

# **A Win over Bad Bygone Habits**

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*Edited by:*

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**NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation**

First published December 2003  
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ISBN 984-32-1044-1

*Cover & Text Design:*  
Waresul Haque

*Computer Compose:*  
Mazedul Hoque Prodhan

*Published by:*  
NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation  
4/6, Block-E, Lalmatia, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh

*Printed by:*  
Boishakhi Printing Press

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## Foreword

It has always been a great challenge to any development agency to materialize the programme activities that has been designed to reach with safe, affordable, easy accessible water supply and sanitation facilities to each of the community people. NGO Forum in order to combat the existing challenges in the WatSan sector has been providing demand-driven, low-cost WatSan facilities to the community for ensuring safe water, hygienic sanitation and personal hygiene practice in a community-managed approach.

NGO Forum feels that success of the WatSan Programme is not possible without active participation of the community people. Therefore, with a view to attaining the success the Forum has been concentrating to ensure active participation of the whole community. In this regard, it has been implementing WatSan programme in a community-managed approach, where community people play the role as the key actor. Under this Community-managed WatSan Programme the Forum through its partner NGOs provides hardware and software integrated supports to the respective community. Community participation covers all aspects ranging from decision-making to conduction of monitoring under the community-managed approach considering all the key factors in relation to planning and designing of the programme implementation strategies. As regards, the sense of ownership over the programme has been built among the community people.

NGO Forum with a view to sharing its programme success and process attempts every year to publish a document comprising a number of success stories. Alongside, such initiative helps the Forum to reflect itself through self-evaluation, which gives future direction towards betterment of its programmes. NGO Forum also believes that the good experiences and learning of the study may also encourage the concerned individuals or agencies to replicate the approach as feasible elsewhere in the country. This Book shows how participatory methods and approaches can enable the total community even the poor people to analyze their situations and get involved in the process to ensure the 100% coverage of safe WatSan facilities.

I express my heartiest thanks to those who have been involved in the process of the Study conduction either directly or indirectly. My special thanks go to Mr. Md. Ayub Ali who has taken all the pain in conducting the Study with his excellences. I also express my gratitude to the respective partner NGOs and the community, who altogether made the programme a success as well as extended all out cooperation in Study conduction. I also reveal my thanks to all of my colleagues who have made this publication a success with their coordinated efforts.

Hope, striking features, views and experiences composed in the publication will arrest interest of the potential readers and stakeholders.

**S.M.A. Rashid**

Executive Director

NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation

## Preface

NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation has been addressing the challenges in the water supply and sanitation sector with a vision to ensure improved public health situation in the country. The Forum has been playing the key role as the apex body of partner NGOs, CBOs and private sector who are engaged in implementing WatSan Programme. In order to obtain the programme objectives, it has been operating the Community-managed WatSan Programme country-wide through ensuring the active participation of the community while the community people play the main role in planning, designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the WatSan programme in their respective villages. Thus the participation of the community people is ensured in overall process of programme operation.

Under the Community-managed WatSan Programme the most unserved and underserved villages are selected considering the WatSan and hygiene situation through the baseline survey for the period of two-year for WatSan programme implementation. After the completion of the intervention period the Forum initiates to document the success of the programme. Hence as a part of its regular initiatives, the Forum this year, conducted a Study in Mathabhanga village of Taknaf in Cox's Bazar district and Kalabaria village of Sitakundo in Chittagong district. The villages have reflected the success of the community-managed WatSan programme, process and strategies. At the outset of the programme intervention the Forum, through its partner NGOs, YPSA and SHED, has formed the VDCs in both the villages involving representatives from all walks of the society for ensuring the community participation in WatSan programme. The VDC has played a laudable role in achieving the success in these two villages.

The Study in particular represents the partial features of the hilly and coastal belt areas of the country in terms of WatSan situation. The situation was not favourable to the implementation of WatSan programme considering geophysical condition, communication facilities and educational status of the villages. But the active participation of all concerned has made possible to achieve the goal of the programme. Particularly, the spirited and dynamic participation of student and youth groups of the villages alongside the local allies has prompted the success since they have played a glorious role in motivating the community people successfully.

