So, respondents from the GC were asked what they consider when selecting office-bearers, what is desirable or preferable to them, and why. During interviews, informants reported one prominent factor that influenced most to choose a person for the office-bearer position was holding a position in the village Panchayat. Values of showing respect towards Murubbis are deeply embedded, and this connects the moral behaviour of the people in the context of co-management. One respondent mentioned that "A Panchyat member is the one everyone in this village obeys and respects. He must be offered this position" (GC-1, CBO-1). For some respondents selecting Panchayat Murubbis in any development-related activity of the village is a system that has been followed in these villages for a long time, and not following the system is similar to disobeying them. According to Scott (2001, p. 55), these views are "prescriptions - normative expectations - of how some actors are supposed to behave" in this situation. A basic psychological preference of avoiding trouble with Panchayat Murubbis, living peacefully and with honour was found among the respondents in the studied areas. As one respondent mentioned:

> We can't go beyond them. We are bound to obey Murubbis... It is not written anywhere. We have been maintaining it year after year. Avoiding them or not choosing them for these positions shows disrespect to them. They will not take this easily. They will not say anything in front of you. But later, they will apply many tactics, such as disrespect or make you feel socially-lowered in front of everyone in any other issues not related to the organisation. Is there any point to make trouble with them? (GC-1, CBO-1)

Another factor respondents mentioned was “Bongshe lathir shonkhya” (number of sons in the lineage). Having a son is also a symbol of power in the studied villages, and one respondent (GC-1, CBO-4, Interview dated 03.02.2020) said, “The person with more boys will have more influence in the village... They will normally be able to hold different positions in society. That family occupies Union Chairman, ward member, all of these important positions, and they have more ‘Dapot’ (influence) in all areas.” The respondent further mentioned that if that person is not given a vote, his sons will come and threaten them with eviction from that area, block access opportunity to the wetlands or withdraw from providing protection. Therefore, avoiding arguments and securing livelihood are all considered while choosing a candidate.

During interviews, it was found that a broader set of factors interact and shape how people behave in a particular way. Respondents pointed to the social mobility that Panchayat Murubbis have, and they think Murubbis can bargain with the government for more waterbodies, which will ultimately develop their life. So Murubbis are appropriate for this position. One respondent explained:

> They get the opportunity of education, have a good connection with influential people in the society and government officials, they know how to talk with them... They know the laws, and regulations and can explain those. If you ask for any solution, chief will solve them instantly with different explanations. We do not have such intelligence.....Moreover, they always secure beels from government under lease. So, we thought they could bring more beels in the name of the organisation, which will benefit us. (GC-2, CBO-4)

Individual consideration about choosing members in the office-bearer positions was also responsive to fulfilling an obligation. One respondent (GC-1, CBO-3) said, “Our Secretary controls large waterbodies.... The fish market near the Haor is under the

control of him and his brother. If we want to buy/sell fish, we must go to them. Sometimes he lowers the price, being from the same neighbourhood." Another respondent (GC-3, CBO-1) recalled their memory of migration and dependency issues and said, "We are bound to our chief in various ways. During the liberation, his family sheltered us. Our fisherfolk community of this Para still now gets access to the beels because of him." A feeling of obligation that emerges from the economic and social protection they get from the Murubbis shapes the thinking of the GC respondents about what is morally right and who is appropriate for the office-bearer position. During the interviews, it was evident that respondents possessed an attitude which they mentioned as "Tal milaye chola" (To keep peace with the powerful). Cleaver (2002) argued that relations of reciprocity guide human behaviour, and when this relation helps to channel access to resources, then conflict has to be avoided to ensure secure access.

The above discussion suggests that institutions cannot be judged only by their instrumental performance — rather, moral values that actors perceive can shape the institutions. People are rarely concerned about a single institution. A messy web of many interacting institutions shapes the actors' incentives, identifies what behaviour is acceptable, and facilitates developing own goals, norms, and sometimes even in conflict with the goals prescribed for them under fisheries co-management by external agents, donors and government. Individual considerations about choosing an office-bearer do not always follow the process that co-management schemes had in mind but are instead responsive to the fulfilment of the obligation, cultural rule of showing respect to Murubbis, enactment of routines, and desirability of peaceful co-existence.

6.3.2 Roots of socially-embedded institution(s)

Understanding the roots of socially-embedded institutions is important, as these shape bureaucratic institutions. This section focuses on two roots of the Panchayat: Bongsho and gender norms-Ijjat, showing how different informal practices provide power to the Panchayat.

'Bongsho'

Bongsho' is the root of the Panchayat system in the studied areas. In the Panchayat, Murubbis can come from different or just one Bongsho, but the chief of the Panchayat was found to be determined by the dominant Bongsho. According to the respondents, a dominant Bongsho possesses several characteristics which determine its members' positions in the Panchayat and greater power. First, a dominant Bongsho bears a high-status patronymic title. In the studied areas, two such title-based Bongsho were found — Chowdhury and Talukdar — who belong to the Ashraf group in society.[59]Deb (2009) mentioned that these patronymic titles reflect someone's designated power and authority. These high-status families make frequent reference to their 'Khandan' (aristocracy), tracing their agnatic connection to the common ancestors, who might have been landholders or wealthy persons 5/6 generations previously. Sometimes, two Bongsho with the same patronymic title exist in one area. In that case, the power of one Bongsho then depends on many other factors — the number of generations staying there, the number of sons in that Bongsho, the amount of ancestral property held, and unity among agnates and their spouses. Unity among the members is crucial in terms of

[59]Muslim communities in this region have their own system of hierarchy, which is based on an imaginary lineage of honour, divided people into different groups; Ashraf (noble born), Atraf (low-born) and Ajlaf/Arzals (lowest) (Chowdhury, 2009).

the status of a 'Bongsho', and respondents defined it in a symbolic term "Ek Chula"[60]. According to them, if their hearths divide, it indicates the relation among the agnates is fragile.

In some of the studied areas, the members of one Bongsho lived in a common residential compound called 'Bari'. However, it is not always mandatory to live in one 'Bari'. Particularly when the family expands, the agnates can live separately in different Para, but it does not mean the ties of the agnation fade. In this case, they control that Para in the village and become the Murubbi of that Para and Panchayat member. Literature (Mashreque, 1998) also suggests that the dominant lineage group is the locus of power, and this kinship group is powerful and influential. If a man is attached to a higher-class family through marriage, he also gets higher respect in the village. He will not be given the Panchayat chief position but could be a member of the Panchayat. The chief of the Panchayat enjoys leadership position by the rule of succession/ hereditary leadership. Leadership passes to the eldest son. However, EC respondents said that, if the eldest son is immature physically or mentally disabled, and if other sons live abroad or outside of the village, then the leadership shifts to the first cousin. One respondent described the leadership succession process in this way:

> Ajmol Chowdhury (pseudonym) is now the senior person of the Chowdhury family. Earlier, his uncle was our chief, and when he became sick, he transferred his position to his nephew by calling a village meeting and telling us that he will look after all of our problems (EC-3, CBO-1)

'Ijjat' and gender norms

[60]Ek chula—Same hearths

‘Ijjat’ is a key social value that governs floodplain women's actions and shapes their status and role in society. Ijjat governs the social reputation of both men and women, but differently. One woman respondent conceptualised ‘Ijjat’ as 'Water on a lotus leaf’ which carries the meaning of instability - once it drops down, it cannot be brought back up. Gupte (2013, p.76) mentioned that "Women are not traditionally bearers of honour, rather they are holder."

A key instrument used in the studied areas to protect women's ‘Ijjat’ is ‘Purdah’. ‘Purdah’ is operated through physical segregation by wearing a ‘Burkha’ (Chapter-5, Section-5.1) so that no one can see a woman. It is also operated in many other ways — for example, through spatial segregation. In the studied areas, women are not allowed in the public space like bazar, Haor area. One respondent said:

> Women do not go to the beel area. Why do they go for fish? Yes, if anyone wishes, she can do fish from the pond with 'Barshi'[61] next to her house in such a way so no one can see. In this case, no one will tell her anything. (EC-2, CBO-2)

According to the respondents, the reason behind physical segregation is that if anything bad happens, such as if a woman is harassed sexually or something supernatural happens to her, she will lose her chastity and purity. People and her family may seclude her socially and accuse her in various ways, such as calling her 'Noshta' (one who loses chastity), which will damage the reputation of the women's whole family and the Para where she lives. Women's ‘Ijjat’, in this case, is the reflection of the individual action of women.

[61]Barshi--Hook

In the studied areas, ‘Purdah’ is a kind of boundary that determines what a woman should wear, where to go, how to walk, speak, and how she makes herself separate so that her family's ‘Ijjat’ will not be put at risk. One respondent, (EC-1, CBO-1), said in this regard, "When women lose their 'Purdah,' then society also loses its ‘Ijjat’. People then point towards its Murubbis, criticise them." One respondent gave a stringent interpretation of ‘Purdah’and said:

> ‘Purdah’ does not mean only covering you top to bottom, it indicates putting a veil on your mind, on your voice, and in everything... She should not speak loud or should not walk in that way people can understand her presence in the room or in that place and start to think of her. To force a man to think of a woman is 'Gunah' (sin). (EC-1, CBO-5)

Women respondents shared how maintenance of ‘Purdah’ is publicised in the studied places. This is highly controlled from religious spaces like the Mosque and by a group of Murubbis who are related to the Mosque and Panchayat at the same time. One woman respondent said;

> "Before Zumma Prayer, our Imam delivers 'Bayan' (lecture) to the males in the Mashjid. We cannot go there but can hear that from here. They describe what is Gunah for us, what a male should do....They speak so loudly in a microphone that if anyone hears, she/he will be scared (EC-4, CBO-1).

‘Ijjat’, in the studied areas, controls the space in favour of males. In the studied village-1, there were signposts every few metres from the village entrance that showed what behaviour of women is acceptable and what is not. These signposts remind women to keep their modesty by speaking softly and covering their heads in wording like “If you deny ‘Purdah’ you have to go to hell", "Not speak loudly", and "Be shy and have shame - these are the only ornaments" etc. Coyle et al. (2020) argues that a man's ‘Ijjat’ *a*nd a

family's ‘Ijjat’ are reaffirmed through how a woman adheres to ‘Purdah’. So, to confirm their ‘Ijjat’ they take responsibility for protecting women's ‘Purdah’.

Along with public places, ‘Purdah’ operates strongly in private spaces. The household is an important place where gender norms are learnt, practised, and reinforced (Evans et al., 2017). In the private space ‘Purdah’ indicates being submissive. During interviews, it was found that women highly prioritised their household activities in the studied areas. Women think that, as wives, they must think of their family first, shoulder much of the burden of household labour, and show deference to their husbands and needs. A wife cannot shout or speak loudly with her husband. If she does so and there isan argument, she could be punished by the Panchayat, which will lower the family's ‘Ijjat’. Gupte (2013) mentioned that men's honour is never at risk through their conduct but always at risk through women's behaviour. Coyle et al. (2020, p.18) said that "women's ‘Ijjat’ is always at risk of being stained like ink on a cloth."

This study and Coyle et al. (2020) found that, in the case of men, ‘Ijjat’ indicates two things — position in the social hierarchy and how they control and enforce ‘Purdah’ on women. But, in women's case, differential views and logic are added and operated here and reflect many things like properly observing ‘Purdah’. This shows how ‘Ijjat’ is inherently gendered and regulates women's and men's differential access to opportunity in society.

6.3.3 How socially-embedded institutions are manifested in co-management and implications for co-management

According to Cleaver (2012) and Cleaver and de Koning (2015), institutional bricolage is a process where institutional components from different origins are continuously pieced together as an adaptive response to change. This is a process of naturalisation of institutions (Cleaver, 2012) applied to make the institution socially fit and provide legitimacy to the adapted institution. de Koning (2014) mentioned three processes of naturalising institutions — aggregation, alteration and articulation. This study found that, in the study sites, the alteration process followed - adapting or reshaping institutions to better fit the current situation, and claim to identity (de Koning, 2014).

In the study area-2, the naturalisation of bureaucratic institutions was facilitated by calls on the Panchayat system, which some respondents mentioned as 'Panchayatiana Kayda" (similar to the Panchayat system). Such calls are reflected in this claim made by one respondent (EC-1, CBO-3) ".....We took members to the committee from every Bongsho. In some cases, more members have been taken from the same Bongsho." He further confirmed that members for president, secretary, and treasurer positions are taken from the dominant Bongsho. The use of the practice of Bongsho shows the centrality of the Panchayat system in the studied CBOs. This reference to CBO committee as 'Panchayatiana Kayda' also reflects a shortcut way of letting people think about how to form a committee, whose voice matters, and where the other people's positions will be in the committee. From the respondents, it was found that studied CBOs ignored the bureaucratic rules for election and instead took the leadership

succession process from the Panchayat system. The following example describes the leadership succession process in practice:

> My father was the first President of this CBO. When he could not perform his responsibility due to sickness, he handed over the post to his brother Mudassir Ali (Pseudonym), who was then in the secretary position, and I came to that secretary position. I was in this position for three terms, now working as a treasurer, and my brother came to the secretary position in the last selection. (EC-3, CBO-5, Interview dated 07.03.2020)

This new arrangement derived from bricolage gains legitimacy if it resembles an appropriate way of conducting affairs. The Panchayat Murubbis shaped the government/NGO idea of making a co-management committee at the community level by taking various elements — Bongsho and the leadership succession. There were several reasons — first, the authority to make social rules exercised in these villages through Bongsho, and hence the Murubbis took committee formation for granted; second, monitoring from local government was poor, and some respondents also pointed toward the presence of local government officials during (s)election, which indicates the studied CBOs got disguised support to continue this informal practice; and third, leadership succession is core to the Panchayat system, practised here for a long time to avoid conflict, maintain or endure unity among /within lineages and keep the authoritative power in the hand of Panchayat members. Hence, they took this as a routine practice. As one respondent (EC-1, CBO-3) said "... it is just a matter within us, is there any need to do election?" Another respondent said:

> If there is an election, there will be factions, a conflict will arise within and between Bongsho to get the position. This will create many problems because conflict will not be confined in one place but will slowly affect everywhere. Since we are also members of the village Panchyat it will be tough to 'Sashon' (govern) the village. It will then be tough to make a judgment seating altogether. (EC-2, CBO-4)

Respondents viewed conflict among the members of the Bongsho as a symbol of their weakness. As respondent (EC-2, CBO-5) further said, “People will start to think we are weak or will raise the question about our strength, power, will start to compare our ‘Khomota’[62].”

Action and logic can vary from more embedded explanations to conscious decisions. The study also found that, currently, these CBOs are not practising the Bongsho and leadership succession in selecting actors in the EC. They involved one fisherman in the office-bearer position in the last (s)election. It seems to be a strategic decision because respondents from GC mentioned this fisherfolk member selected for office-bearer is not competent enough and has no educational background. From the perspective of EC respondents, the reason for inclusion of fisherfolk as office-bearers is that the National Wetland Management Act-2009 says that the organisations (CBOs) that are given waterbodies under MOU must be involved fisherfolk. Since the 10-year tenure of the waterbodies was due to expire at the end of 2021, if they did not include any fisherfolk in the EC then government might not extend the lease-period. They mainly wanted to be clear from the legal angle, and that’s why Murubbis thought involving one fisherfolk in the office-bearer position would be an appropriate way to respond to the current situation, and choosing leaders from the dominant Bongsho was, for once, downplayed.

In the study area-1, according to the original constitution of studied CBOs fishers will fill up 50% of the membership, where 25% of fisherfolk members will be from CG. In

[62]Khomota-power

the office-bearer positions of CBO, three posts out of five will be composed of fisherfolk (one from the general fisherfolk community and two from CG fisherfolk). For the rest, 50% will be filled by local elites (10%) and people from other professions (40%). The respondents reported that, initially, studied CBOs adopted NGO norms of committee formation. One of the key reasons was the strictness of the constitution in terms of fisherfolk involvement. Moreover, Murubbis thought that, if they followed the committee formation guidelines, the organisation would get the waterbody under a long-term contract for making temporary and permanent sanctuary, the yearly rent for which is meagre. Initially, studied CBOs ignored the election process and followed a re-selection process when the committee's term expired. The reasons for re-selection were many. First, respondents reported that the committee's performance created a positive impression among every member, so they gave their consent to continue their activities. Fisherfolk members were happy because representatives from the fisherfolk group were involved in such an official committee, which was beyond their expectations. As one respondent (GC-1, CBO-1) said, "Everything was then just new. We did not have such a committee in our village earlier. We did meetings all together... We were all happy with the performance of the committee." Second, re-selection did not pose too many problems from the NGO staff side as it re-established NGO's proposed structure. Third, influential members in the EC perceived that upholding the same committee would ensure the CBOs got waterbodies for the long-term. Respondents from GC said some amendments were made in the organogram following the re-selection process regarding committee formation (mentioned in Section-6.1.2) involved 60% membership from FCG, 30% from other professions, and 10% from local elites. Following the amendment, the studied CBOs first adopted a selection process to choose office-bearers.

The reasons EC respondents mentioned were time and cost. As noted by the EC respondents, the process resembles the Panchayat committee meeting. It was a verbal selection under the control of Murubbis, where one Murubbi proposed a name and another Murubbi supported it, and then the members present raised their hands in support. Murubbis thought that their identity would be more prominent through the selection process. This process can be said to have been effective in reshaping studied CBOs because, from the respondents of GC and EC, it was found in CBO-1 that only one fisherfolk was selected, but there was no chosen fisherfolk in CBO-2.

Respondents shared that they are now following the election process as written on their organogram. However study found they modified it to some extent by involving a practice of selling the nomination form. The practice had a broad logic. For example, one respondent (EC-1, CBO-1) said it was intended to increase the CBO fund, to be utilised for productive purposes like securing other waterbody under lease in the organisation's name and respond at the time of an emergency for example to cover transportation cost, and to distribute winter clothes among the poor. The reason for moving towards the election process was also a bit strategy focused. Though the bureaucratic rule of the election was not welcomed much by Murubbis, they evaluated having the waterbody under their control. As an earlier respondent said:

> We practised both processes, but now we do election since it is written in our organogram...if we continue the selection process, this may create a problem since we need to send all the papers to the Social Welfare office at the Upazilla. They may say we are avoiding rules and so may take the waterbodies away from us. (EC-1, CBO-1)

From the above analysis, it can be seen that CBO is officially a bureaucratic institution but that it operates according to the “rules of the game” (Cleaver, 2006). Panchayat Murubbis assemble different institutional components strategically and unconsciously, shaping the introduced institutions and adapting the bureaucratic institution to the existing social system. An important point here is that when an institution is internally unstructured, without formal specification of the roles of different actors, it opens up an opportunity for self-organisation (Kosamu et al., 2017), which happened in the study area-2, where Bongsho and leadership succession were taken for granted as they are routinised practices and reshape CBO-3,4 and 5. But in the study area-1, the original constitution of CBO was very strict and structured in terms of fisherfolk involvement and their roles and position. Amendment of the organogram gave greater dominance to Panchyat Murubbis in the EC, leaves the space for them to manage the power differentials and so they were able to bend the bureaucratic rules and reshape CBO in their favour. But this hybrid institution cannot be said to be equal and effective since the elite continually assemble different institutional elements and employ them in various situations. In this way, bricoleur's norms transferred to the community but not without consideration of the less-powerful (Kosamu et al., 2017).

6.4 Power analysis

Section-3.3 in Chapter-3 mentioned three forms of power: visible, hidden, and invisible. The visible form indicates control over active decision-making. This form of power can be observed in the explicit exclusion or marginalisation of certain groups that becomes legitimised in policy-making and laws (Hebert, 2010). But, in order to investigate elite capture, it is more important to understand the hidden and invisible forms, which

involve “...how power is embedded in wider social relations and reproduced in everyday interactions” (Cleaver and Whaley, 2018, p. 10). Therefore, this section investigates how hidden and invisible power is manifested in co-management.

6.4.1 Hidden power

This sub-section presents data on how less-powerful groups are prevented from being a part of the EC, whether they have any grievances and how power may influence conceptions of grievances. This study found power can be hidden in three ways. First, power can be hidden within broader social practices and norms of the community. For example, in the study area-2 in the CBOs, granting authority through the idea of Bongsho — hereditary leadership —the appropriate way of forming the committee reflected their social practices and norms. The notion of Bongsho makes the power hidden because under the Bongsho and leadership succession system a woman is not eligible to get the chief's position. Bongsho follows the patrilineage line and the custom of patrilocal marriage attenuates a woman's ties with her Bongsho. Therefore, women are automatically excluded from claiming leadership positions. On the other side, CBOs followed ‘Panchayatiana Kayda’ (mentioned in 6.2.3), under which system fisherfolk could not be involved in leadership positions due to lower social status. These practices, therefore, naturally allowed leaders from dominant Bongsho to hold the office-bearer position.

The second form of hidden power indicates situations where a powerful group or individual is driven by a hidden interest and agenda and uses their visible authority for

the "capture of benefits" (Cleaver, 2012, p.50). Different mechanisms were found to be consciously applied by the powerful. The first mechanism involved introducing the (s)election process and using the meeting procedure of Panchayat to select office-bearers, claiming that this was cost and time effective. However, respondents from GC reported that Murubbis controlled this process. When Murubbis talked in a meeting and gave or proposed a decision, others did not speak but instead gave verbal acceptance for that decision, as that is morally acceptable in this society, which created opportunities for Murubbis to be selected. Here the selection process operated systematically and consistently to the benefit of Murubbis. Invocation of the selection process was not actually targeted to save time or the costs of the election process but rather to exclude fisherfolk.

The second mechanism involved using formal rules to achieve objectives. For example, in the study area-1, fisherfolk respondents of both studied CBOs mentioned that the EC members excluded many fisherfolk members either from the organisation or from the EC with a false accusation of hampering development-related works in the waterbodies. According to the existing organogram, EC has the power to eliminate members from the committee involved in activities against the interests of the organisation. Regarding this, one respondent (EC-1, CBO-1) said, "If anyone breaks the rules or goes oppose to the organisation, we cannot keep him on the committee. If we do, then others will follow that same route." But the study found a different view from GC respondents. One respondent gave an example:

> In Nripen Sarkar's (pseudonym) case... he did not raise his hand in favour of our chief in (s)election. So, after the (s)election, the elected body gave him the monitoring responsibility. One day, as part of patrolling in the

> sanctuary, he caught two thieves along with sanctuary fish and took them to the office..... Later, the EC members came, and the president called the police and accused Nripen of the same case and fired him from CBO, citing that he had broken the organisation's rule. (GC-2, CBO-1)

This did not just happen in one CBO in case study-1 areas. Cancellation of membership and exclusion from EC was aimed to discipline the members but from the example mentioned above and from other interviews it was found that the influential members used their authority and formal rule of cancellation of membership in a highly deliberate way, targeting only the fisherfolk. Some GC respondents mentioned that, though the president or secretary did some unlawful act, they were not punished. The influential members use formal rules not to discipline others. But they have hidden interests — label the fisherfolk negatively so that other people lose faith in their leadership and involve their people in the CBO. One respondent (GC-3, CBO-2) said, "You will take that person who will vote for you, work for you. Certainly, you do not keep others who may go against you."

The third mechanism that the Panchayat Murubbis used was establishing a new rule that created barriers to participation. For example, they introduced a new practice of setting up a fee for the nomination form during the election, claiming to perform multiple activities by the organisation. However, this study found that this put pressure on fisherfolk and women. This selling of nomination forms covertly discouraged both the poor fisherfolk and women from participating in the election. Fisherfolk and female respondents mentioned the price of the nomination form being too high for them to bear the cost. As one respondent said, “Earlier, the price of the form was 500 BDT (6$). In the last election, it was 4500 BDT (53$). Where do I get that money? Will my husband

give me that money?" (EC-4, CBO-1) Women in the studied areas generally do not hold enough money since they are not involved in daily economic activities. Due to movement restrictions, economic power always lies with the men. Additionally, the fisherfolk community is also inherently financially poor. Fisherfolk depend on 'Mohajon' to manage the money of the nomination form, so they show apathy to participate in the election. Therefore, this new rule opens the opportunity only for the Murubbis to take part in the election. The objective of the fund was not to finance multiple activities but to eliminate less-powerful groups.

The fourth mechanism involves a situation where Murubbis unified different ideas regarding participation in election that favour them to maintain the status quo. Panchayat Murubbis said they do not deny women's involvement in the election but, simultaneously, they emphasised women's domestic responsibilities, the norms of time restrictions, and cultural values. For example, one respondent (EC-2, CBO-1) said, "What are women in this village always doing —taking care of elders, children, and husband.....Looking after the house is their duty." Male respondents hold on to the idea of a woman from the angle of the mother myth. According to them, women should not deny their domestic and caring responsibility and should not deprive and dishonour their husbands by doing any public activities. Another idea they held was that women are subject to time restrictions. The respondent (EC-2, CBO-1) put it this way, "Our women do not stay outside after evening prayer.... This will lose not only her 'Ijjat' but also their husband' 'Ijjat'." Another respondent mentioned,

> If a woman wishes for a post, we will give a decision. But can they fulfill their responsibility? We usually do our meeting in the afternoon as we all have work in the morning. But our women cannot stay outside after

> Maghrib (Evening prayer)....They also have their household chores and caring responsibilities. Where do they get the time? (EC-1, CBO-1)

Though Murubbis accumulated these different ideas of femaleness to maintain household stability and security, these ideas ultimately excluded women from office-bearers. One respondent (EC-1, CBO-2) said, "If they get time after these duties, we do not have any problem." Every female respondent frequently reported an inability to take organisational responsibility due to domestic commitment. They pointed toward one crucial issue — their household duties are not performed in fixed time frames, which restrict them from accessing the public domain. Gerson and Peiss (1985) argued that insisting on participation on the one hand and advocating retention of their femaleness on the other is contradictory, which suggests that women will remain outsiders.

This second form of hidden power resembles a study on Malawi fisheries by Njaya et al. (2012) where the author showed the hidden agenda of the commercial fishers was to eliminate potential competitors and to derive benefit from resources. Gaventa (1982) argued that one of the most important aspects of power is pre-determining the agenda and, according to Gaventa (1982, p. 9) "...it is not necessarily true that people with the greatest needs participate in politics more actively — whoever decides what the game is about also decides who gets in the game."

The third form of hidden power involves a situation where there are conflicts of interests but they go unchallenged. Here, conceptions of the less-powerful are shaped. Power is hidden within the conception of the less-powerful and exercised in such a way that they do not consider raising any grievances. Respondents shared that they avoided

standing for the office-bearer position, raising voices about the price of the nomination form, and about the manipulation in the election process (mentioned in Section-6.1) because they think, even if they are selected, they will not be given the scope to perform their responsibility. Moreover, this will create a mental burden on them and will hamper existing relations. As one respondent (GC-1, CBO-1) mentioned, "It will create more hassle than its value." Another respondent pointed out that it is better for them to keep quiet and said, "When I was President, I tried to be honest, took action against illegal fishing activities in our sanctuary... But there were so many repercussions I experienced from the Murubbis for being and showing this honesty, so it is better to keep silent, away from them, the position, and raise no points and arguments" (GC-3, CBO-2, Interview dated 28.12.2019) Another respondent (GC-2, CBO-2), who was a former Treasurer of CBO-2 emphasised the issue of avoidance of public shaming, and to him, keeping away from a leadership position is more dignified. He said, "I left the position and am now keeping myself away from this power position for my dignity, respect and for my family's respect in front of our fisherfolk community." Another respondent (GC-2, CBO-1) similarly said, "Everyone has his/her sense of respect....So it's better to let it continue as it is."

Participants in the study areas decided not to complain to the respective authority — i.e., local government — about different unfair treatments targeted at them. They think it will not be effective and will not be a wise decision because, according to them, all the powerful maintain a network. As one respondent (GC-2, CBO-5, Interview dated 03.03.2020) said, "There is no point of making complaint. We can give a written complaint to Shmobay Officer (Upazilla Shomobay Officer, local government official),

but the officer will remove it from the office consulting with them." Some respondents from GC, who are fisherfolk, stated that they chose not to report any problem and raise issues because they are of afraid of exclusion from the committee. As one respondent (GC-1, CBO-2) said, "They (powerful members) know how to eliminate one and employ such a strategy... Who will go to fight with them?"

Some respondents are not interested in having arguments with the powerful because they think this will make them uncomfortable afterward. They mentioned that the powerful might call them, threaten them, or request them to do something that they don't want to do and, according to them, it is "better not to draw the attention of the powerful"(GC-1, CBO-1). In some cases, a fear of deterioration of relations and losing historical fishing access influenced them not to begin any argument with them. As one respondent (GC-3, CBO-1) said, "The real poor 'Gorib' like us don't want to be involved in any problem with the powerful, don't want to shake the boat. It is not certainly a comfortable situation to us when we have to depend on them for our daily livelihood, for getting access to their beel" (Interview dated 17.11.2019). Another respondent (GC-2, CBO-1) said, "In the last election, one of our members was elected but he didn't get any rights. The earlier treasurer didn't hand over the ledger books and account details to him... We do not say anything. If I fall in any problem, I will need justice then in my favour in the 'Shalish,' and I have to ask for his assistance." Respondents also pointed toward insecurity for being in a minority group. They think, as they are a minority group, to secure their livelihood and stay peacefully in their ancestor's place, it is best not to voice against the Murubbis. As one respondent said,

> In this village, we have only 40-42 Hindu fisherfolk families. We have to think about and maintain a lot of underlying issues. We have to survive here (GC-3, CBO-1)

It is not like inequalities cannot be challenged, but this study found that the costs are often disproportionately high (Cleaver, 2012), which influences the less-powerful to think of non-challenge. This example of hidden power is similar to Chisholm et al.'s (2020) study on tenants' responses to substandard housing, where the authors showed how the conflict in interests of tenants remains hidden because of fear of negative repercussions from the landlord. Gaventa (1982, p. 161) mentioned, "It is not the actual exercise of coercion but the constant possibility that it might be exercised that supports the routines of non-challenge." Gaventa (1982, p. 15) suggests this power process as "non-event".

Hidden power indicates how less-powerful groups are prevented, for all practical purposes, from participating in the election and raising voices about grievances. From the above analysis, three forms of hidden power were found — power can be hidden within social practices and norms; it can be hidden within the influential member's ideologies, interest, and agenda, which is more strategic; and it can also be hidden within a less-powerful group's conceptions.

6.4.2 Invisible power

In Section-3.3, Chapter-3 mentioned invisible power as a situation where power centres on socially and culturally embedded norms and practices and, by influencing individuals' thinking about their world, it shapes self-esteem and acceptance of the

status quo, even their own superiority and inferiority (Gaventa, 2006). This process enables inequality and exclusion by defining them as normal. This study found that both the fisherfolk and women, the less-powerful groups accustomed to the idea that the office-bearer position is not for them but rather for the Murubbis, had developed a concept within their minds that whatever development initiatives will take place, such an unequal situation is inevitable. They internalised their situation — their socially lowered position, and unequal situation — "as natural" (Lukes, 2005, p. 28), which is found in the following interview extract.

> We are 'Namashudra' fisherfolk. They do not want to see us in these office-bearer positions. A 'Namashudra' or fisherfolk will run an organisation, preside over a meeting as a President, and Murubbis will respect us and give us 'Salam', sit at the same table, and use the same wooden chair; it cannot happen. If they do it, then they will be socially lowered. They want us to respect him and give them 'Salam,' but they do not view it well to respect us. (GC-2, CBO-2)

A question was asked of the female respondents in EC about their involvement in office-bearer positions. They responded from an internalised perspective. Dominant views about females' capacity and gender norms of ‘Purdah’ are internalised within them and influence them to keep themselves away from office-bearer positions. As one female respondent said:

> We cannot talk smartly. If I take the responsibility, I have to go to the Upazilla office and talk with a male officer. I never spoke in front of our Murubbi, so how can I deliver a speech in front of them. Our president knows everything — laws and regulations, how to seat, talk with officers. He is best for giving speeches....Taking responsibility means I have to go to the Haor at night for patrolling, and if any emergency arises, I have to move along with the police. In our 'Samaj', women can't go to the Haor or Bazar. It will never happen. If I do this, villagers will make offensive remark 'Beyadob Mohila' (an impudent woman) (EC-4, CBO-1, Interview dated 21.11.2019)

Female members secure and maintain their position within the EC by behaving within acceptable social norms. During interviews, it was found that, in most of the CBOs, at least 2 to 3 women were involved in EC, and they were happy with their position as EC members, rather than taking a leadership position. Though some of them were found educationally sound, it was observed that they do not feel any need to get leadership roles. They think staying away from taking leadership roles and supporting the male leaders in the organisation to take this responsibility and prioritising them are good gestures, showing respect to them and a way to keep in their good books.

Invisible power was also found at work where less-powerful groups think there are no available better options, or their current situation is better than the earlier one. Internalisation of gender norms, being submissive in front of Murubbis, and negotiation, are conscious attitudes that fisherfolk and women use. These attitudes give several intrinsic and extrinsic benefits and secure their positions within the committee. Female respondents shared that sometimes male leaders in the organisation ask them in the meeting whether anyone of them is interested in any position and in taking part in the election. They think this is more honourable, that they at least ask them about their opinion or acknowledge them. They mentioned, though, that they do not stand in the election but the leaders give them responsibility before the election to arrange 'Ghorowa boithok' and mobilise other women of the organisation in favour of the powerful. They feel honoured when they are given this duty because it enhances their position in front of others and other people think of them as "Kaser lok" (nearer people) of the powerful Murubbis. According to the female respondents, once they were not given respect, but

now people give them ‘Salam’[63] whenever they meet. The identity as an EC member gave them a lot of social respect.

This study also identified several extrinsic rewards that the less-powerful groups received from the powerful. Female respondents shared that being a member of EC and having good relationships with leaders in the CBO helps them to maintain networks with other women in the village. If those women need any help from the CBO leaders they contact female members of the organisation. To the female respondents, it is a matter of honour. This network is also a resource that enables them to negotiate with Panchayat Murubbis for access to privileges and opportunities. For example, one female EC respondent (CBO-2) mentioned, "Our organisation was given funding for buying agricultural equipment. It was said that this will be given to members by rotation. Before the decision was taken, I told our President to give me the machine first. He kept his word." This study found that the benefit she was able to manage may not be directly economically profitable to her, since she gave the machine to her son and husband for agricultural purposes, but it strengthened her position within the household. She mentioned that, earlier, her in-laws created a problem if she went anywhere without completing household work, but now they do not have any problem when she attends the meeting, as it is beneficial for their son, increases economic power, and their family status. Similar kinds of examples were also found in other CBOs.

[63]Salam -- The Salam is a religious salutation among Muslims when greeting.

Another female respondent (EC-4, CBO-1), who is a member of the respective Ward, described how her compliance with proper gender behaviour in the EC meeting at different times enabled her to be selected as a representative of the Ward. She mentioned one incident. "They made me steering committee member in the last CBO election. The other two male members got their remuneration for election-related works, but I was not given... I asked once, but they replied what work I did at that time. I didn't talk anymore." She further explained how good gestures benefitted her later. She said that when she thought of going for Ward level election, the president of the organisation and other Murubbis supported her. She has been selected two times as a Ward member and, through this position, has been able to make a new house. People now call her according to her position 'Memberni' (female ward member), which is more respectable and beneficial to her. She marked it as a 'definite improvement' from her earlier position and status when her life was confined within the boundaries of her own home and her family. She thinks this is possibly because of her place in the EC and submissive behaviour in the CBO's committee meetings.

The above-mentioned examples showed how the female respondents willingly engaged in the practice of ‘Purdah’ (avoid talking/disputing with Murubbis) in the case of co-management and created their space in other private and public arenas. Rozario (2006) identified this process of maintaining ‘Purdah’ of women as ‘strategic-instrumentalist’ — the idea being that they managed to get something in return for maintaining Purdah. In a study on a fishing community in coastal Kenya, Kawarazuka et al. (2019) showed how women without openly or directly challenging the local patriarchal structure, use different gendered practices and creatively negotiate for better options and outcomes for

themselves. A similar observation of cultural ways of negotiating power relations was also found in the study of Ali (2014).

This study found that to the less-powerful group, reputation is much more important than exercising power. In the studied villages, attachment with an organisation has been seen as a symbol of status and respect. Most of the fisherfolk respondents within the organisation mentioned that they never thought that, with minimum institutional capital, they would be able to join such a formal committee. One respondent (GC-1, CBO-1) said, “It was beyond our dream.” It was found that the problem of not being able to use power is insignificant to the fisherfolk compared to their previous state, where they were denied power. Another respondent said:

> The existing president asked me to be ready for taking responsibility to take charge of president, since his tenure is nearly over but I know if I take the responsibility then I have to work according to their instruction and demand, otherwise I cannot continue here. I said to him it’s okay, I will take charge but you will run the organisation. (GC-1, CBO-2)

Invisible power is at work in the above examples because less-powerful groups value their present unequal condition in the co-management arena and see it as normal. Their current states meet their intrinsic and extrinsic demands, so they see this unequal circumstance as insignificant. Broader social practices transform the way they perceive themselves and their preferences.

From the above analysis of power — hidden and invisible — it is apparent that less-powerful groups are deprived of power. It is not as if they were always constrained by the Panchayat Murubbis within the committee, but they were not showing any effort to

challenge the unequal power situation and viewed this as natural. Gaventa (1982) mentioned that, if unequal issues are non-challenged over time, the less powerful group's calculated withdrawal can cause an unconscious pattern of withdrawal from the participation arena, which is maintained not by fear but by a sense of powerlessness that has developed within them. Denying participation and the democratic experiences out of which less-powerful group's consciousness about environmental factors, management, and ability to influence decisions, relationships, and interests can grow, they internalised dominant views and existing norms and developed a "culture of silence" (Gaventa, 1982, p.19). This has two effects: first, norm compliance offers intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to the less-powerful and opens the scope of negotiation, which is not necessarily symmetric; and second, it provides the "dominant narratives an air of legitimacy" (Gaventa, 1982) or it enables social legitimations to be developed around the dominant. Scott (2001) also argued that "Compliance with a normative order discursively affirms that order....and leaves dominant symbolic structure intact."