In order to make the task easier to achieve the 100% WatSan coverage within the timeframe, the Forum has provided hardware and software integrated services to the community. The Forum, from its gained experiences also trusts that merely by providing material supports the desired goal cannot be achieved. Therefore, the Forum has mobilized community people through organizing different promotional activities for creating demand for safe WatSan services. Besides, IEC and BCC materials have also been distributed among the community people that ultimately contributed to bring changes in people's attitude, behaviour and life-style in terms of maintaining safe water, sanitation and hygiene practices. This book offers some insights of the methodology that has been applied in the Community-managed WatSan Programme as well as upholds the programme success.

It is my pleasure to take the privilege to give thanks to those who have extended heartiest cooperation through giving valuable suggestions and guidance to conduct the Study. I offer special thanks to Mr. Md. Ayub Ali who gave his potential inputs to conduct the Study to bring it into a final publication.

Hopefully this Book will create an interest to the potential readers and stakeholders as they will be shared the success, experience and learning of the Programme implementation.

**Joseph Halder**

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NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation

## Introduction

Mathabhanga and Kalabaria villages are quite distinct from majority of the villages of the country owing to geophysical condition by location and for a markable achievements on water supply and sanitation coverage as well as significant increase in hygiene practices among the community people. Mathabhanga and Kalabaria are located at the foothill of Cox's Bazar-Taknaf hills and Chandranath hill of Sitakundo respectively. Both the villagers had to experience severe drinking water crisis, and poor sanitation coverage. The villagers used to suffer also from various intestinal diseases before intervention of the Community-managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum. In respect to drinking water sources, situation was acute in Mathabhanga village during pre-intervention period, though the sea waves with huge water continuously breaks on the shore at 50 to 400 meters away from houses, but safe drinking water sources was a utopia. On the other hand, in Kalabaria, though water sources were available but water was unsafe because of iron and arsenic contamination. The water sources have seasonal characteristics, e.g. spring water become unavailable and or inaccessible during dry season, ground water level decreases, etc., that are diverse in nature in case of both the villages. Alongside, the sanitation coverage was also very poor. Based on such poor coverage of safe water and sanitation as well as hygiene practices, these villages were selected by partner organization of NGO Forum to implement the Community-managed WatSan Programme aiming to 100% coverage within a two-year tenure. The villages have achieved a tremendous success in safe water and hygienic sanitation coverage which have contributed significantly to hygiene promotion as well. This success has been achieved with the implementation of different hardware and software services under the Community-managed WatSan Programme with the involvement and active participation of the villagers and stakeholders at various levels.

The Baseline Survey, conducted in January 2002 confirmed that the coverage of sanitary latrine was 25% and 6.4% in Kalabaria and Mathabhanga respectively, which have reached to 100% and 70% respectively within two years of programme intervention. The water coverage has increased to near about 100% with the installation of various alternative technologies like AIRP and Ring-well in Kalabaria. In Mathabhanga, safe water use in both drinking and cooking purposes have increased to 80% within this two-year of intervention with the installation of Rain-water Harvesting System and Ring-well. The villagers mention that a significant number of children were suffering from various water-borne diseases and incidence of death was almost a common phenomenon. The main reason behind this was drinking of unsafe water and unhygienic latrine use and/or indiscriminate open defecation. Alongside, lack of health education and awareness had immense role in deteriorating health situation and increasing sufferings. However, as a result of WatSan programme intervention, water-borne diseases have substantially reduced, and knowledge about reasons for health hazard has increased significantly among the community people. A tremendous change has occurred in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in relation to health and hygiene habit. This change is just like a miracle. Like many other stakeholders in both the villages Jannat Ara, a student of class ten of Mathabhanga village discloses the secret, "It is certainly the safe water and hygienic sanitation coverage and practices by community people irrespective of age and sex". The process, followed to achieve the success of coverage of the water and sanitation, has been inquired in the study. In investigating and depicting the process, followed to implement WatSan programme, various tools and techniques of participatory research like Focus Group Discussion, Key Informant's Interview, In-depth Case Studies, Community Meetings, etc. have been used. The

findings uphold the process in detail that has instigated in achieving significant coverage of water supply and sanitation and increase of hygiene behaviour in both the villages.

Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), and Society for Health Extension and Development (SHED), partner organizations of NGO Forum, have initiated the WatSan programme in both Kalabaria and Mathabhanga villages respectively in January 2002 with the vision to protect people from the severe water-borne diseases and to reduce the mortality rate specially the child mortality. Considering the adverse geophysical condition and its effects on the water supply and sanitation facilities, both the villages were selected under the NGO Forum facilitated Community-managed WatSan Programme. About two years of rigorous intervention of water and sanitation programme in the villages a tremendous success in water and sanitation coverage as well as changing of attitude, knowledge and behaviour and hygiene practices in relation to WatSan have been achieved. The villages were selected for the study to understand the process that has influenced to make the success in water and sanitation coverage as well as hygiene practices. The villagers and other relevant stakeholders have voiced it during participatory assessment exercises that the traditional practices of defecation were thought as immutable and sources of drinking water had no alternatives. However, now the villagers have been illuminated by dint of access to information about the facilities of water and sanitation, hygiene practice, and overall health and environment as well.

## **Geophysical Characteristics**

Various factors like soil texture, flooding condition, trends of water flow, communication network etc, are major determinants for installation of safe water technologies and ensuring hygienic latrine facilities as well as making these equipments available to the community. Mathabhanga and Kalabaria villages are located in the same region, having indistinguishable geophysical characteristics of social and cultural tradition but communication network is completely divergent. The village Mathabhanga is not easy accessible since road communication is difficult, while Kalabaria is easy accessible since the village is located adjacent to highway, only 5 kilometers away from upazilla sadar. Both the villages contain analogous characteristics like rocky soil texture, iron, and arsenic contamination in ground water and situated at the foothills. The poor communication network is the significant constraint in making available the water supply technologies and sanitation equipments to the community. These constraints have substantially affected the coverage of safe water and hygienic sanitation for a long period.

Mathabhanga is a village of migrant people. Long ago the village was known as Jhau Gacher Mathabhanga, in course of time the first two parts of the name have been dropped. There is a myth among the villagers regarding the name of the village that once a plane had collided with the highest jhau tree, then existing in the area, and broke its upper-most branch and crashed as well. The Mathabhanga became a customized name of the village under Baharchara union of Taknaf upazila. The geophysical condition and communication network is too difficult to explain. It could be realized with the statement of Master Hoson Ahang of Mathabhanga village as he philosophizes, "We have an agreement with the sea for continuing the current of life; the total time is divided into two, half for the mighty sea and the rest half for us. When the sea is in rest (low tide) current of life starts and before it gets furious (high tide) we become bound to stop our chirpiness. This is our life". However, the dependence on nature of the people is hard to imagine without getting practical experience.

It is difficult to pass only 25 kilometers to reach Mathabhanga even in a whole day. Mathabhanga is located at the Northwestern side of Teknaf Upazila in between the seashore and hills. The distance between the seashore to the foothill is about 400 to 600 meters only. There is no road or water communication facilities between the upazila and the village. However, the only mode of transportation is open Jeep locally known as *Chander Gari*. This service continues only six hours during low tide in the sea at daytime. People are bound to use these risky transports that are expired for running on road. During low tide these Jeeps run through seashore by passing at least 10 canals flowing from the hills to the sea in rainy season. However, in rainy days these canals become dangerous to cross because of violent water flows from hills for heavy rains. Then only transport of communication become impeded due to such water flows. Alongside, always there is risk for falling in quicksand on the sea beach on which the Jeep runs. If any one fails to pass the distance before the tide comes in, one would have to wait for another 12 hours for passing the distance. The sea on the one hand and the high hill on the other regulate the life of the community. Natural calamities i.e. cyclone, tidal surge, land sliding due to heavy rainfall etc. occur at regular interval and these finally intensify the villagers' misery specially in maintaining the safe water and sanitation facilities.