6.5 Concluding summary

In conclusion, it can be said that, officially, CBOs are bureaucratic institutions, but in practice it is a hybrid institution. In the studied areas, Panchayat Murubbis possess more authoritative resources, enabling them to assemble different elements of institutions, reshape bureaucratic institutions under different logics and successfully manage the power differential. Kosamu et al. (2017) said that, through making this power differential, the leaders can manage the resources well. This study found it hampers the aim of co-management — the creation of countervailing power of the community (Jentoft, 2005) to manage the resources. For less powerful groups to be able to claim a

position on the committees and to reduce inequalities, they must first become aware that the circumstances are unjust or, in other words, invisible power should become detectable to them (Gaventa, 1982; Chisholm et al., 2020), which will then facilitate them to raise a voice about the situation as well as to make the conflict visible. But it was found that less-powerful groups internalise the dominant values and norms. Norm compliance, strategically acting, and tactical withdrawal from leadership positions can make the less-powerful more secure in the committee and to some extent financially beneficial. It can give them respect within a particular circumstance. Still, significantly, it negatively influences both the community and individual level of empowerment, hampers social and political understanding, reduces the ability of the less-powerful groups to influence the political process, and plays an assertive role in managing resources in the context of co-management. Instead, the study found it leaves the space for Murubbis to influence decisions.

Chapter 7: Maintaining elite control and capture

7.1 Introduction

The earlier chapter discussed the influence of Panchayat Murubbis on co-management structure and how they captured co-management structure. This chapter analyses different strategies elites use to maintain power and ensure that co-management not only benefits them but does not disrupt their established relations and benefits. This chapter answers the questions on how elites act as bricoleurs to maintain elite capture and, relatedly, how patron-client relations are maintained in managing fisheries under co-management and how these relations influence co-management. In order to answer these questions, Chapter 7 identifies different strategies that the elites/ Panchayat Murubbis in the studied CBOs use, as well as why they use these strategies and how these influence ecological and livelihood outcomes.

7.2 Strategies used by Panchayat Murubbis

The study identified five strategies that the Panchayat Murubbis used to keep control over resources and the decision-making arena. These strategies are discussed in the following sub-sections.

7.2.1 Controlling the process of consultation in the decision-making arena

To improve decision-making about resource management, consultation among different groups within the CBO is necessary. Consultation is a process that seeks the perspectives, ideas, and experiences of individuals or groups on particular issues. An effective consultation involves inclusiveness, transparency, openness and clarity, responsiveness, accessibility, and integrity. In the studied areas, according to the constitution of the studied CBOs, the EC is responsible for making a yearly report, and a GC meeting needs to be held every year to review and evaluate activities of the previous year and to determine activities for managing the waterbodies for the following years. The GC meeting enables members to offer advice, expertise, and information that can benefit them and others. The GC reserves the right to make decisions in favour of the organisation and vote on the issues discussed in the GC meeting. In theory, GC is a platform for expressing consensus or grievances and providing feedback. In practice, however, GC meetings, as conducted by Panchayat Murubbis, are examples of elite control over resource management decisions. In the analytical framework, this is referred to as the ways in which elites use their official positions to decide who will present in the decision-making discussion, which ideas or issues have the most importance, what issues will reach the political agenda, and how the issues on the agenda are discussed in terms of the order and framing, so as to modify or manipulate the democratic decision-making arena and process. Three strategies were identified that the CBO leaders employed, and they are discussed as follows:

7.2.1.1 Control over participants

This strategy was used to persuade less-powerful members not to organise and discuss resource management matters. It worked in various ways —first, by controlling the invitation of members. This study found that influential leaders invite those with whom they can advance those agendas where they have an interest. It is said in the organogram of the CBOs that GC members must be notified at least 15 days in advance. But, in all study sites, GC members reported that the meeting invitation was sent the day before the meeting or even just before the meeting started, diminishing the opportunity for attendance of the less-powerful members. The problem with the last-minute invitations is the management of time, the need to compromise daily livelihoods and income, and the likelihood of having to bear financial loss. This study also found that CBO leaders financially assisted some members in attending the meeting, particularly the female members whom the CBO leaders could control. According to them, this mainly happened when office-bearers needed to approve anything or needed someone to talk/raise a hand in their favour.

Respondents also highlighted the use of unclear invitations for meetings, as a means of maintaining control over the members. In the organogram of the CBOsit is said that in the invitation letter for a meeting, the agendas of the meeting should be clearly given, but this was hardly ever followed — only the date and time of the meeting was given. Office-bearers of the studied CBOs changed the format of meeting invitations and other members accepted this as normal. One respondent (GC-1, CBO-1) mentioned, “It will be beneficial for me to know what we will discuss in the meeting. But where is that opportunity? Only a person comes and takes our signature on a paper.” Another

respondent (GC-3, CBO-2) said, “It is always mentioned date and time in the paper. This is how he sends meeting invitations always.” In the case of sending invitations, a kind of disinterest works among the office-bearers that ultimately create frustration among some general members. In this case, some GC members either do not come to the meeting or do not speak as they do not have any preparation in advance, which facilitates suppression of conflict.

Respondents from GC highlighted the fact that the seating arrangements for GC meetings often discouraged and discriminated against fisherfolk members. In the analytical framework, the system of sitting in the meeting is one factor that influences the extent and nature of interaction among actors. The level of discrimination, in this case, determines how far the less-powerful members can influence decisions and their opportunities for access to information. During meeting observation (22.01.2020) many GC members were observed standing outside or inside during the meeting due to lack of seating arrangements.

Regarding seating arrangement-related issues, EC respondents said that since the GC meeting is held once a year and all members cannot attend meetings, buying furniture for one day is not cost-effective. However, a different view was found from some GC-fisherfolk respondents. They mentioned how Murubbis maintain pre-existing class/caste-based distance (Chapter-5, Section-5.1), which gives an understanding of how power plays in the decision-making arena. Singh (2002)said such division is produced and maintained by the upper caste/class to keep social, economic and political

power in their hand. Sitting on a chair is seen as a symbol of status and honour in the studied areas. Meeting furniture contributes a lot to communication, participation, engagement, and improvement in decisions. According to the GC respondents, when Murubbis and other senior members enter the room, they stand up from their chairs as a sign of respect. Other members from Bangal[64] do not share chairs with fisherfolk, which compels them to sit either on the floor-mats, bench, or stand inside or outside the room. These make the fisherfolk members feel disrespected and disinterested in attending the meeting. According to one respondent

> They do not want us to attend the meeting, sit here along with them, on the same level as them. So Murubbis do not keep any seating arrangements... If they want us to attend this meeting, they will manage chairs from our schools. (GC-3, CBO-2)

According to some respondents, this inequality in seating arrangements influences their access to information. When they ask for any information on beel-management issues, for example, their leaders stop them through non-verbal expressions such as eye movement and say to talk later. The experience of power is often activated by verbal cues and non-verbal behaviours, influencing others to act toward one's goals (Scholl et al., 2015). In studied CBOs, leaders do not directly tell fisherfolk to leave the meeting arena, but a discriminatory attitude indirectly and psychologically influences fisherfolk not to participate. Important information was also reported by female members and GC members of CBO regarding seating system in the case of female members in the organisation. Placing a particular group in a specific position can greatly affect the meeting outcome. Respondents reported that, during meetings, female members sit apart from the male members and on the north side of the meeting room, which is relatively

[64]Bangal—One non-fisherfolk group involved in business.

poorly lit, from where they cannot be seen clearly by the others. This was maintained from the outset from the perspective of 'Purdah' (Chapters 6). Women respondents reported that this creates difficulties in participating in discussion from that place. Female members cannot be seen clearly, so no one feels interested in listening to them. This finding is consistent with the results of Agarwal's (2001) study in the case of community forestry in India and Nepal, where the author reported that gendered behavioural norms initiate different seating arrangements for women, making women less-effective in raising a point.

The meeting place itself is another crucial factor determining the room for different opinions to be heard. Holding meetings in Murubbis' own private spaces, despite there being an office, and the taking of decisions by just a few was common in all study sites. During interviews, many EC respondents said that they conducted meetings in their residence because all are from the same village so they can do it at any time in their house or any convenient place. But GC respondents (fisherfolk) mentioned that it creates hesitation among them, since they are not informally allowed in many areas because of their class/caste identity (Chapter-5). This hesitation discourages them from going there. Some respondents pointed to the pre-existing conflict and deteriorating relations with some leaders and among members, which prevented them from participating in meetings and accessing information.

It was found that, to steer decisions towards a particular biased outcome, excluding certain members from the process through controlling invitations, discriminating seating

arrangements, and arranging a meeting in an informal place are all hidden mechanisms that Murubbis employ. Regarding this strategic exclusion, one fisherfolk respondent (GC-3, CBO-1)said, "Real fisherfolk know everything about maintenance of the waterbodies. If they want, they cannot feed us all expenditures." During interviews, it was found that some EC members appointed their own hired people to set 'Dolkata' in the sanctuary area. During submission of the labour's payment voucher, sometimes they manipulate the number of labourers, documenting more labourers than were actually used. Respondents also reported that sometimes they manipulated the amount they paid, inflating the amount that they actually paid. Instead of taking members from within the organisation, they hire labourers from outside the village, with the advantage that no one can then know the level of actual payment. In a study on elite capture in Nepal's Terai forest, Iversen et al. (2006) also reported a similar issue of how the elites capture financial benefits through documenting inflated expenditures, which they mentioned as the hidden transaction. Respondents noted that these decisions about who will go for setting ‘Dolkata’ in the sanctuary are usually taken in the GC meeting. But as very few fisherfolk members can attend the meeting, the decisions are taken according to their interests. Another point some respondents noted is that GC meetings are not held regularly, so it becomes difficult to identify the extent of manipulation.

7.2.1.2 Reinforcing gender norms and control over women

The second mechanism in controlling the consultation process was reinforcing supporting gender norms and rules, pre-existing ideas, and practices (Samndong and Kjosavik, 2017; Choudhury et al., 2016; Evans et al., 2017; Nunan et al., 2015). This was found in two ways — first, dividing roles and activities in managing resources and,

second, controlling discussion in the decision-making arena to maintain previous influence and relations and capture project benefit. The strategy CBO leaders applied influenced female members to anticipate that whatever development initiatives take place, pre-existing norms, attitudes, and perceptions of the male towards them are harder to change (Chapter-6, Section-6.3.2).

In the studied area, women have not been involved in any fisheries-management-related activities or asked for any decisions in the public space (Chapter-6, Section-6.1.1). Male respondents perceived that the project emphasised women's involvement, but their 'Ijjat' should also be protected. Women in the studied areas are not given any sanctuary-related work. A male respondent (EC-1, CBO-1) said that women were taken on patrol at the outset of the project, as the project emphasised women's involvement. But he shared an experience of physical harassment of a female EC member who went to patrol the beels with other male members. According to him, such a situation is troublesome because that woman filed a case of physical harassment against a male EC member. Finally, it needed to be resolved by the Panchayat. Following that incident, female members were not given any beel-management activities. In this regard, some female respondents had a different view. They thought leaders had an interest to save their people and exclude women from beel-management, so they forced the case before the Panchayat. Access to justice is not equal for men and women in the studied areas. A man is never punished when there is an issue between a male and a female (Chapter-5), rather the woman is blamed, which facilitated women's exclusion from beel-management activities and decision-making. Participation is relational to skills and knowledge. According to these female respondents, their leaders thought that, if they

cannot go to the Haor, surely they won't have that knowledge of resources, so cannot deliver any opinion and participate in decision-making regarding waterbodies management.

Gender division is also apparent in sub-committee formation for executing beel management-related works. Leaders formed different sub-committees to implement resource management activities in the study area-1. Members were chosen first according to their knowledge about the work. This study found these criteria keep female members away from beel management-related activities. Women generally are less-knowledgable about fisheries management because of the social and cultural norms that restrict their physical movement and opportunity. One male respondent (EC-1, CBO-1) mentioned that, in the studied area, women never buy any land or take out a lease on waterbodies. If she wants, she can take a lease on a pond with her husband or son. This social norm-based blockage influences women's knowledge and involvement in sub-committees and ability to participate in management activities. For example, in some CBOs it was found women were not involved in the beel-management sub-committee, whereas other CBOs included them but in an inactive way. In this case, the female member is not taken to the beel. Instead, male members in that sub-committee perform all the activities. The second important criterion for involvement in sub-committees is the training members had received. During interviews, it was found that both males and females were given training in different activities at the project's outset, but these training opportunities were not equally open to everyone. Women were not given training in beel-management. Instead, they received those activities related to

private spaces — poultry, nursery, tailoring, cow fattening, and rice-husking. For this reason, women were primarily found involved in the social activities of CBOs.

Women's involvement in selective activities influences how and to what extent they will contribute to the decision-making arena. One female respondent said:

> We do not say anything about Haor-management-related issues. I could say something if I visit there. If our mail members keep us with them, we can know a lot, but they never take us. They do not even give us duties related to sanctuary. They got all training related to it, know all the work. (EC-4, CBO-2, Interview dated 10.12.2019)

Another female respondent reported that if they ask something about the beel management, the leaders stop them and say they cannot talk about that issue:

> Leader used to tell us what we know about Haor. Have you ever been to the Haor area? Have you ever seen what men do there? They say they know how to take care of it. How can you know while staying at home? (EC-4, CBO-1)

One female respondent (EC-4, CBO-2) also said if anyone of them raised any points, their president and other members said in this way, "Now 'Beitiyanra' (women) will also talk about beel-related issues. What a time 'Kolijug' has come? Okay, but whatever you want to say, speak in an organised way. We do not have enough time..." Some respondents mentioned that, whenever they wanted to say something on an issue, leaders and other male members would laugh at them. They explained that as women they have less public exposure so usually cannot talk in an organised way, which makes male members laugh at them and say mockingly, “Say what you want but don’t make us laugh” (GC-3,CBO-4). Some female respondents reported that sometimes they are allowed to talk but that their opinion or points they raised are not listened to properly.

One respondent (EC-4, CBO-1) noted, "They allow us to talk at first and say what we say they will reflect on later, but later they do not discuss the issue anymore." These male members' acts and attitudes discourage female members from participating in the decision-making, which is reflected in one interview extract: "For this reason, we just stopped saying anything"(EC-4, CBO-2). This difference between voicing and influencing the decision was also reported by Nightingale (2002) in the case of community forestry. In a study on East African and Malawi fisheries, Nunan et al. (2015) mentioned decision-making process within fisheries being patriarchal, where women voices are unheard. During interviews, it was found that the situation made women feel worthless, facilitating self-exclusion.

Male members were asked how they recognise women's opinions and views regarding resource management. It was found they think that women cannot contribute better ideas and do not want to accept that women can talk in a public forum on any issue as this is not supported and matched with the culture in the studied areas, so they control the discussion arena. One respondent said:

> In the GC meeting, we tell them we decide on this issue. If they want or have anything to say, they can. In our village, women cannot speak because they always stay inside the house. So naturally, they will feel shy talking over in public (EC-1, CBO-1).

Notions of proper gender behaviour were also found to similarly affect women's role in the meeting place. The reason is that social and cultural norms are transmitted from generation to generation through socialisation and regulate the way people interact with the world around them by prohibiting certain activities (Oloko et al., 2021). Regarding women's participation in GC/EC meetings, one female respondent (GC-3, CBO-2) said,

"When our leaders talk, we shake our heads in favour of them..." Another female respondent said:

> In our samaj[65], there is no tradition to talk in a public place over Murubbis or a male person. We listen to what the male members discuss in the meeting. We always agree with their decision. They inform us what they have decided or planned to do in the meeting. (EC-4, CBO-1)

Similar evidence was reported in a study on project-1 by Choudhury et al. (2016), where they found that women's participation in meetings was just a physical activity.

This study found that one of the critical benefits of gender division of activities and related training and exclusion is control over different financial allowances. This is a hidden interest of the CBO leaders that they executed by introducing supporting norms and practices. It was reported during the interviews that the organisation earned money from floating-leases (see 7.2.3), and that the leaders keep separate one portion of the funds as an honorarium for those who do the patrol as it is a challenging and risky job. Since these patrols are limited to office-bearers, with women excluded due to security and 'Ijjat', one gender lacks this financial opportunity. Women respondents also pointed toward beel-management-related training and mentioned that in this training, trainees were given different allowances (travel, accommodation, and participation). Being women, they did not receive those financial benefits, as women did not receive management-related training. They therefore, lacked knowledge, which facilitated Murubbis in excluding women from beel-management-related decision-making.

[65] Samaj--Society

Women respondents mentioned that they did do some supervision work at the outset, such as maintaining a record of their labours. But now, their activities are limited to joining in the rallies. One respondent said:

> When they distribute poultry, tree-seeds, winter clothes among the poor, they do this by our hand, keep us in the front, take a picture of it, and send them to Upazilla offices, NGOs. They recognise our importance only when taking a picture but not involve any beel-management activities. (EC-4, CBO-2)

The women respondents said the benefit of these activities is twofold — first, to show that they are not making gender-based differences in their organisation (rather, that they support women's empowerment) and, second, by presenting these pictures to the NGO officials and government officials, they were managing funds to buy poultry, make poultry-farms, buy boats, agricultural equipment, help flood-affected people, etc. But this study found female members do not have that fund-related information about where it was spent, and how the fund was distributed. One respondent (EC-4, CBO-1) said, "They never discuss that issue before us, we just heard from others that we have two types of funds."

7.2.1.3 Control over agenda

Agenda control is a kind of hidden strategy, less-obvious, employed by Panchayat Murubbis to exclude and undervalue (Gaventa, 2006) the less-powerful group and their concern and opinion about the management of fisheries. Agenda control occurs because of the very nature of politics — a committee endowed with formidable power may find that the system's internal dynamics tend to drain their power away (Bendor and Moe, 1986). This study found control over the agenda worked in four ways, and they are discussed as follows.

Control over meeting resolution

Controlling meeting resolution is a powerful strategy Murubbis used, preventing any challenge to the decision-maker's decision. This study found that, to advance or keep the leader's agenda, sometimes decisions are changed later, or relevant information is deliberately concealed. During interviews, EC respondents said that meeting resolutions are not written immediately. The secretary noted the discussion points, took the members' signatures on the resolution book, and later wrote it up. Irregularities in resolution writing, changing of decisions, and hiding information by the Murubbis were frequently reported in all study sites. For example, one respondent mentioned:

> Our leader said he can't write fast. So he takes notes first, and then they write them according to their interest, involving new points that will benefit them. The new points they added were strategically skipped while reading previous decisions taken in the meeting....I once understood such manipulation when I heard about two different things about sanctioning a floating-lease. In this case, they documented less but, in reality, took more from the sub-lessee (GC-3, CBO-2)

Another respondent said:

> Sometimes they changed the sign-sheet and forged some signatures, added a new signature, or eliminated someone and wrote down a decision in their favour.(GC-1, CBO-5)

In the meeting, to hide that manipulation, earlier decisions are not read, showing different excuses — for instance, shortage of time or sending the document to the audit office. One respondent (GC-2, CBO-1) mentioned, "I do not understand why it's taking so long, six months to do an audit. How do I understand where they keep or send the notebook?" This study found two issues that, without question, influence decisions-making. First, the limited ability of fisherfolk members and women to give up a whole

day to attend a meeting. Second, illiteracy among the less-powerful makes members feel shy to ask for any information. Therefore, to what extent manipulation in decisions has been made is sometimes uninformed.