Kalabaria is a village of Barioadhala union under Sitakundo upazilla, situated at the foothill of Chandranath hill of Sitakundo. It is only 5 kilometers north from the upazilla sadar. The geophysical characteristics are comprised of rocky soil texture, iron and arsenic contaminated ground water, recurrent experiences of hilly water flow during heavy rains, etc. Such characteristics are impediment to making available safe water for drinking and cooking purposes and sustainability of sanitary latrine.

## Socio-economic profile

### *Demographic Characteristics:*

The total number of households of Mathabhanga village is 314 and total population is 2,855, of whom 1,125 and 1,200 are female and male respectively, which is evident from the baseline survey conducted before intervention of the programme. The total population of below 5 years is 530, which is 18.56% of total population as per the baseline survey. Whereas in Kalabaria the number of households is 318 and total population was 2,295, of whom 1,030 are male, and 960 are female. The number of below five years population is about 305, which is 13.28% of the total population of the village. There is a basic difference in the percentage of below five years population. In Mathabhanga it is about 6 percent which is higher than that of the Kalabaria village.

Socio-economic Profile		
Indicators	Kalabaria	Mathabhanga
Distance from Upazila	5 km	25 km
No. of Households	318	314
Total Population	2,295	2,855
% of Population < 5 years	13.28	18.56
Literacy rate	Above 80%	< 25%
Occupation	Agriculture, business, service, and diversified occupation	Agriculture, fishing, business, day labour, etc.
Communication	Well communicated	Very remote to access
Water Quality	Arsenic and Iron contaminated	Salinity and Iron concentrated
Soil Texture	Rocky Soil, Tube well installation unsuccessful, but ring well, RWHS are main sources of water	Rocky Soil, but Tube well installation partially successful, no other safe water source

**Occupational Status:** There are various kinds of occupational groups in Mathabhanga village. At least 60 percent of the villagers are involved in fish fry collection, and day labourer. About 20 years back almost 80% people were involved in agriculture, while maximum of them have now been shifted to fishing. Now only 10% are farmers, 10% are involved in business, while only 1-2% are in service. About 20% are agricultural labourer, and work (including cutting wood, and other natural resources collection) in hills. There is no opportunity to the village people for occupational diversification. Alongside, there is very few cropping land in Mathabhanga village. The people are very conservative who do not allow women to be involved in work outside the houses. Socio-economic conditions of majority of the villagers are poor. However, the occupational pattern of the people of Kalabaria is diversified, because of good communication network, higher educational status, good arable land types, and cropping pattern, and for some other opportunities. Most of the villagers are involved in agriculture, trading, and service. A significant numbers are day labourers, industry workers, and involved in other informal sectors.

### **Situation of pre intervention period**

- Very poor awareness about safe water and hygienic latrine use
- Lack of knowledge about alternative water technology
- Lack of unity & motivation to combat common problems
- No water and sanitation activities in the villages
- Lack of adequate & uniform knowledge about Arsenic contamination
- Poor sanitation coverage in both the villages
- Poor water supply facilities in the villages
- Water-borne diseases were common

**Educational Status:** The educational status is extremely low in Mathabhanga. None of the villagers but only the Head Master of a school is a graduate, but he does not stay permanently

in the village. There are only nine persons who are educated up to SSC and about fifty are studying in ranging from class six to eight. For the first time, only ten girl students were admitted in class six, but only five are still continuing in junior high school that is established in the village recently. Before establishing the Junior High School the students had to stop education after class five, except the children of a few families who had opportunities and capacities to educate their children keeping in towns. The educational status of Kalabaria village is comparatively higher than that of the Mathabhanga.