Control over information

The fifth strategy that the CBO leaders applied in the decision-making arena was controlling what information they would disclose and what they would not unveil in the public arena. This was found to be done in two ways — direct coercion and deliberate procrastination during the discussion. The study found that direct coercion was used to hide their misappropriation of funds and manipulation of the documentation. In the studied CBOs, every member pays a membership fee and contributes revenue to the organisation; hence they have the right to know about their savings and the organisation's fund. One respondent said:

> If we ask anything about the organisation's fund, they said 'we spent the money where needed....Why do you talk too much?(GC-3, CBO-2)

Respondents reported that office-bearers have the responsibility of patrolling the sanctuary area, and they can catch thieves, seize the fish and can sell the confiscated fish to the market. Though they are not given authority to collect fines, they do it anyway to increase funds. But general members do not know whether the money earned from fining/selling fish is deposited into the account or not. As one respondent said:

> ..... They do not even share what they have done with this money. How much money does our organisation have? Where can we invest this money?(GC-1, CBO-1)

Respondents highlighted that when any fund-related and beel-management-related questions are asked, the leaders try to bypass that by procrastination. One respondent describes the process as follows:

> .....In this case, they spent more time discussing their success. For example, at the last CBO meeting, they started with the information that we get 200 acres of an extra waterbody. I agree it's a big success. But when I raised questions on management of these extra waterbodies, others asked on fund-related issues, they changed the topic and started to discuss the earlier issue.... They only waste time. Sometimes, they begin to talk among themselves about another issue, an irrelevant one. After a while, they say okay, it is time to go for prayer, take a break, and talk about this issue after a break. Later, when they come back after prayer, they finish the meeting very quickly. Most of the time, the meeting ends without deciding many issues. (GC-1, CBO-1)

Respondents reported that leaders do not disclose account-related information and do not make any decisions because they believe that leaders invest this money for personal benefit. They keep it in their bank account and take the interest.

Reluctance in accepting others' view

To advance their interests, the influential members can control the space by resisting other members in the form of failing to hear or accept others' views. In all studied CBOs, appointing guards for the sanctuary is a crucial issue, finalised through the GC meeting. As responsibility and honesty-related issues are involved with this post, different views may arise regarding selecting the person(s) for this post. But to appoint their people, leaders either bypass the issue or discourage members from discussing it. As one respondent said:

> In our organisation, leaders select guards for the sanctuary. But this time, they have appointed some guards about whom there are already many controversies and complaints. We told them to reconsider the issue. But

> they said guards are not easily available. No one wants to do this duty. As you raise questions on this issue, you better give us a guard. How can I find a guard that instantly? They do not want us to talk about this issue. So what is the point of talking here?(GC-1, CBO-1)

One respondent (EC-2, CBO-5) said they do not make this appointment of the guard-related decision openly in the GC meeting as disputes occur. This study found the views of the less-powerful group were devalued. For example, one respondent (GC-2, CBO-1) said they have an opinion about appointing two guards, one from the fisherfolk members and one from outside the organisation. Another respondent (GC-1, CBO-2) said they have the idea of selecting guards from the three villages instead of one village. The advantage of taking guards from different areas, as they mentioned, is this can control illegal fishing activities and help them to know what is happening within the sanctuary area. But if the decision is taken collectively, it may block leaders' hidden interest, and their choice cannot be advanced, and a debate will develop. According to the fisherfolk respondents in the CBOs, the powerful appoint those who are their trusted people. If they select guards according to the fisherfolk's choice, they cannot continue illegal activities (Section-7.2.2.1). To advance their choices, the leaders take the decision first in the EC meeting, and in the GC meeting, without giving time or creating a supportive environment for discussion or feedback on this.

Covert way of taking decisions

Covert decision-making is one of the powerful mechanisms Murubbis used to advance their agenda. They took the decision separately and then approved it in a GC meeting. According to the organogram, the EC has been given the power to make waterbody-related management decisions. This study found that CBO leaders use their official

power to achieve their objective, sometimes to the detriment of others. The reasons for covert decision-taking, as EC respondents mentioned is irregularities in arranging meetings due to unavailability of members or lack of time. Regarding floating-lease distribution, EC respondents said, if they are not distributed in a timely fashion, the organisation will fail to pay rent to the government.

However, GC respondents gave a different view on this. Sometimes leaders make decisions separately because if they discuss it in the GC meeting, conflicting opinions may arise, making it difficult to advance their interests. They gave as an example the fact that waterbodies in their organisation were always distributed among its members. There was a sub-committee who usually set the price of the waterbodies, placed them in GC and then an auction took place (Section-7.2.3). However, this time leaders took decisions separately and gave the waterbody to an outsider of the organisation. According to them, leaders gave it to external people for two reasons. Leaders first calculated their profit. If the benefit is higher than keeping the waterbodies to themselves, they would give it to others. The advantage of deciding this way is that no one can know the exact selling price of the lease, and leaders can earn a considerable amount of money through bribes. Second, leaders want to maintain a good relationship with powerful leaseholders to continue illegal fishing activities in the sanctuary (see Sub-section-7.2.2.2). Respondents mentioned that, though they have many questions, it is not always possible to ask them for two reasons — first, the elite can create an environment in which the less-powerful are given no opportunity to talk and, second, the social norms of respect. In this case, the benefit always remains with the leaders. One respondent shared a meeting experience in the following way:

> In such a situation, they started the meeting through through advisors. This time, UFO started the meeting in this way… 'Your leaders made a mistake. We know you have an objection to giving this waterbody to the outsiders, so we can solve it now that your president will give back the money to him. That waterbody will handover under floating-lease to Kola Mia (Pseudonym, guard of the sanctuary and our Secretary's cousin).....One thing is common here when there is a discussion on any conflicting issue every advisors will present and supports the leaders. On that day they just informed the pre-planned decision. Now, who will talk before our Murubbis? It is bad manners to talk over them. (GC-2, CBO-1)

From the above examples, it was found that decision-making is mainly limited to some powerful elite actors. Fisherfolk and women members in the organisation can hardly deliver their views and opinions about beel-management activities, the appointment of the guard, and fund appropriation. If their views were incorporated, this would change the allocation of benefits and privileges and block the opportunities for hidden transactions, and grabbing the hidden subsidies (Iversen et al., 2006). To suppress this demand for change and maintain pre-existing inequalities, the elite actors use many strategies in the decision-making arena.

7.2.2 Management of sanctuary through trusted committee members and maintaining elite network

In the studied areas, except for the inherited properties, other waterbodies are 'Jalmohals'[66]. Under the two projects, Project-1 and Projet-2, some waterbodies were allocated to the CBOs without a competitive tendering process. Some of these waterbodies were transferred to permanent or temporary[67] 'Macher Ovoyasrom'

[66]Jalmohal-State property.
[67]Temporary sanctuary –Temporary indicates for 10 years.

(mother fishery/sanctuary). For the management of the sanctuary, the CBO leaders employed two strategies, which are discussed below.

7.2.2.1 Sanctuary management through trusted committee members

To manage sanctuaries, the CBO leaders involve committee members in patrolling and as guards they can trust. But it was also a strategy for capturing vast benefits from the sanctuary, and ties. Establishing a fish sanctuary in the studied areas was a relatively new activity, allowing safe spots for fish breeding. This intervention was seen as an efficient managing device for fisheries conservation, increasing fish production, ensuring higher catches in the Haor system, and improving the fisherfolk community's livelihood. So it was vital to prevent fishing activities in the sanctuary area. Earlier, influential leaseholders secured these waterbodies under the lease. At that time, the poor fisherfolk community had access through an informal fee-paying rule (Chapter-5, Section-5.2.2). With the establishment of the sanctuary, the local fisherfolk community and the general members within the organisation no longer have historical fishing rights and access. Hence making rules regarding the sanctuary maintenance proved challenging.

EC respondents of the studied CBOs confirmed that no one can enter the sanctuary areas except EC members, guards, or caretakers, and they have no withdrawal rights. They only patrol the sanctuary area and observe whether the guards do their duty. Removing anything from this sanctuary is a punishable act. In the study area-2, the decision about sanctuary maintenance was found to be taken by the three office-bearers

separately, and its maintenance issues were limited only to the office-bearers. There was a different process in the study area-1. To manage the sanctuaries, CBO leaders formed a sub-committee composed of only office-bearers and some members from the GC whom they could trust, and whom the fisherfolk community also obeyed. These members had kinship ties and employee relations (member of their FCOs) with CBO leaders whom some respondents from GC and CG named as 'Nijer lok'(own people), 'Kaser lok'(nearer one) (Chapter-6, Section-6.1.2). The purpose of involving these trustworthy members was manifold. EC respondents first mentioned sanctuary conservation and security issues. As one respondent said:

> We can't give the maintenance and management in other's hand. If we do this, it will be destroyed just in one day.... Earlier it was monitored by different groups in a rotation where members were selected from the GC. In 2013, this sanctuary was looted.....we cannot take any more chances. (EC-1, CBO-1)

To manage the sanctuary, the EC in every study site also adopted some other rules — removing the informal boat-parking zone near the sanctuary with the help of local government officials, strengthening the security, and restricting the movement of the local people. To gain consensus from the community and other GC and CG members regarding these rules, it was essential to involve some whom the fisherfolk community also obeyed. Hence, another purpose of involving some trustworthy GC members was to motivate their group members and other fisherfolk outside of the organisation to comply with sanctuary access rules.

This study found that introducing the area restrictions rule and appointing trustworthy people were moves that were, in reality, targeted to extract financial and non-financial

benefits. In every study site, illegal fishing activities of some of the leaders were repeatedly mentioned by some GC and local fisherfolk respondents. According to them, making a sanctuary is now a profitable business for the CBO leaders. Leaders transformed most of the waterbodies that were given to the CBOs into sanctuaries and used them as their fisheries. Behind norms and rules of access restrictions, they fish by themselves and involve just a few people in their network in these activities. One respondent mentioned that:

> Before establishing sanctuary, we placed our boat there since the area is near our fishing ground...They made the rule that no one could park their boats near the sanctuary; otherwise, they would seize our boat.....They made this rule because if we go near the sanctuary to park our boat, we will certainly observe their corrupt activities. If we cannot go there, we cannot see anything. (Fisherfolk-1)

In every case-study site, fisherfolk and GC respondents mentioned how the leaders carry out corrupt activities with the help of trusted members and in the name of patrolling. One respondent, for example, said:

> We cannot go there. But as EC members, they can do all the activities...You can ask anyone in this village. Everyone knows that every night, they catch fish with the help of their guards. Our leaders involve those 'Kaser Lok' as they do not know how to fish. So they fish there for the leaders. They do not sell the fish they catch here — instead, they send them very early morning to the dealers of other districts. If they sold here, then people would understand easily. Every day, some EC members in the CBO earn a minimum of 5000 BDT (53$) each from selling this fish. (CG-2, Interview dated 18.11.2019)

This form of illicit act – illegal harvesting — was referred to by Iversen et al. (2006) as a hidden transaction. This study found an informal support system is built surrounding the sanctuary management, which is of two types — one is instrumental, based on material exchanges for example, some GC respondents from the first case-study area reported one portion of the money CBO leaders earned from the illegal fishing was

spent during the CBO election to buy votes (See Chapter-6, Section-6.1.2). Another form of informal support system was found between the CBO leaders and trusted members based on non-material and material exchanges. This network is maintained by the leaders mainly to capture maximum economic benefit. In the studied areas, the guards' salaries are paid from endowment funds. During interviews, it was found that these salaries were not regularly handed over to the guards. Instead, the leaders kept them, giving some illegal fishing opportunities in exchange. Many respondents reported that in the Haor area 'torch/light fishing' is completely banned, but the guards do this in the name of guarding. They also mentioned that the guards are involved in giving illegal fishing access to the fisherfolk of their village in exchange for an hourly-fee. It is not like the office-bearers are entirely unaware of it. Some EC members support it out of consideration for their guards' poor financial condition. In this respect, one EC member (EC-2, CBO-1) said, "...why will the guard not do this? They are only paid 4000 BDT (42$) per month. How can a family survive with this amount nowadays? They have to survive. If they catch fish from the sanctuary and sell them, he will get 10,000-12,000 BDT (105-126)."

Guards are usually appointed depending on the size of the waterbodies. In the studied areas, some waterbodies require three to four guards. During interviews, it was also found that the UFC[68] sanctioned salaries for 3 to 4 guards from the endowment fund but, in reality, leaders appointed fewer guards for example two guards instead of three and allow these two guards to share the salary of the third guards between them. In this

[68]Upazilla Fisheries Committee

way one respondent (GC-1, CBO-4)said he and other guard each got 35,000 BDT (368$) last year.

In exchange for financial and non-financial benefits, the guards also work for some CBO leaders and provide labour and political services. For example, the respondent (GC-1, CBO-4) said that he works as a caretaker of a beel of the CBO leader and does not take any amount from him to do his work. Fisherfolk respondents also reported that both guards are politically linked and provide political services (campaigning) to their CBO leader. Similar support network was found during interviews at the study area-2. Since most of the guards were appointed through kinship, employee, or political ties, this issue and those illegal financial and non-financial benefits mentioned above make them loyal to the leaders, limiting the chances of developing dissent regarding fisheries management-related activities. For example, regarding leaders' manipulation of documentation of lease money, one respondent (GC-2, CBO-4) said, "I understand and know that they manipulate amounts and other expenditures of the organisation, but their other side is good.....Working with the organisation is voluntary, but if the leaders are not given or get any benefit, why would these leaders work?" A similar kind of example was also found in a study by Platteau (2004), where the author reported the leaders' role in manipulating project funds and how the ordinary members defended their leader, as they also get some benefits. This kind of patronage is problematic as it hampers leader accountability.

7.2.2.2 Maintaining informal network with politicians, leaseholders

This study found the CBO leaders maintained informal networks with higher and local-level politicians and powerful leaseholders in the context of sanctuary management. This was done for two reasons — first, to dilute their influence on sanctuary management and secure the lease for a long-time and, second, to continue illegal fishing so that no one can raise any questions against their activities. Regarding this relationship, one respondent (GC-2, CBO-1) said, "No one can say anything before these leaders. Political leaders back them." Another respondent said:

> Local and higher-level politicians all are their partners. They give these politicians fish and a timely share of the income. Everyone knows that last year these members sent fish from the sanctuary on the wedding of a politician's son. Rules of the sanctuary are made only for us. (CG-1, Interview dated 18.11.2019)

To understand the relation with external actors, office-bearer respondents were asked whether they faced any challenges or barriers in managing waterbodies. This study identified that, although for the last several years the studied CBOs have maintained a good relationship with some higher and local-level politicians, at the outset the situation had been different. Higher-level politicians play a vital role in decisions about waterbody leasing since they are also a part of UFC (Chapter-2, Section-2.3.3). Chapter-5 discussed how financially and politically powerful bidders procure leases using this political channel. Leasing decisions of higher-level politicians are related to the leaseholder's economic benefit and have a critical influence in maintaining votes in that area. Besides this election-related support, the politician also gets cash and non-cash benefits throughout the year from these leaseholders. Under co-management, the waterbodies were transferred to CBOs under MoU between MoL and MoFL/MoEF.

There was no competitive bidding process followed here, so higher-level politicians were not involved in this process. As the CBOs got the waterbodies directly from the DoF/DoE, this new power challenges the power of politicians in the leasing process. One respondent (EC-1, CBO-2) said, in this regard, “Until 2011, we only showed power. No one was able to exert /show power on us.” But it is not easy to avoid higher-level politicians. During the interviews, their influence was reported by the respondents several times. NGO staff-1 mentioned the interest of politicians and said, “When the project worked here, they wished to get something as a gift — for example, shares of fish and money from the CBOs. But it was not given to them. That’s why probably dissatisfaction worked among them.” Another respondent also echoed the views of the NGO respondent said and shared an incident:

> In 2012, in an opening ceremony for a watchtower for the sanctuary, the NGO- officers invited one of our higher-level politicians, but they did not make any proper arrangement for him to honour him properly... He got angry at the activities of the NGO-officers related to that project... He said to us, ‘If you only can see the benefits of conservation, then how it is possible... You have to show us what the benefit of sanctuary conservation is.’ (EC-2, CBO-1)

The respondent further reported that their dissatisfaction led to interference in the enforcement of regulations in various ways — releasing the accused, taking official action (stand-release) against government officials for exercising law, and stopping enforcement. Another respondent explained how higher-level politicians create obstacles in the enforcement of law and regulation process and limit the local government administration from executing their duty:

> Once we were faced with climate-related catastrophe. Due to severe drought, the water level had dropped extremely and, to get oxygen, fish came up. Local people were very much attracted to see such big fish. Thousands of people came from the surrounding union and looted the

> beel.....We called the police, but the police, UNO, and UFO didn't take any action. They only said they have the order from the highest authority not to take any action, not to file any case against local people. (EC-1, CBO-1)

The ransacking of the sanctuaries occurred in almost all sanctuaries in the study areas. The influence of higher-level politicians on enforcement of regulation is not exceptional in this case. In a study on Lake Victoria, Nunan (2020) reported the interference of politicians in fisheries management in the form of stopping or preventing enforcement, particularly during election times when they have the most significant concern for the vote from constituents. Politicians do not want to damage their popularity and chances of re-election.

During interviews, interference of local government officials was reported in the form of demanding bribes for disbursing endowment funds and abstaining from enforcement of regulation and policy support. Respondents from CBO-2 said that when the contract period was nearly over, the members from the EC went to the UNO for its extension, as UNO is one of the authorities to pursue recommendations for beel-extension. But they did not get any help from the local government office. Instead, the officer said, "The beel is government property, and these local people also belong to the government. If people want to get a share in this property and catch fish, then what can you or I do?" (EC-1, CBO-2) It was found that in the study sites-1, out of 21 waterbodies 7 were sanctuaries. Except for permanent sanctuary, no other waterbodies were given to the CBOs for the next five years under extension when the time limit on the lease was expired.

This study also identified the interpersonal relations of leaseholders, local political leaders, and local people that can influence co-management. In the study area-1, in village-4 and 5, the fisherfolk community belongs to the majority group. This fisherfolk community first welcomed co-management since the beels given under co-management are situated next to their village. Their daily livelihoods depend on those beels, and they thought they would get priority access. But the existing CBO leaders mainly focused on personal ties (Section-7.2.3) when giving access to the waterbodies and providing benefits to the people of village-3. Lack of access and benefits influenced many fisherfolk from village-4 and 5 to leave the CBO and communicate with the leaseholders who had bought those beels before co-management was introduced. They are also linked politically. Moreover, these leaseholders also aspire to get back those beels. This gives the leaseholders a solid ground to influence higher-level politicians in opposition to co-management. According to a respondent (GC-1, CBO-2), nearly 4000 voters live in these villages, and the majority are fisherfolk. This high portion of fisherfolk also has critical importance in local-level political landscapes.

Moreover, these politically linked leaseholders also bear the election costs of higher-level politicians. This large number of voters, and a fear of losing control over voters, enabled higher-level politicians to interfere in returning the waterbody to CBOs. This is probably one of the reasons why CBO-2's lease period was not renewed for next 5 years. So to get the waterbodies back CBO-2 filed a case, and during interviews it was found that it was still under process. This higher-level politician's interferences created a fear within the CBO leaders of other CBOs that government can take away the waterbodies. Hence, to secure, maintain, and keep their control over the waterbodies,

the CBO leaders sought to maintain relations with politicians and leaseholders. For example, one respondent mentioned that "...That's why we now take care of who wants what...we meet their demand according to their wish (EC-1, CBO-1).

It was found from the interviews that the visible authority of CBO leaders to manage the sanctuary broadens their scope in cultivating relations in various ways and on multiple levels. CBO leaders took various steps to maintain communication with higher-level politicians. Some CBO leaders gave the floating-lease waterbodies of the organisation to the politician's own people. During the interview with an NGO professional, it was found that the CBO leaders often carry out illegal activities in a very systematic and indirect way and bypass formal rules. This also demonstrates that NGO staffs are not unaware of these illegal activities. He said:

> In the CBO, the leaders connect with other local elites, local and higher-level politicians. These influential people also have their land (ancestors/leased) adjacent to the sanctuary....These influential people and leaders make deeper holes between their areas and the sanctuary. Now it is strictly said in the waterbody laws that '*Vumir Sreni Poriborton Kora Jabe Na'*.[69] But who will speak up about these irregularities? The police will not take action as politicians are attached to it. During the monsoon, fish from the sanctuary spread over the Haor, and when fish come back during dry time to the sanctuary area, most of them take shelter in these holes. When dry season starts, they apply the dewatering method[70] to harvest the fish and earned a huge amount of money. This share they then distribute among those who participated in the illegal process. (NGO staff-1)

[69]'Vumir Sreni Poriborton Kora Jabe Na' means The structure of land cannot be changed under any circumstances

[70]Dewatering is a process of removing ground water completely. This is prohibited in the fisheries regulations as it is linked to habitat destruction, extinction.

In reality, the influence of higher-level politicians and other leaseholders made CBO leaders understand that it is crucial to maintain relations with them. NGO respondent-1 said, "Earlier politicians influence a lot, but now it can be said there is no influence... The CBO leaders are now capable enough to handle politicians." A "symbiotic hidden power relationship" (Rabé and Kamanzi, 2012, p. 39) was found where the CBO leader's power to give bribe/illegal benefits to the politicians is nurtured by the politician's power to resolve any issues informally. This study found that these cash and non-cash benefits to the politicians, their followers, and government officials enabled the CBO-1 to get another extra 200 acres of waterbodies next to the sanctuary for which they applied. During the fieldwork, the NGO respondents from the study area-1 said that some of the waterbodies were already given back to the other CBOs. To get the waterbodies back, following the legal process is not exceptional in the studied areas. Brakel et al. (2021) reported this in other co-managed waterbodies and mentioned that CBOs get those waterbodies back as the court decided to favour the CBOs and forced the government to renew the lease. This study shows that matters are not so straightforward. Instead, maintaining a network with elites eases the getting back of waterbodies.

7.2.3 Control over floating-lease[71] waterbodies

This study identified a range of rules and practices that Panchayat Murubbis introduced to distribute waterbodies under floating-lease. Though the reasons behind the

[71]Floating lease—In this process waterbodies are given under lease with the condition of fishing keeping the water level 3 feet. Here fishers cannot use any harmful gears instead can fish which are floating.

introduction of the practice were noble — fund enhancement of the organisation, and conservation — in reality, Murubbis were driven by a hidden interest in keeping the control of the waterbodies in their hands. They have a higher interest on the hidden transactions and subsidies associated with floating-leases. Except for sanctuary, the studied CBOs were handed over to several waterbodies for two main purposes — first, to ensure the livelihoods of the fisherfolk members, since establishing a sanctuary would restrict their access. One NGO professional mentioned that waterbodies were given so that fisherfolk groups within the CBOs could get them under a floating-lease on a rotation basis for a specific time and receive the monetary benefits. The second main purpose was to ensure a secured revenue source for the organisation. The money earned from the floating-lease would be deposited in the bank account of the respective organisation and expended on two sectors — first, on official yearly costs (arranging meetings, photocopying, transportation cost, allowances, etc.) and, second, to pay the yearly rent of the waterbodies.

The distribution of waterbodies under floating-lease is mainly followed by a sub-lease system, which is completely prohibited according to the National Wetland Management Act-2009. Government banned sub-leasing is because it inflates the actual price of the waterbodies. It was found in the study area-1, the studied CBOs have used open-tender and sealed-tender processes from the government centralised leasing system. In this case, the minimum price of the waterbodies is set based on 5% or 10% higher than the earlier lease value. CBO-1 used to follow a competitive open-tender process to sanction the waterbodies. According to the respondent (EC-1, CBO-1), under the open-tender process, they set the lowest price of the waterbody, every member of the organisation

could take part, and the lease price could go up. The highest bidder within the organisation, who was able to pay the lease money at the time, could acquire the beel. He also mentioned that introducing open-tendering was targeted at increasing the organisation's funds.

The process of waterbodies distribution slightly differs in the case of CBO-2. At the project's outset, the CBO-2 followed a sealed-tender process where applicants applied for a lease mentioning the highest price of the waterbody. The decision was taken in the GC meeting. Interpersonal relations of fisherfolk applicants with the UP Chairman played a critical role here. Fisherfolk members from village-4 and 5 used to secure leases utilising this channel. The UP chairman also did not deny their request for the fisherfolk votes during the UP election. Nevertheless, this sealed-tender process was not followed afterwards. Instead, the CBO-2 also started the open-tender process. One respondent (EC-2, CBO-2) mentioned that they first called applications from a group of 10 people. Groups were formed here by involving members from inside and outside of CBO aimedto give the leasing opportunity to everyone.

The open-tender process was taken from the centralised leasing system, so no one could oppose it or raise a question about it, but the study found it to be a strategy of CBO leaders to keep out fisherfolk from the leasing process in a very systematic way. There were four ways identified in which fisherfolk were excluded from floating-lease opportunity. In the studied areas, the fisherfolk community is financially poor (Chapter-5). Under the open-tender process, fisherfolk members within the organisation faced

financial constraints from many sides. First, under this process, the price of the waterbodies can go up, limiting the fisherfolk group's chances of getting the waterbody and facilitating financially influential CBO leaders to take away the beel with high prices. One respondent (GC-2, CBO-2) said, "If we fisherfolk group say the price 60,000 BDT (631$) then they said 70,000 BDT (736$). They raise the price up to 2,00000 BDT (2103$). It is not possible for us to give that amount of money....”

The second point some GC respondents mentioned was the payment system of the floating-lease price. Fisherfolk cannot apply for a floating-lease or feel disinterested in applying because they have to deposit a large amount of lease-money within 7 or 15 days of the floating-lease decision taken. It was found from the interviews that this one-time payment was practised at the outset of the project. But when the leaders and their people started to take the lease, they created a new practice of instalment payment where the lessee pays for the floating-lease in 2 or 3 instalments. The EC members mentioned they did this to reduce the financial pressure on the lessee. Some GC respondents also noted that, to pay the instalments, the lessee sometimes applies illegal fishing methods like dewatering or reselling it at a higher price to other leaseholders. Alternatively, they offer fisherfolk access to that waterbody under different conditions, for example paying a toll (seasonal and gear-based). Here lessee determined the toll. Respondents reported that as the lessee secured the waterbodies from the CBO by paying huge amounts of money, they charged a higher toll to get the money back. As the beel is next to their village, they had no other option but to accept this higher toll.

Third, this study identified a disinterest among the GC (fisherfolk) respondents in taking waterbodies. In addition to the lease price, they have to pay an extra amount unofficially to the leaders to get the beel. This complexity facilitates the lease being taken by financially influential people of the CBO. One respondent said:

> To participate in floating-leases, we not only give the lease money. We have to pay an extra amount. Each office-bearer related to this process, particularly the president and secretary, get 20,000-25000 BDT (210-263$). It depends on the size of the beel and its fish availability (GC-1, CBO-1).

The fourth point, some fisherfolk respondents reported complexities in access to the group that makes the floating-lease, since the CBO leaders maintained "affective ties" (Scott, 1972, P. 99) in group formation:

> Our leaders involve only their people, relatives, and party people they included in CBO in their group. They do not give floating-leases to anyone outside their channel. Here group formation depends on the leader, and those with whom leader feels comfortable to work (GC-3, CBO-1).

A CG member in this respect said:

> No, no, how could we get involved? Those who helped him (president) win the election, only they can be involved in the floating lease-based group, can get the opportunity to go to the sanctuary.(CG-3, Interview dated 22.11.2019)

The open-tender process the Murubbis used for distributing waterbodies is highly unequal, because the financially disadvantaged group cannot participate. A similar finding was reported in a study on community forestry in South Asia by Agarwal (2001). The author noted that, though the auctioning process seemed neutral, as it emphasised willingness to pay, or pay by contribution or by need, it had significant

gender and class implications. People with differing abilities, particularly the poor and women, were less able to pay or contribute.

In the study area-2, the Murubbis followed different strategies to sanction waterbodies. To select member(s) for floating-lease, Murubbis of CBO-3 set a rule that waterbodies would be handed over under a floating-lease to a specific identity 'Beel Mare'. This identity in the study area-2 is only informally assigned to the influential leaseholders. They have the financial capacity to bear all the lease costs and constantly secure the lease from the government. This identity-related informal rule certainly excluded fisherfolk from accessing waterbodies. CBO-3 also made a benefit-distribution rule that whoever is the leaseholder within the organisation will get the lease, and the fish harvested will go on sale in the 'Aarot' (fish market) situated next to the Haor. It was found that the Aarot is mainly controlled by some of the leaders of the CBO-3. This condition was included to ensure that the leaseholder and leaders get a reasonable price. In this case, the leader will benefit in both cases — if he takes the lease, he can sell the fish outside at a high price. Alternatively, if the leaseholder sells fish to him, he can re-sell the fish at higher prices. Another leasing arrangement EC respondents from CBO-4 and CBO-5 mentioned was the partnership system — a popular informal system in the second case-study area (Chapter-5). Under this system, Murubbis within the organisation take external leaseholders as their partners. In the study area-2, a network of elites is maintained everywhere in the context of the floating- lease.

Another example of the hidden interest of leaders came from GC respondents from CBO-2, where they mentioned that, except for sanctioning floating-leases, the EC also permitted the fisherfolk to get access to the waterbody under the condition of toll and fishing gear used. CBO leaders banned the 'Polo' (one kind of local fishing gear), claiming that 'Polo' is harmful to conservation. Alternatively, they gave access to those fisherfolk who use 'Ber Jaal' and 'Current Jaal'. Interestingly, all these fishing nets are completely prohibited under the Fisheries Act-1997. This study found that the approval of 'Ber Jaal' and 'Current Jaal' was targeted to benefit only the fisherfolk members from village-3, the CBO leader's village. Fisherfolk members from village-4 and 5 use 'Polo' for fishing, and this gear-restriction rule excluded this particular group of fisherfolk from their waterbodies. According to some GC respondents, the gear restriction rule was not only targeted to provide benefits to a specific group, but leaders also got an informal commission for giving them access permits. One respondent (GC-3, CBO-2) from village-4 said, "Nothing can be hidden in the fish market...Leaders give access benefit there and count their share from fishing sitting in the market." Therefore, the Murubbis' objective in this case was not conservation but receiving financial benefits. In a study on forest governance by Persha and Andersson (2014), the authors reported similar findings on access restriction and the benefit of a particular powerful group.

It can be seen from the above-mentioned floating-lease rules that these rules allocated the highest benefit to powerful leaders. Murubbis in this case extracted benefits in many ways, in the form of various hidden transactions like bribes and subsidies and through illegal harvesting, while other group members, particularly some fisherfolk and women, were effectively disadvantaged.

7.2.4 Enforcement-related support

The influential leaders in the studied CBOs provide enforcement-related supports to their clients — leaseholders and fisherfolk — by preventing, stopping enforcement action of the local government official, and informally solving small law-violations, e.g., theft/stealing fish. This study found that hidden transactions in the form of bribes motivated leaders to provide this support. When leaders take the floating-lease, they apply the dewatering method and get the lease money back in the space of one day. The fisherfolk included in the floating-lease group (Section-7.2.3) do this illegal harvesting for them, and leaders provide them enforcement-related supports. Sometimes a floating-lease is also handed over to other leaseholders and rich fisherfolk. In Section-7.2.3, it was mentioned that to get a floating-lease applicants pay an extra amount unofficially (in other words, a bribe) to the leaders. The bribe is linked with receiving further opportunities from the leaders — continuation of illegal fishing activities and enforcement-related support. The lessee then applies unlawful fishing methods to recover the informally paid amount. An informal agreement was made among the powerful office-bearers and applicants in this case. One respondent (GC-4, CBO-1, Interview dated 25.11.2019) said, "Leaders say to set machine for dewatering in that way so the police cannot be informed....if anyone informs the police, leave the machine there, and I will then handle that issue."

One of the vital resources of leaders is indirect control over government officials. To provide enforcement-related support to the clients and to help them continue illegal fishing activities, EC respondents maintain good relations with local government officials and give material and non-material benefits throughout the year. The following

extract shows an example of non-material benefit the leaders gives to the local government officials:

> UNO[72] sir knows everything when we set the machine. A few days back, he called me and told me to wait for a few days if I haven't set the machine yet. Some of his relatives will come from Dhaka to visit the Haor. When they come, I take care of them. (EC-2, CBO-1)

It was found that the local government officials and CBO leaders all work in a network. In this respect, one informant described an incident that happened during the fieldwork:

> This year (2019), who has taken 'Jaguria Khal' under floating-lease set illegal nets. Some of our members saw this and informed UFO[73]. UFO came, but instead of taking any legal action to remove the net, he called the person and told him to meet with him in the bazaar. We can understand everything that how they will settle the issue. The next day, we also called UNO to send a police force to remove the net, but he said he would talk about this issue with the leaders. That person removed the illegal net, but he did it after 5/7 days. By this time, he caught fish and sold them, which can be worth a minimum of 250000 BDT (2629$) (GC-2, CBO-1).

To monitor co-management activities, a portion of endowment funds (STD-1) is allocated to local government officials (Chapter-2). But this study found an informal arrangement at work whereby local government officials do not monitor and CBO leaders also do not ask for any help. Though, it benefits the respective government officials by making fake vouchers for a trip and keeping the money. However, EC respondents also mentioned that sometimes they fall into a problem when new government officials come. In this case, they work in two ways: first, they inform them of the entire informal arrangement, and secondly, they use the network of higher-level politicians to convince them.

[72]UNO-Upazilla Nirbahi Officer
[73]UFO-Upazilla Fisheries Officer

During interviews, it was found that enforcement support and permission to employ illegal fishing methods are not always equally given to all sub-lessees. Leaders have the power to decide who they will provide benefits and support to because the bribe given to them for this purpose is not documented anywhere, so no one can charge them for it. Pre-existing class-based differences between non-fisherfolk and fisherfolk (Chapter-5, Section-5.1) determine the differential treatment of fisherfolk. For example, one respondent (GC-3, CBO-2) reported that "at the time of handovering waterbody, leaders told us that we cannot apply dewater and on the other people from his village forcefully catch fish with 'Ber jaal' in the waterbody that we were secured under the lease. If we ask enforcement-related help from them, they show procrastination." Some respondents also mentioned how influential leaders apply technique to extract financial benefit from fisherfolk. The following example presents one respondent's experience.

> When the waterbody was handed over from the organisation to me, I put 'Dolkata' first, but the people from village-3 entered into the waterbody illegally. I communicated to the leader, but he told me to take legal action. My point here is that I gave him extra money. If I go for legal action, I have to pay again. I brought this from him, so he has to take action. After that, he said he would look after the issue. When the leader takes responsibility for looking after an issue, I have to spend something. Otherwise, he will make a delay. He called a meeting when I gave him money separately (GC-1, CBO-2).

This study found another informal arrangement, where the Murubbis of the CBO arrange a 'Shalish' to punish someone for doing illegal fishing activities except asking legal help from Upazilla. Though EC does not have the authority to solve the issues through 'Shalish' and impose any fines according to the offense level, they do it to save their village people because they think they can hand over the accused to the police or file a case against the offenders. But this will put them to shame. During interviews, it was found the number of fines in the 'Shalish' depends on negotiation. Negotiation is

possible as there is no fixed rate, but it works as an indicator of the benevolence of influential CBO leaders. One respondent (EC-1, CBO-1) said, "Suppose we set a fine of 3000BDT (32$). Now they humbly request for a reduction of the fine. They are our people. How could we become so rude? We fixed the fine based on negotiation. For this, we cannot give him life imprisonment."

Some respondents also mentioned that, if any member within the organisation was accused of illegal fishing activities, sometimes the leaders solved the issue by forgiving him without handing him over to the police or being excluded from the organisation. This support creates a sense of gratitude that the leaders excuse him even though he committed illegal work. Protecting from police, saving honour, avoiding giving shame and abstaining from exclusion from the organisation are all perceived as benevolent acts that CBO leaders do to exert a positive impression on the community and members. But respondents also mentioned that it prevents all those members from being eloquent in the decision-making arena.

7.2.5 Control over credit

Credit support under the projects focused on the income security of the poor fisherfolk during the dry season. During interviews, it was found that some fisherfolk received loan benefits at the beginning of the project but were systematically excluded from being given this benefit by the leaders. A hidden interest works among the leaders to keep the fund in their hands and provide the loan benefit to certain members. Murubbis introduced informal rules and practices to distribute credit. But these practices, in

reality, benefitted only the leaders and their trusted people and excluded many fisherfolk from accessing loan opportunities.

CG respondents in case study-1 and CBO members in case study-2 were asked about their experiences of access to credit. To access credit facilities, a member has to apply for a loan first and then the EC takes the decision. During interviews, it was found that loan approval depends on various factors —financial solvency, ability to deposit savings, the capability of loan repayment, and personal endowments or assets they possess. One CG leader from the study area-1 said:

> In the CGs, some members are financially disadvantaged, daily income is nearly 300 BDT (3$). They also apply for a loan....In this case we do not sanction a loan. (CG-4, Interview dated 22.11.2019)

Approving loans according to financial solvency adversely affects the fisherfolk members and women. Fisherfolk in the studied areas are historically disadvantaged. Women also have less or no access to financial resources. One of the reasons is their restricted mobility and, because of this, economic power belongs to the male (Chapter-5, Section-5.1). Another reason is the tradition of inherited properties. Even if women get a share of the property, they have to hand it over to their husband due to cultural practices. During interviews, besides financial assets, one crucial asset of women was identified: whether they have a son. One female (EC-4, CBO-1) respondent said that the more sons a woman has the more she is valued in the society because these sons work for the Murubbis and are available to fight for them when lease-related conflicts arise or provide political services (at rallies, election campaigns etc.). The Murubbis sanctioned loans to women who have sons who will be able to utilise those loans and provide

labour and political services to them. In this regard, a female respondent (CG-5) said she applied for a loan amount of 25000 BDT (263$), but the committee did not sanction her that amount because she is a widow. In her religion, a Hindu woman does not get any share in her father's property. She had no sons. Though she assured them she would buy cows and could repay the loan, the EC did not approve the loan amount.

During interviews the study also found that, in the context of approval of the loan, what is crucial is to network with leaders who have direct and indirect control or influence over credit-distribution. The following two extracts show how networks work here. One respondent said:

> Our leader is from our 'Para'.I talked with him first before applying for a loan of 5,000BDT (58$). He first agreed. But some other people told him not to sanction my loan because I cannot repay it...He didn't give me that loan. (CG-2)

But another respondent said:

> Last year, I took the loan amount of 45000 BDT (473$) from FCG. My husband utilised this amount to take a sub-lease from the CBO-1 leader. I did not face any problems in getting the loan. Before applying for this loan, my husband shared it first with the leader... Mainly I got the loan because of the recommendation of the CBO leader. He requested to give me this loan. (CG-5, Interview dated 27.11.2019)

Control over credit is an essential means of cultivating support during elections, (s)election process, and in the case of any decision-taking. In the study area-1, though FCG and CBO are two separate organisations, the study found that the CBO leader can influence loan approval. From the interviews with CG respondents, two factors were found. First, the FCG president is grateful to the CBO president for involving him in the CBO. According to project rules, no one can belong to two organisation's EC

committees at a time. EC members of CBO-1 altered this rule to involve the FCG leader. Second, respondents shared that an incident happened three years before regarding the misappropriation of the FCG fund. An informal ‘Shalish’ had taken place, where the CBO leader chaired the ‘Shalish’ and saved FCG leaders. This made FCG leaders socially bound and loyal to him to some extent. These actions helped CBO leaders to influence the loan-related decisions of FCG. During the interviews, it was found that new members, who are businessmen and tradespersons by profession, joined FCG on the recommendation of the CBO leader. They received 50,000 BDT (526$) to 150,000 BDT (1577$) and worked for the leaders during CBO election. In the study area-2, one respondent (GC-1, CBO-3) reported that their president approved a loan for 12 members, all of whom — with the exception of two members (his wife and his brother-in-law) —were fish traders who bought fish regularly from him from the ‘Aarot’. Since they got this financial service from the leader, it made them loyal and helped the president to manage support during the GC meeting. A similar example was also reported in other CBOs. The study found that in loan access, an affective tie was maintained, which created obstacles for many less-powerful.

The second informal rule leaders followed for credit-distribution was approving loans according to the training received. At the outset of the projects, fisherfolk members were given training in Alternative Livelihood Activities (ALA) and, according to them, the loans were sanctioned for them only for specific activities such as livestock rearing, poultry, handicrafts, establishing shop, tailoring, or for nursery. In this case, the problem was that competition was high as the livelihood opportunities the fisherfolk respondents get are identical, and chances of economic mobility in these activities are minimal. For

example, one respondent (CG-8, Interview dated 15.12.2019) said that he took out a loan twice and used it for making ‘Faron’. But this was not profitable, as many people inside and outside of the village were doing this same business. Similar response came who are related with tailoring, rice-husking and poultry. Some respondents mentioned that they were not given loans for beel-related activities because co-management encourages conservation. According to them, people think fisherfolk are mainly responsible for overexploitation, so steering them away from fishing will reduce pressure on fish. Though fisherfolk are not given loans, influential members can take loans for lease purposes. One respondent (CG-1, FCG-1) said their FCG leader took 200000 BDT (2103$) loan and used it to bring a beel under sub-lease from a higher-level politician of this area. Another respondent reported that:

> If a financially poor member who has been with the CG from earlier wants 20,000 BDT (210$) as a loan, he will not get this, but a business person, some leaders of the political group who joined here just six years before, they get the loan of 2 00000BDT (2103$)”. (CG-2)

One crucial point is that one of the reasons the CBOs were given a floating-lease was so that fisherfolk could take the lease in a group. But they were only given loans for ALA during the dry season, when the profit margin was meagre. It is rarely possible to save money through these activities and invest it to secure a floating-lease, as the lease price is vast. Credit was not sanctioned for buying a lease. The question raised here is whether the projects really targeted the poor or created scope for the elite. This study found that most fisherfolk left the organisation considering less-profit and discriminatory attitudes of leader in credit-distribution.

In loan-distribution, the third practice leaders followed was approving loans based on previous loan records. During interviews with EC respondents, most of them mentioned difficulties of loan repayment by poor fisherfolk as reasons why they are not given loan facilities. However, some CG and GC members had different opinions, who pointed to irregularities in credit distribution. It was found that a group of influential people already captures a considerable portion of the loan fund. This influential group involves office-bearers of CBOs and their people. The shortage of credit also creates situations in which loan instalment are not paid on time. Most fisherfolk respondents reported that they could not get their loans timely and failed to repay in time. For example, one respondent said:

> I am a fisherman. I took a loan of 5000 BDT (53$), but I failed to repay the weekly instalment because I did not get the loan on time. If they do not give me the loan before dry season start, how can I utilise it and repay the 'Kisti' (instalment). (CG-2, FCG-1)

During interviews, it was found that delay in paying back the loan instalments by influential also motivates some poor fisherfolk to follow the same path. Though their loan amount is minimal, this fact facilitates the loan approving authority to highlight poor fisherfolk as loan defaulters. One CG leader (CG-4, FCG-2) mentioned, "The behaviour 'Khaslot' of our fisherfolk is not good. They tend to skip monthly instalments showing their poverty." But some respondents also pointed to manipulation in the documentation of savings. One respondent (CG-2, FCG-1) mentioned, "Sometimes it also happened to me that I deposited four instalments of the loan, but they showed it as three instalments". This was found to happen for two reasons — first, the illiteracy of the fisherfolk and, second, most of the time the leaders do not give back the deposit book in a timely fashion, and fail to identify the manipulation that forces some women

and fisherfolk members into defaulting on their loans. Fisherfolk and women respondents think this rule of loan approval based on previous loan records only applies to them. One respondent said, “In our group, there has a loan defaulter, a relative of our CBO leader. FCG cannot take any action against him because he is an influential person”. It is not that taking legal action against loan defaulters is not possible, but leaders refrain from doing that since it will cause bad personal relations within the powerful.

A similar finding was also found in a study by Ramcilovic-Souminen and Kotilainen (2020). The authors showed that the poorer families could not return their loans, so the authority avoided giving the loans to them. The authority pre-selects those who will return the loan in a timely fashion, which ultimately causes inequality and resentment in the villages. This was also found in the studied village, where respondents do not support these development activities. For example, one respondent (CG-1, FCG-1) asked, “Has the NGO done anything good for us? No. I agree there was a difference among us, but they increased that gap a lot.”

It was thought credit support to the poor could improve their economic condition, empower them, and make them self-sufficient. But crucial questions are, who is controlling the credit? and, how do they control credit, and why? In a study on microcredit and female empowerment in Bangladesh, Afrin et al. (2008) showed that this credit program only helps to survive and does not help to empower. Though a study on Project-1 by Dev (2011) showed livelihood improvement among credit holders,

Khan and Ahmad (2017) did not find such evidence. This study found livelihood improvement happened only to those who are the trusted people of leaders. Leaders have a hidden interest in winning the election and making decisions in their favour, so they provide benefit to their people and systematically exclude poor fisherfolk from credit opportunities.

7.3 Concluding Summary

In conclusion, this study shows that both control and capture can happen at the same time. Some literature (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007; Fritzen, 2007; Mansuri and Rao, 2004) viewed elite control from a positive perspective where authors showed elite control/domination over decision-making and project funds may also benefit the wider community. But this is not what happened in these studied CBOs. Dasgupta and Beard (2007) emphasise the need to evaluate elite capture according to its nature, accountability relations, and distributional outcome perspective. This study found that CBOs leaders employed different strategies and created and reinforced different practices and rules. The strategies they employed provide benefit to certain people but the leaders ensure that maximum benefit is retained by them. It was found that this way of maintaining patronage becomes problematic in practice. First, it repels and neutralises the voice against any illegalities or inequalities. Second, it creates differences among the less-powerful in the way of instrumental and affective ties. The study found that the CBO leaders use their official position and employed strategies. Though these strategies are targeted towards improving conservation, enhancing funds, and avoiding conflict, the study found that CBO leaders abuse their position and employ strategies that protect their hidden interests, capture maximum benefit for themselves

and their own people, and exclude fisherfolk from positions of ownership, thereby maintaining pre-existing inequalities, relations and influence.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter draws conclusions and reflects on how the research questions have been addressed. Simultaneously, it identifies key findings of the research and the main contributions made by the thesis, as well as the areas for future research. The chapter is organised into four main sections. Section 8.2 answers the three sub-research questions of this study and identifies key findings that build on existing literature; Section 8.3 details the contributions the study makes; Section 8.4 suggests directions for future research; and Section 8.5 presents a summary of the thesis.

8.2 Answering the research questions and key findings

8.2.1 Answering the research questions

The key research question for this study is: How do patron-client relations shape the structure, functioning and practices of co-management? The sub-questions are as follows:

a. Why do patron-client relations continue to be significant in fisheries and how are these relation(s) maintained over time?

b. How is co-management influenced by existing socially-embedded institutions?

c. How are patron-client relations reflected in the structures and practices of co-management?

The qualitative research findings which are presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are used to determine how the related research questions have been addressed.

Sub-research Question 1: Why do patron-client relations continue to be significant in fisheries and how are these relation(s) maintained over time?

In Chapter-5, Section-5.2.1, it was found that there are three reasons why patron-client relations continue to be significant in fisheries. First, patrons who are the leaseholders and/or 'Mohajon' and/or Murubbis in the studied villages can respond to the needs of the fisherfolk that NGO- or Government-led microcredit organizations fail to address. These needs include greater flexibility in loan provision (such as quick response during extreme financial needs of the marginalised and collateral-free credit services), and no risk of discrimination, social exclusion, or public shaming due to missing a 'Kisti' i.e. repayment of loan (and so no feeling of dishonour). The second reason is patrons' superior access to resources due to the historical high regard for their family title, inherited properties, and ownership of resources. In the government leasing system (since the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971), access to a lease is restricted to FCO made up of fisherfolk. Due to financial hardship and lack of political contacts, fisherfolk are not able to form FCO and secure a lease. In this case, leaseholders bear the cost of forming a FCO, manage waterbodies through political connections and give fisherfolk flexible entry to FCOs and waterbodies. The third reason is lack of alternative options for social protection in times of need. Lower social status and existing social norms and cultural practices (norms of purity, caste/class-based mobility restrictions) create

obstacles to fisherfolk being members of the village Panchayat (Chapter-5, Section-5.1). Therefore, in the case of managing social support — for example, during marriages, conflict resolution, and spiritual services — fisherfolk and women inevitably are dependent on Murubbis of the villages, which makes these relations continue to be significant.

Literature (see, for example, Crona et al., 2010; Miñarro et al., 2016) has reported that, in the context of fisheries, reasons for the reciprocal agreement between patrons and fisherfolk are uncertainty in access rights, price risk, risk of loss of assets, and lack of formal insurance and credit-market. Evidence from this study revealed that this relationship can persist even where there is availability of formal credit market and government support for leasing. The most crucial reason is that, in addition to financial help, the social assistance fisherfolk receive from patrons creates respect, gratefulness, and a feeling of personal obligation. Fisherfolk feel safe and secure with their patron. Here, fisherfolk and women know that during their extreme needs their patron will assist them, they will not dishonour them in front of others due to their lower caste status — rather, patrons will secure them by treating them as “Amader nijeder lok” i.e. “people from our village, own people”. To the fisherfolk and women, shame and honour are extremely important. They think it is, therefore, their responsibility to comply with rules and conditions set by their patron. On the other side, patrons understand the dependence of the marginalised on them and, know that in exchange for support, the marginalised will also provide them with labour, money, and political services such as votes during ward-level election. This gives patrons the power to set conditions according to their desire and considerations.

In order to maintain patron-client relations over time, there are rules, norms and practices that are developed more widely by society. As mentioned in Chapter-5, Section-5.2.2, there are informal rules related to accessing the waterbodies — namely, informal toll, which depends on the position of the waterbody within the Haor; gears used for fishing; the season for fishing; and rules of area for fishing. There are also unwritten rules in accessing the market — for instance, rules for determining fish price and distribution of money earned from selling catches and the practice of giving the best fish to 'Mohajon' as a gift. Within this process, patrons also play some game in the way of giving fisherfolk a small amount of fish, a little money for breakfast, for entertainment purposes, or waiving one instalment. In comparison, the benefits fisherfolk get are very meagre compared to the benefits patrons get. However, all these benevolent acts create a positive feeling among the fisherfolk to their patrons and help to keep the relationship going.

In providing social support, the village Panchayat sometimes treats people unequally according to religion (Hindu and Muslim) and gender. The biased treatment creates a positive attitude among Muslims and men towards their patron and keeps the Hindu minority and women under psychological pressure. These practices are important in the construction and maintenance of identity, and they provide social and economic power to the patron. These patron-client relations, may not always provide fisherfolk and women maximum financial benefit compared to the benefits patrons receive, as found elsewhere (Miñarro et al., 2016; Basurto et al., 2020) where authors compare the income between independent fisherfolk and those who are attached with a patron. But this research found that the marginalised groups, notwithstanding that they know the

benefits to be inadequate, consciously accept the situation. This is because they are from the lowest caste/class and patrons have long experience, knowledge and financial resources. Most importantly, patrons provide social support. The marginalised understand that they receive inadequate benefit from their patron but their patron also shows ‘Doya’ i.e., generosity towards them. Therefore, this relationship is not a one-way relationship but is maintained both by the patron and fisherfolk, though fisherfolk in the studied areas have little alternative.

The interpretation of this relationship is presented differently by different authors. There is evidence (Nunan et al., 2020) that fisherfolk are not always totally trapped in this relation and that power is not only held by the patron but, rather, the clients also possess some power, which enables them to bargain for a good price for their fish. However, there are other studies suggesting that fisherfolk are trapped in this asymmetric relation. This research supports this point. The relationship is a stubborn one, in which the marginalised group shows a steady determination not to change behaviour despite receiving inadequate benefits. Here fisherfolk are trapped in the relationship because of the strongly embedded wider social significance of the institutions and wider social implications.

Sub-Research Question 2: How is co-management influenced by existing socially-embedded institutions?

As discussed in Chapter-6, in the studied areas, CBOs are the bureaucratic institutions and socially-embedded institutions are the Panchayat, the norm of avoiding conflict and living peacefully, the norm of securing livelihoods, the cultural rule of showing respect, and ideas about the proper form of village meetings, routine practices, and gender norms of Ijjat. In both of the case study sites, these socially-embedded institutions interacted with bureaucratic institutions, helping to shape them by influencing the composition and functioning of the CBOs. In particular, Panchayat Murubbis shaped these introduced institutions through the "alteration" process of bricolage, assembling various institutional components non-consciously and strategically without rejecting the bureaucratic institutions (de Koning, 2013, p. 364). For instance, in the second case study site, Bongsho and leadership succession rules were taken for granted as they are routinised practices. On the other hand, in the first case study site, instead of arranging elections, Murubbis strategically used the Panchayat meeting process at the time of (s)election of office-bearers. Murubbis also bent the election rules by involving ideas about women's involvement in the committee and introduced a new practice of selling of nomination forms at the time of election to make money, as well as to exclude the marginalised.

These social and cultural rules, ideas and practices in effect influenced fisherfolk and women from seeking leadership positions — for instance, the Bongsho and leadership succession system of Panchayat in the second case study area naturally excluded women and fisherfolk. In the first case study area, strategically used practices and created rules excluded fisherfolk and women from taking office-bearer positions. Socially-embedded institutions also muted the less-powerful groups. The decision-making process of

fisheries management related activities and its influence on social and ecological outcomes were found to be controlled by Panchayat Murubbis. This finding supports the finding of Nunan et al. (2015) in East African inland and Malawi fisheries, where the authors showed how kinship, gender relations and norms affect the composition and functioning of co-management committees at the community level.

Sub-Research Question 3: **How are patron-client relations reflected in the structures and practices of co-management**?

Patron-client relations were reflected in co-management structures and practices through a number of strategies, which are discussed as follows. The first strategy was controlling the process of consultation in the decision-making arena (Chapter-7, Sub-section-7.2.2) where Panchayat Murubbis introduced or set some informal practices in the decision–making arena. These practices were found to exclude the views and opinions of the less powerful, who do not challenge their exclusion because this affirmative action benefitted them financially. They involve, for example, control over invitation, an unclear invitation for meetings, discriminatory sitting arrangements, conducting meetings in informal places, determining who can talk in the meeting, when and how long for, deciding whose opinion will be listened to, the nature of discussion, the issues for discussion and the terms of debate, control over information through procrastination, and control over the meeting resolution.

Patron-client relations are also reflected in the waterbody management practices. Chapter-7, Sub-section-7.2.2 discussed the sanctuary management strategy, which involved two actions. The first involved appointing trusted committee members for monitoring, guarding the sanctuary area, developing rules of area closure, and restricting access of general members and the general public. These rules and restrictions were implemented for conservation and security purposes, but huge economic benefits to the Murubbis are embedded within this rule. In this case, access to sanctuary and income from illegal fishing in the sanctuary area is the critical benefit that trusted committee members receive. In exchange, they provide a share of income from illegal fishing, labour services, and political services (voting for their Murubbis, supporting the Murubbis while taking decisions in the meeting and at the time of selection, and also working for the Murubbis at the time of election of the CBOs). A small portion of illegal income is also used by the Panchayat Murubbis to buy votes during CBO elections. In sharing the benefits from illegal fishing with the marginalised, this study found Murubbis maintained two types of social tie — instrumental and affective social ties (Scott, 1972). Affective social ties are maintained with kin and those who work in their FCOs and who do illegal fishing for the Murubbis. Instrumental ties are maintained with other general members, not directly related with Murubbis, through kinship and labour employee relations; and the reason for maintaining this tie is for voting purposes. The second action was maintaining an elite network. Though this was targeted to secure the lease for the management of the waterbodies over the long term, it also gave the Murubbis the opportunity to share benefits among elites and ensure the continuation of illegal fishing.

In the case of floating-lease waterbodies, Murubbis introduced several rules and practices for accessing them, involving open-tender, a one-time payment system, and differentiation in access according to the fishing-gears. Similar strategies — such as auctioning, a price and payment system for forest products, and access permits —were also reported in the literature on forest resource management, which may look neutral from the perspective of willingness to pay, in the sense of being in theory open to all but in practice being mainly adopted by the elites for their benefit (Agarwal, 2001; Iversen et al., 2006; Persha and Andersson, 2014). This study (Chapter-7, Section-7.2.1) also found three more practices in the case of floating-leases — for example, sub-lease system, partnership arrangement and the practice of leasing out the waterbody to a certain identity, “Beel Mare”. These rules were implemented to increase funds of organizations, but Chapter-7, Section-7.2.3 shows such informal rules in reality excluded fisherfolk from financially benefitting from getting waterbodies under lease. Floating-lease waterbodies were found to be under the control of the Murubbis, a control used not only to preserve financial benefit for the local elite but also to maintain a network with other elites in the studied areas.

Enforcement of rules and regulation is also affected by patron-client relations. In Chapter-7, Section-7.2.4, it was discussed that a bribe needs to be given to the Murubbis, which allows illegal fishing and secures the support from the powerful in the form of preventing enforcement-related activities. Murubbis also address minor law violations with local informal rules such as Shalish, ‘Amanot’, charging a penalty/fine instead of handing offenders over to police. In exchange for this apparent benevolence, fisherfolk support Murubbis in election/s(e)lection and decision taking. These practices

in reality limit the effectiveness of co-management. A similar result was also found in a study on East African Inland and Malawi fisheries, where Nunan et al. (2015) showed that friendship, kinship and peer-relations influence the enforcement of regulation and bribes for illegal fishing and returning seized gear restrict the effectiveness of the co-management system.

Patron-client relations are also reflected in the credit distribution strategy. The study findings (Section-7.2.5) reported informal rules and practices that were introduced by Murubbis such as distributing loans according to financial solvency and assets, previous loan records, and training received for being involved in alternative livelihood activities under the project. These rules were introduced for the smooth running of the loan fund but, in reality, excluded many women and fisherfolk. Loans were found to have been distributed mainly to the trusted members and Murubbis. Trusted members were given credit for supporting Murubbis during election and selection, in order to take any decision, to avoid dispute on any issues in the committee meeting and in order to buy fish from the 'Aarot' (local fish market) controlled by that leader. Elite capture of microcredit or project funding was also reported in other literature (Platteau and Abraham, 2002, Platteau, 2004; Wong, 2010; Rusca et al., 2015), where authors mentioned this taking place through manipulation of the system and financial misappropriation. But this study found Murubbis devised rules for credit distribution in such a way that maximum benefit came to them.

8.2.2 Answering the overall research question

There are four key findings found from the earlier sub-section, which demonstrate how patron-client relations shape the structure, functioning and practices of co-management. The first finding is that, in the studied areas, patron-client relations in fisheries management are not always reciprocal and pecuniary in nature but are strongly socially and culturally embedded. Internalization of values, norms, rules and expectations of patrons by the fisherfolk and women have contributed to the continuation of these longstanding relationships. Regarding embeddedness, Granovetter (1992 in Moran, 2005, p. 1131) said "...economic action and outcomes, like all social action and outcomes, are affected by actors' dyadic (pair wise) relations". An important issue is how these relations influence the actions and behaviour of the actors and what nature of supporting practices patrons employ in these relations. Scott (1972) mentioned there are two types of patron, where one group is more likely to use sanctions and withdraw benefits, and have a stricter style of providing support to their client, and the other group is more likely to offer incentives or different benefits and rewards. It was mainly this second type of patron that was found in the studied areas, where patrons showed greater flexibility, love, affection and generosity towards the marginalised group. The non-economic or social support that Murubbis provide to their clients motivated them internally. The study found that the Murubbis do not impose any pressure on the marginalised to take support from them. The social benefits Murubbis provide create a feeling among the marginalised that it is morally appropriate and it is their responsibility to show respect to the Murubbis and, if they do not maintain this relation, Murubbis may not provide any further support or they may be disheartened or disappointed. This shows how Murubbis' non-economic or social support influences

Murubbis' perceived value to the fisherfolk and women. According to Campbell (1964, p. 394) "...human actor has the ability to imagine the presence...of absent significant other and to adapt his behavior so as to avoid the pain of knowing he has not done what they would have wished". This is called internalization, where the marginalised commit energy to the maintenance of the norms even when external pressures is not present (Campbell, 1964). Through internalization of values and norms, the marginalised in this case live up to a moral standard and maintain this relation for a long time.

The second finding is that officially CBOs are bureaucratic institutions but, in the studied areas, the Panchayat Murubbis mixed together both socially-embedded and bureaucratic institutions; in practice, therefore, CBOs are considered hybrid institutions. This finding is interesting in relation to critical institutionalism as it reflects the influence of socially-embedded institutions beyond those designed for fisheries management and interactions between institutions (Nunan et al., 2015). This interaction between institutions, modifying each other, has been referred to as "Institutional bricolage" (Cleaver, 2012, p.45), a process of responding to changing circumstances. The question here is when and why bricolage takes place. According to Happala et al. (2016), bricolage cannot be overtly planned or designed. The design for new structures for co-management unwittingly contains characteristics that encourage the bricolage process. According to de Koning and Benneker (2013), conscious practice of bricolage happens when the introduced institution is viewed as highly different from the institutions that are embedded in societies over time.

This study found that, in the studied areas, practices of bricolage took place since the introduced institutions lacked legitimacy. Institutional legitimacy indicates whether the institution is socially fit and acceptable within the broader social environment and principles (Cleaver and Whaley, 2018; Wang et al., 2021). It was found that the introduced institution under co-management was different from the existing Panchayat institution, as within Panchayat committees there is no room for fisherfolk and women, and they cannot even deliver their opinion or suggestion. In the Panchayat system, the marginalised groups in the studied areas are only on the receiving end of decisions made by others — it is Panchayat Murubbis who make decisions in matters of village governance (Chapter-6, Section-6.1.1). But co-management in this case aimed to empower the fisherfolk community, involve them in the management committee and give them a particular position so that they can potentially influence decisions about fisheries management as well as relationships that can affect their lives and interests — a process that caused reshaping of the introduced institution. For example, in the first case study sites, at the outset fisherfolk held some office bearer-positions due to the strictness of the constitution in terms of fisherfolk involvement. In holding leadership positions, the fisherfolk took some decisions regarding enforcement related issues without consulting Panchayat Murubbis. This ignoring of Panchayat Murubbis also occurred in the case of female members, where one Hindu female member, instead of asking help from Panchayat, filed a case in the Magistrate court on a physical harassment issue. These activities gave an impression to the Murubbis that NGO/government guidelines for committee formation will be a threat for their long-established social order system so they requested the respective NGO/local government authority to amend the relevant rule of committee formation in the constitution.

Following the amendment, they deliberately chose some traditional practices, ideas, and rules that aligned with their interest (Chapter-6, Section-6.1.2, 6.2.3). In the studied areas, Murubbis at once adapted changes that they thought threatened the continuation of their power in a way that each new or perceived threat corresponds with a new rule or bending rules or re-establishment of a social rule. Murubbis called on socially-embedded rules, practices to make certain that things are done in the right way, and this gave legitimacy to these actions (Cleaver, 2012). With strategically pieced together institutions, Murubbis in this case formed a blended institution that is "fit with accepted logics of practice and social relationships" (Cleaver and de Koning, 2015, p. 5) and lowers the risk of losing power. Simultaneously, they avoided or ignored rules and reshaped some — for example, rules of election, and processes of election that were not favourable to a continuation of their power. In both case study sites, it was found that Murubbis did not entirely reject the introduced bureaucratic institution because they have highest interest in securing waterbodies from the government and in maintaining long-term control over the waterbodies and the communities.

The third key finding is that a co-management arrangement at village level may have the possibility of functioning when institutions are pieced together but it does not always lead to equity, since elite control persists in the overall process, and therefore does not always effectively deliver the individual and community empowerment objectives of co-management. There are different interpretations presented in existing literature regarding institutional bricolage. de Koning and Benneker (2013) comment that bricolage practices should not necessarily be seen as negative and that without bricoleurs newly introduced institutions cannot be effective and successful. This study

found that it was Murubbis who are the bricoleurs mostly concerned with consolidating their interests, and that bricolage practices by them can result in unanticipated outcomes, such as the elite capture of co-management structures.

Chapter-6, Section-6.3 showed that social and cultural rules, practices and ideas that Panchayat Murubbis used for piecing together institutions can prevent less-powerful groups from participation in both unconscious and strategic ways. But it is not that the less-powerful are always restricted by norms, ideas and rules — in some cases, they do not show any interest in challenging the unequal power situation. Such behaviour is particularly shaped by a variety of life experiences — for instance, shaming, false accusations, exclusion from committees, and the bias of NGO/government staff towards the leaders. In some cases, fear of deterioration in existing relations and losing historical fishing access and social support also dissuades the less powerful from taking an argument to the powerful. This indicates that elite control can persist and prevent the less powerful from participation not only through rules, norms, and practices but also through shaping conceptions of the less powerful.

The study also found that this above-mentioned withdrawal of the less-powerful can turn into an unconscious pattern of withdrawal from the arena of participation where they think they are powerless and where their sense of powerlessness persuades them that some norms, rules, ideas and practices cannot change, so they abstain themselves from open defiance against norms of mobility, Ijjat, and build a “culture of silence” (Gaventa, 1982, p.18; Rao and Sandler, 2020). Accepting or complying with norms and

developing a culture of silence has two effects — first, they allow both fisherfolk and women to manage several benefits, to get respect according to the local standards, to gain trust of the powerful, and to manage some external benefits, which are not always related to co-management. Some literature (Ali, 2014; Kawarazuka et al., 2019) viewed this norm-acceptance as acting strategically and managing some benefits as empowerment. But this study shows that this kind of empowerment does not complement the idea of empowerment in co-management, which sees empowerment as psychological empowerment, where individuals can play a firm role, can influence management decisions that can affect lives and shape the ideology of the community and where community handles its own affairs and influences its own futures (Zimmerman and Rappaport, 1988; Nielsen et al., 2004; Jentoft 2005). In this case, instead of focusing on the benefits from co-management, the less-powerful focus on the benefits not related with co-management. Second, culture of silence prevents development of consciousness among the less-powerful in the context of co-management and allows the Murubbis free rein to take decisions about fisheries management practices.

The fourth key finding is that power is hidden within the strategies undertaken by Panchayat Murubbis to manage fisheries. Hidden ways of exercising power are less obvious, hard to identify or locate (Pantazidou, 2012; Ramcilovic-Suominen andKotilanien, 2020). In the studied areas, a caste/class, religion, and gender-based inequality have been maintained over a period of time through social and cultural norms, rules and practices (Chapter-5). In order to manage the fisheries resources and to control the decision-making arena, Murubbis re-established some socio-cultural

practices, norms, ideas, and rules and also developed some new rules. There are specific grounds for re-establishing, reusing or developing rules — for example, conservation, enhancing an organization's funding, reducing or controlling conflict within the meeting arena, providing enforcement related supports, and to save the honour of the village people. de Koning, (2011) argues that institutional bricolage processes are related with diverse motivations. The reason why people do things may be linked with a straightforward explanation, but that is often not the only reason — rather, the final motivation may be different, often hidden (de Koning, 2011, 2014). The norms, rules, ideas, and practices that Murubbis employed for managing the decision-making arena and managing fisheries acted as barriers for the less-powerful to get maximum benefit, and to deliver their opinion and concerns. Murubbis are interested in maintaining their influence over resources and the community, to maintain historical inequalities in terms of gender and caste/class, to capture maximum material and non-material benefits from their power and to maintain networks with elites who are not related with co-management — all which influence the effectiveness of co-management.

The concluding point is that patron-client relationships shape fisheries' co-management structure, functioning and practices. In the studied areas, patron-client relations are socially and culturally embedded. When new institutions for co-managing fisheries were introduced, the Panchayat Murubbis, who are the patrons in the studied areas, shaped those introduced institutions, through the alteration process of bricolage and adapted those institutions to the local system. This reshaping of introduced institutions was done in both unconscious and strategic ways. In this case, the Panchayat Murubbis selected those institutional components and exploited ideas that enabled them to capture

the structure and influence the functioning of co-management, and provided opportunity and space for them to take various strategies and— maintain control over community and resources, and capture maximum benefits.

Fisheries co-management aimed to increase the number of fisherfolk and women in the resource management committees, bring them into leadership positions, and improve their leadership capabilities, so that they can potentially influence decision and relationships that can affect their lives and interest. In a word co-management aimed to empower the less-powerful groups. But research findings suggest that in reality in fisheries co-management the empowered community is not fisherfolk instead it is the Panchayat Murubbis. It was found that an elite network has been created here surrounding co-management. This study suggests that some areas in particular deserve attention in supporting co-management. These are: pre-existing institutions that interact with co-management; rules for benefit distribution; elite network and relations among different categories of elites surrounding co-management and recognition of how less-powerful groups negotiate.

8.3 Contribution of the research to knowledge

This study has contributed significantly to the existing fisheries co-management literature. Patron-client relations in fisheries are widely discussed in fisheries management literature but these relations are not so widely unpacked in the literature on fisheries co-management. This thesis makes four contributions to knowledge in the fisheries co-management literature. They are discussed as follows:

8.3.1 Contribution to literature on patron-client relation in fisheries co-management

The study contributes to literature on patron-client relations in fisheries co-management. Literature on fisheries co-management addresses the presence of an informal power structure and highlights the role of a traditional power structure in mediating access to and benefits from fisheries resources (Russell & Dobson, 2011; Njaya et al., 2012; Nunan et al., 2015; Kosamu et al., 2017). This study offers understanding on why and how patron-client relations influence fisheries co-management. The study shows that patron-client relations are strongly embedded, both socially and culturally, and were there long before co-management and will be there long after the projects. These relations influence who is involved in fisheries co-management and how this new system functions. Here patrons manipulate co-management structures and processes through institutional bricolage. This has implications for the social and ecological outcomes of fisheries co-management.

8.3.2 Contribution to literature on elite capture

This study identified strategies (Chapter-7) that Panchayat Murubbis in the studied areas use to maintain their interests and power in fisheries co-management. This is important in the literature on the elite's capture of fisheries co-management. Literature addresses how the elites capture committee structure, for example, Wong (2010) reported local elites exerted their influence in the newly created committee through controlling of livelihoods of the marginalized externally and forcing the members to take them in the committee. Other literature (Saito-Jensen et al., 2010; Ramcilovic-Suominen and Kotilainen, 2020) mentioned elites capture the committee through their traditional

authority, caste identity but this study shows elites shape the CBOs, by using rules, practices, from Panchayat, and also created some ideas and they used those institutional components, which were useful to exclude less powerful from the leadership position. Another strategy includes keeping control over the process of consultation so that the elite can take decisions in their favour. The literature (Agarwal, 2001; Nightingale, 2002; Choudhury et al., 2016) has reported control over members in the decision-making arena, which is achieved by controlling invitations, discriminating sitting arrangements according to gender and caste, meeting at informal places, monetary benefits for attending meetings, and reinforcing gender norms. The current study argues that agenda setting is another action that is also used by the Panchayat Murubbis to take decisions on the distribution of floating-leases, management of sanctuaries, and sanctioning loans in their favour.

In allocation of resources, the literature (Agarwal, 2001; Iversen et al., 2007; Njaya, 2012; Persha and Andersson, 2014) has reported a number of practices that elites employ such as the auctioning system, payment system, access permits and cost-related restrictions, which provide opportunities that are of benefit to the elite. This study argues that, in distributing floating-lease waterbodies, three more processes are followed by the elite —the sub-lease system, partnership among elites, and handing over waterbodies only to certain identity 'Beel Mare' — and these are not only to ensure their control over waterbodies but also to enable them to maintain networks with others, and to give other elites not related with fisheries co-management a share of the benefit. This study shows that sanctuary management strategy, through maintaining an elite

network, also provides huge financial benefit to the elite. This strategy of maintaining an elite network has not been adequately addressed in the literature on elite capture.

The elite capture of the microcredit system and project funding has also been reported in the literature. Wong (2010) and Wilshusen (2009) reported significant manipulation of the microcredit system, consisting of borrowing of huge loan amounts, then decline to repay and misdirecting other ordinary members not to repay. Platteau and Gaspart (2003) mentioned that one strategy that elites follow is financial misappropriation, general malpractice, taking a disproportionate share of the benefit and sharing a small benefit to the less-powerful. But this study shows the elite constructing informal rules about the allocation of funds and having these informal rules affect loan distribution according to the financial solvency and assets, the previous loan record and the training received. These rules in a hidden way excluded many fisherfolk and women.

8.3.3 Contribution to literature on critical institutionalism

This thesis contributes to the literature on critical institutionalism. Literature on critical institutionalism focuses on entwinement of institutions in daily social life, their historical roots, and how different socially-embedded and bureaucratic institutions are pieced together strategically and unconsciously through processes of bricolage as an adaptive response to change (de Koning and Benneker, 2013; de Koning, 2014; Hall et al., 2014; Nunan et al., 2015; Cleaver and Whaley, 2018; Nunan, 2020). de Koning (2014) mentioned three processes of bricolage; aggregation, alteration and articulation. When new institutions come/introduce/craft then the community may reject those

completely, or the community may pick out the most appealing institutions and recombine with their own, follow the institutions to a certain extent or they may adapt and reshape the bureaucratic or socially-embedded institution to certain circumstances. Literature on institutional bricolage (Lecoutere, 2011; Sirimorok andAsfriyanto, 2020) focuses on how powerful actors exercise their power and affirm their authority through bricolage processes, which can lead to equal distribution of resources, protecting the environment, and reducing conflicts. But this research showed that the purpose of institutional bricolage by the powerful Panchayat members is to capture committee structure and maintain pre-existing patron-client relation. The powerful Panchayat members manipulated the bricolage practices, adapt the bureaucratic institution to locally-embedded Panchayat rules, which facilitates them keeping control over decisions, and taking many strategies for maintaining dominance over waterbodies to capture maximum benefits. One important contribution of this thesis is it extends the institutional bricolage literature by connecting to the elite capture.

8.3.4 Contribution to literature on the Power Cube

The original Power Cube framework (Gaventa, 2006) has three dimensions — space, levels, and power — which are interrelated to each other and present an understanding of the ways in which power operates (Gaventa, 2006). This framework has been used in much literature to investigate the quality of participation, whether new mechanisms of different actor engagement show a real shift in power and open up space where citizens are able to give their voice and whether that voice can have an influence over the power differences in a decision-making arena (Boni et al., 2009; Rabé and Kamanzi, 2012; Whaley and Weatherhead, 2014; Cullen et al., 2014). Literature (Njaya et al., 2011) also

used this framework along with a decentralization framework to describe various vertical power relations that are important in the establishment of fisheries co-management and how different actors exercise their power.

The key difference between the original Power Cube framework by Gaventa (2006), other literature which uses the original framework and the framework used in this thesis is that it incorporates an institutional analysis in the second dimension i.e., within the level. In the original framework, level refers to differing levels of decision-making authority, including local, government and global, how and by whom the space for participation is shaped, and shows the vertical relationship of power across the local to the global arena (Gaventa, 2005, 2006). This study argues that it is also important to look at the interrelationship of actors within the local level — in other words, at horizontal power relations (Ramcilovic-Suominen and Kotilainen, 2020) — and the institutional environment at the local level, which is not adequately addressed in the original framework.

Institutions are important since they influence the whole decision-making process: whose voice matters and what kinds of practices are accepted despite formal decisions and rules (Nunan et al., 2015). At the local level, the community already has their own informal institutions, norms, social and cultural rules, practices, and ideas that are critical in living peacefully and in managing fisheries resources. These socially-embedded institutions can interact with those designed for managing fisheries resources. Institutional analysis recognises the role and influence of socially-embedded institutions

behind a bureaucratic institution (Nunan et al., 2015). Through integrating institutional analysis into the original Power Cube framework, the study was able to investigate how institutions are used at the community level — i.e., how Panchayat Murubbis, in this case, assemble different components of these institutions through the alteration process of bricolage and why they assemble different institutions. This incorporation of institutional analysis in the Power Cube framework is useful because it provides more detailed insights into the patron-client relationship's influence in fisheries co-management. The patron-client relation is just not an external, contextual factor — rather, it influences the culture of participation within space. This study identified institutional components for example Bongsho, leadership succession, Panchayat meeting process, ideas about women's involvement in the committee, gender norms of Ijjat, practice of selling of nomination forms and bureaucratic rules of cancelling membership that are both hidden and in invisible ways influence the composition and functioning of co-management.

This study shows more invisible forms of power, internalised gender norms of Ijjat, mobility restriction and caste-based ideas. One important contribution is this study is that it identified three different forms of hidden power. This study shows power can be hidden within wider social practices and norms of the community; it can be hidden within powerful member's ideologies, interests, and agendas, which are more strategic, and it can be hidden within less-powerful group's conception in the way that Murubbis can exercise their power anytime so it's better not to raise a voice or participate.

8.4 Directions for future research

It is said that there has been limited discussion about how the pre-existing social, economic and political context influences fisheries co-management structure, practices and outcomes (Nunan, 2020; d'Armengol et al., 2018). This research focuses on patron-client relation in fisheries co-management in a certain context and sheds light on how pre-existing inequalities within fishing communities based on caste/class, gender, religion are still reflected in the structure and practices through Panchayat, though Panchayat is not directly related with fisheries management. Further research is necessary on the social, economic and political context, since the settings/context may vary and influence co-management differently. Patron-client relations do not follow the same trend everywhere. In some cases, clients can have more power and can use some agency. Attention also needs to be given to how less-powerful fisherfolk and women negotiate for better livelihood options. In the coastal belt of Bangladesh, women are more involved with fisheries. There is a need to focus on gender relations in terms of how women get access to and benefit from fisheries and how, or whether, or to what extent, they are able to participate in the fisheries co-management. The Power Cube framework can also be used to understand gender relations in fisheries co-management, bringing gender analysis explicitly into all three dimensions of the Power Cube. With this, it will be helpful to identify hidden, invisible elements and processes, which are essential for informing support and intervention.

Longitudinal research can be used since this research design enables the observation of change and the development of a particular social phenomenon over an extended period.

With this design, the influence of patron-client relations on co-management can be studied over time.

8.5 Summary of the thesis

This thesis investigates how patron-client relations shape and influence the structure, functioning and practices of co-management. Taking Bangladesh as a case, two donor-funded fisheries co-management projects were investigated. A total of 55 key-informant interviews were undertaken and 4 fish markets and 2 CBO meetings were observed.

This thesis identified which institutions were embedded within the studied fishing communities over time and influence structure and practices of fisheries co-management, the historical roots of the institutions, and how these institutions interacted with the introduced bureaucratic institutions — i.e., CBO. The study found in both of the cases the alteration process of bricolage was employed where institutional elements for bricolage were taken from the Panchayat and rules of the election were bent. This thesis shows that power is embedded in wider social and power relations through norms, practices and ideas and reproduced in everyday interactions. Several norms, social rules, practices, ideas operate in hidden and invisible ways to influence who can participate, influence decisions, and take decisions. Also considered are various strategies the Panchayat Murubbis used in fisheries management practices. Three themes were identified to investigate the influence of patron-client relations in fisheries co-management, and these were (1) patron-client relations in the studied areas; (2) elite

capture of co-management structure by the Panchayat*;* and (3) strategies for maintaining elite control and capture.

One of the contributions of the study suggests that patron-client relations in a community influence who will be involved in the committee and how the system will work. In the case of piecing together bureaucratic and socially-embedded institutions the elite actors used those elements that are imbued with power relations and meaning. Though bricolage practices lead to functioning and legitimacy, elite control persists here through three hidden ways; social practices and rule, which are natural adoption, strategic adoption of norms, practices, ideologies and by shaping conception of participation, which influences the composition. It was found that the elite used different strategies to maintain their interest and capture maximum benefits. Therefore, it can be said that designed institutions may not always deliver the expected outcomes. The contextual issues in areas/communities, pre-existing institutions, practices, and social and cultural rules that envelop the arena may simply interact with the introduced institution and result in unanticipated consequences such as elite capture.

APPENDICES

Appendix 4.1 Interview Guide

Interview Schedule (Key Informant Interview)

Questions for office holder of CBOs

1. Please tell me about the present condition of the wetland (e.g. fish production, fish species degradation)?

   -What do you understand by co-management?

2. Tell me how did you come to be on the CBO committee?

   - How long have you been on the committee?

   - Were you nominated by election or selection process? How are the members within this committee selected? Please describe the process of selection that happened in practice. Why is selection process used rather than election (where that has been the case)?

3. Please explain to me how the management committee works.

   -How frequently do the members of the committee meet together and where do you meet?

   -Are notes taken about the discussion and decisions made? Who takes the notes and sees the notes?

   -Who sets the agenda of the meeting?

4. Please describe to me about being part of the management committee.

   -What kind of experience have you had of working with other members within the organization and with other stakeholders coming from different backgrounds (e.g. NGOs, government agencies)?

   -Are there any individuals outside of the committee that try to, or do, influence what the committee discusses or do?

5. Please tell me about your experiences about co-management activities.

   -What do you think the resource management organization is supposed to do?

-What kinds of activities have been taken under co-management and what are the major activities that CBO conducted under co-management?

-What are the priorities that the committee has set for appropriate management intervention? Why are those priorities appropriate? When are the priorities normally set and how? Who can participate in these co-management activities?

-What is most important to you about your experience of co-management?

6. What are the challenges or barriers that the committee faces in order to carry out co-management related activities?

   -How could you define your role within the committee in resolving those challenges?

   -Have the committee been able to resolve those challenges? If so, how and what helps you to solve the challenges? If no, why not? What are the implications of those challenges remaining?

   -How do you solve conflict (within committee /between stakeholders/ between committee and outsiders?). Is any meeting (officially) arranged for this purpose?

7. How do local politicians influence the functioning of co-management? How do they influence co-management activities? What do you think-involvement of local politicians (more or less) can make significant differences in co-management? What are those differences (if they are not involved)?

8. Tell me about your experience with government agencies under co-management.

   -Does the management organization get any support from local administration when it needs? What kinds of support are they? What barriers does the management organization face?

   -Do you think the government agencies are creating or causing problems? How?

   -Who do the government officers interact with?

9. What do you think of women involvement and how do they can contribute to wetland resource management?

   How are the women members selected in the committee? How they are participating and contributing in resource management related activities that already taken under co-management?

   Do you think their involvement could add difference in the management performance? Why or why not?

10. How do NGOs support wetland management activities? How do you describe NGOs role from your experience?

Questions for general committee members of the CBO

1. Can you describe to me what motivates you to be involved with co-management?

   -What are your responsibilities as a member of general committee?

   -How often are the general committee meetings held, where, who is present at the meeting, who chairs the meeting? What are the topics discussed there? Who decides what is discussed?

   -Can you please explain how do you select the executive members? (Election or selection). Why selection process is considered more preferable than election? Which factors do you consider choosing members of the CBO? Have you experienced any external influence in making decisions about nominating members? How?

2. What do you think how the management committee is working?

   -What kinds of activities are undertaken as part of co-management intervention (e.g. participation, rule compliance, resource control)? How are you involved with those activities?

   -What is your understanding about the progress (better/worst) of this intervention? Why?

   -How has the management of co-management related activities changed over time? Can you please tell me what changes happened?

3. Please tell me about who gets access to the co-managed waterbody. What are the rules set to get access to the waterbody (e.g. rule of subleasing the waterbody, monitoring, harvesting etc)? Who sets the rules? How are the rules executed in practice?

   - Do you have access to the water body to fish? If yes, how? Could you please explain? If no, why, who manages the access or what is important in managing access?

   -How has the committee been interacting with other stakeholders (government agencies, NGOs) to execute the rules?

4. What are the challenges the committee has faced in order to execute management activities? Why do these challenges exist? What has the committee done about those challenges?

   -Is there anyone outside the committee who has greater influence over what happens in the committee or what it decides?

5. Do the local politicians have any influence over the functioning of co-management? How do they influence co-management activities and why? Who do the politicians interact with?

6. How would you describe NGOs role in involving community in resource management? How do the NGO interact with CBO?

Questions for ordinary members of the Resource User Groups (CG)

1. How long have you been part of the CG? How was the CG formed? What are your roles as a member of CG? Who decides your role and how do you know about your role?

2. How do you know that who is responsible for managing wetlands?

   -Can you please tell me how is it managed? How effective do you think the management is?

   -How do you get access to the fisheries? Who decides where you can do fish and when?

   -Which gear do you use to fish? Who decides?

   -Do you sell your catches in the fish market by yourself? If no, why and if yes, to whom do you sell your entire catches.

3. How it is important to you to comply with fishing rules (where to fish, which gear, where to sell)? Why is that?

4. Can you describe to me what motivates you to be part of the CG under co-management?

   -What do you know and how do you know about co-management?

   -How do you think co-management is working? Why is that?

   -What challenges have been experienced in co-management? What has been done to address those challenges and who took action and why?

   - How would you describe NGOs role in resource management?

-How do government agencies interact with community in different co-management activities?

-In your opinion what is vital for co-management?

5. Please tell me about your experience of access to credit.

   -What have you found most challenging/useful for you in accessing credit? What helps you to manage it?

   -Is credit available for all the user group members? If there is limited availability then how are the priorities set for credit distribution?

   -Tell me how the credit is distributed within the user group members. What are the formal rules for credit access and its utilization? Does everyone can apply for credit? Who are able to get the credit?

6. What is most important to you from your experience of accessing credit?

7. Do you or other group members borrow money from other sources (moneylenders, other NGOs)? /How do you meet up your immediate loan availability?

   -How are those loan opportunities offered to you?

Questions for local elite (s) [In the study area local elites are Union Parishad chairman, moneylenders, influential leaseholders, chairman of the school/ madrasha committee/mosque committee].

1. Please tell me about the present condition of the wetland (e.g. fish production, fish species degradation)?

   -What is important to you about the use of the wetland and management of the fisheries resources (when to fish, where, which gear, amount of catch)?

   -Do the local community people get access to the water body?

2. What kind of help does the community seek from you?

   -How do you help them to get access to the water body, and access to fish market?

   -Share an experience when you help someone?

   -What else do you do for them (e.g. advices, social supports etc)? Can you please give an example and explain how the advice or credit works?

3. What do you think about community involvement in managing resources?

-How far do you think community involvement is effective in resource management? Please explain your answer.

-What challenges have been experienced in co-management and why? What has been done to address those challenges and what more could be done?

4. What is most important to you about your experience of co-management?
5. What are the major conflicting interests that arise between the CGs members who are participating co-management and the local community who are not under this co-management system? How do you solve those problems?

Questions for local community people (local fishermen) [patron-client relations in fisheries management- dependencies, exchange, Institutions, power]

1. What is your daily livelihood? What do you think about this fishery resource (fish production increases/ decreases, fish species degradation)?
2. Who is responsible for managing wetlands? How do you know who is responsible?

   -Can you please tell me how is it managed? How effective do you think the management is?

   -How do you know about fishing rules (where to fish, how long, when, amount of catch, which gear, where to sell). Who determines these rules?

   -How important is it to you to comply with fishing norms?

   -How do you get access to the fisheries? Tell me about your experience about access to the fishery, how do you manage it? What is important to get access to the fisheries? What else do you need to do to get access to the waterbodies? Is managing access equal to everybody in your community? For whom this is different? How and why?
3. Do you sell your catches in the fish market by yourself? Where, and to whom, do you sell your entire catches and how? Whether you sell your catch always to a single person? Why? What happens if you alter your choice and sell it to other persons?
4. What do you do to cope with unexpected financial crisis, environmental disasters like flood? How are loan opportunities offered to you? How do you find the loan opportunities? Are the terms good and easier for you? How long do

you have to pay money back? What happens if you can't pay the money back? Do you borrow the money from the same person or from different people? How do you take decision to borrow money from a particular source? Which factors set your preference/ which factors got the priority? Do you lend money to anyone? Why?

5. What do you know about co-management? Who can involve in the co-management? Did you ask earlier to participate? What influence you to not to involve in the co-management? To what extent do think co-management is effective? Please explain your answer.
6. Is there anything else you'd like to share about the management of the water body?

Questions for Government Agencies

1. How long have you been in this post? What are your responsibilities in managing waterbodies?
2. Can you please tell me what the formal rules are for managing waterbodies (e.g. leasing, monitoring)? Who can participate in water body leasing? Who get the lease? How these leased waterbodies are monitored?

   -Are these rules different for those water bodies working under co-management? How do you compare both systems; government's leasing system and co-management?
3. Why and how did co-management develop in your view? What was the primary rationale for introducing co-management?
4. What is your understanding about community involvement in the water body management?

   - When different stakeholders' (fishermen, local elites) are involved in resource management system, would that can change performance and functioning of resource management.

5. What is the most important experience(s) for you about co-management related activities? How could you define your role there?
6. How often and how do you interact with CBO committee?

-How are the priorities of the government about water body management and, conservation shared with CBO committee? What are those priorities? Are there any discrepancies between district priorities and local concerns? Can you please tell me what those discrepancies are?

-What are the key challenges experienced in making linkage between community priorities in water body management and national level priorities?

-What services does government provide under co-management? What challenges do you face in providing services like enforcement related services to the community? How do you handle those challenges?

-Are there any external influences over co-management arrangement? How does the local political structure have an influence on co-management of water bodies?

7. What are the key challenges for co-management? What has been done, or could be done, to address those challenges?

8. What are the strength and weakness of co-management do you think?

Questions for the personnel from NGOs, related with co-management

1. Tell me about what does this organization work on? How long has this organization been working here? How is this organization involved in wetland management?

2. Why and how has co-management developed in your view? What was the primary rationale for introducing co-management under this (CBFM/ MACH) project?

3. Please tell me about your experience of co-management.

- To manage water bodies what activities were taken under this co-management project?

-What operational activities have been undertaken (e.g. sanctuary management, monitoring, fishing ban period etc.)

-What worked well (or not) under co-management? Why and How?

- What is your experience with government involvement in co-management? How do government agencies interact with CBO in different co-management activities?

-How far do you think community involvement is effective in resource management?

3. In your opinion how does the local political structure relate to water body leasing? What do you think of how the politicians can influence the functioning of co-management?

4. What are the challenges and difficulties your organization faced in continuing the activities? How do you solve them? With whom do you need to communicate to solve those difficulties?

Appendix 4.2 Observation Guide

Observation Guide (Meeting)

What information will record during observation?

1. Who is participating in the meeting?
2. Who takes charge of the meeting and control the discussions in meeting arena? How do they control the discussions?
3. How do people/ members behave (style of talking, making arguments) in the meeting arena? How do women participate in the meeting?
4. Which actors talk most and what do they say?
5. How do people make/take decisions?
6. Whose agenda and which agenda-Which agenda is received by the committee, what do they follow and whether they become involved in making decisions at the meeting.

Observation Guide (Local fish market-wholesale)

What information will record during observation?

1. Who are participating in the market? Who controls the market?
2. How do the fishermen (marginalized) participate in the market?
3. To whom the fishermen sell their catch?
4. How do the fish price determined?
5. How do fishermen behave (style of talking, arguments) in the market place?

Appendix 4.3Participant Information Sheet

Explanatory Statement for Participants

Title of research project: The influence of patron-client relations on fisheries co-management in Bangladesh

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Rehnuma Ferdous. I am conducting a research with Professor Fiona Nunan & Dr. Emma Foster, in the Department of International Development, University of Birmingham, UK towards a PhD Degree. I will be writing a thesis tofulfill the requirements of a PhD degree. The title of my thesis is "Patron-Client Relation within Fisheries Co-management: A Critical Institutionalism Perspective"**.** I am writing to you requesting your support for the research. Forresearch purpose, I would like to interview you on the issues relating to the fisheries co-management.

Purpose of the research

This study aims at investigating how the social and power relations within fishing communities interact with formal rules and affect the functioning and performance of fisheries co-management. The study will investigate how relations between different types of people working in fisheries affect fisheries co-management.

Possible benefits

Over the couple of decades, co-management has established as a mainstream approach to fisheries managementacross the developing world. In Bangladesh, co-management has been adopted since 1990 in some parts of the water bodies under different donor-funded projects.The experience of co-management in different water bodies is diverse in terms of community participation and power relations between stakeholders. The research will help to explain why there are differences in how co-management works

and what it has delivered between locations.

What does the research involve?

The study involves in-depth informal interviews with key informants, observation of meetings of Resource Management Organizations (CBOs) and observation of fish markets. Interviewees will be encouraged to give a full description of his/her experiences, perceptions and thoughts regarding fisheries co-management. With permission, the interview maybe recorded (hand notes and/or audio taped or both).The questions are not based on any sort of sensitive political and cultural issues.In case of observation of CBO meetings, consent will be asked from all present. The consent form (signed by the interviewee) specifies the voluntary involvement and the promise of confidentiality and anonymity of data, if participation is granted.

How much time will the interview take?

The key informant interview may last about an 1 hour.

Inconvenience/discomfort

During informal interview, no personal information will be asked for. Therefore, it is very unlikely to cause stress, inconvenience or discomfort. The interviewer willtake every possible step to avoid any undue minor inconveniences.

Payment

No payment will be offered, financial or otherwise, to participate in theinterview.

Can I withdraw from the research?

Participation in the study is on a voluntary basis. You can withdraw from the interview if you wish or you may decline to answer certain questions. You can withdraw your

consent to participate in the research within two weeks of the interview taking place by contacting Rehnuma Ferdous.

Confidentiality

Your participation, names and identities or position will be kept confidential in this research. A sincere declaration is that the collected datawill be used for research and academic purpose only, and will be treated in strict confidence. Confidentiality and anonymity of data will be ensured through assigning codes to notes and transcripts. The researcher will record the names of the participants and then the interview data will be kept separate from the list of names and codes.

Storage of data

Storage of the data collected will comply with the University regulations. Both raw and processed data will be preserved on the University of Birmingham research data archive for 10 years after the end of the project however the recordings will not be preserved. Only theresearchers will have access to the original data. The entire data will never be made public as it may contain sensitive personal information and will be covered by a confidentiality agreement, however anonymised data will be made available on request.

If you agree to participate, please confirm your agreement and sign the consent form, sending these to [redacted] or contact me on mobile [redacted] If you have queries about any aspect of the research or wish to be informed of theaggregate research findings, please contact the researcher. The contact details are asfollows:

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