**Health Status:** No government healthcare services and facilities are operated in the Mathabhanga village or at the nearby area. Only a primary health care center has been established and being managed by SHED for providing primary health care services. Although SHED has been conducting development programme in Mathabhanga village since 1990, there was no programme to address water and sanitation issues. “About 20 years back, ICDDR,B had started implementation of Dysentery Project (a research project) but no significant changes occurred in health status over the years”, says Abdus Salam, the VDC Chairman of Mathabhanga village. Without ensuring safe water and hygienic latrine, health programme could not bring any change on the rate of recurrence of diseases over the years. But the Community-managed WatSan Programme has been functioning as preventive health programme, which have reduced water-borne diseases and people have been experiencing less suffering from diseases. The health status of Kalabaria village was better than that of Mathabhanga. With the intervention of Community-managed WatSan Programme the health status has been changed which is a remarkable success on health issues in the village. Komal Kodar, the VDC Chairman and a rural medical practitioner as well points out that water-borne diseases were so common that “as a doctor I had to be full time busy to attend patients, but now the number of calls has been significantly reduced in the village”. However, during initiation of the programme the overall situation on issues related to water and sanitation was rather poor but those have been improved as a consequence of conducting Community-managed WatSan Programme in both the villages.

## **Community-managed WatSan Programme**

NGO Forum has been supporting the water supply and sanitation sector alongside the Government of Bangladesh. To improve drinking water supply and sanitation situation in unserved and underserved rural areas, it has been operating activities since its emergence in 1982. NGO Forum has been facilitating its partner NGOs to implement water and sanitation programme through the community-managed approach for 100% coverage within a 2-year intervention period. Under this approach each partner organization selects one village consisting 300 households and implements intensive support in terms of hardware and software services to reach the goal within the given timeframe.

NGO Forum has adopted the Community-managed WatSan Programme approach as a comprehensive mechanism to reach the objectives of full coverage of safe WatSan and hygiene practices. NGO Forum has a guideline for its partner organizations to select unserved and underserved villages by following a set of criteria. The partner organizations SHED and YPSA selected Mathabhanga and Kalabaria villages under the Community-managed WatSan Programme as per the guideline and based on the outcome of a baseline survey. One of the common features of the community-managed approach is making the safe WatSan facilities available at the doorsteps of the community people as per the planning and management by the respective community. And with a view to making aware, sensitizing and capacitating the

community people the respective community is guided with the facilitation of various software services including conduction of different motivational activities.

With all its initiatives NGO Forum realizes some positive changes in terms of ensuring safe water and sanitation facilities and hygiene behaviour. Based on geophysical characteristics NGO Forum has been providing different alternative technologies to meet the community need created through conduction of various software services. All these services are implemented through community-managed approach targeting 100% WatSan coverage of the respective community. As community participation is the pre-requisite to any development, so the Forum proceeds on ensuring effective participation and inputs in different dimensions that can help to reach the goal by the community people themselves with the direct guidance and facilitation by the respective partner organization.

Operational mechanism of the Community-managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum ranges from the village selection with conduction of a baseline survey to final WatSan coverage and its sustainability. With a view to ensuring this different type of supports are provided by NGO Forum in an integrated fashion which are categorized into two parts namely, Hardware Support and Software Services.

**Hardware Support:** NGO Forum has been providing different type of water supply technologies to the community considering the geophysical characteristics, effectiveness and usefulness of the technologies based on the affordability of the community people. Among those technologies Ring-well, Dug-well, Rain-water Harvesting System, Arsenic-iron Removal Plant (AIRP), Pond Sand Filter (PSF) and Deep-set Pump, etc. are suitable as the alternative technologies. To address the challenges of drinking water and sanitation facilities in rural Bangladesh, the Forum has been operating its programme through its partner organizations in almost all the areas of the country under the supervision of its 14 Regional Offices. And to ensure the coverage of safe water supply and hygienic sanitation facilities NGO Forum provides water supply technologies maintaining a cost-sharing provision and sanitary latrines on cost basis. To ensure supply of such quality materials, it has trained masons in different parts of the country and has provided seed money to produce sanitary latrines to partner organization and private producer for running village sanitation center (VSC). This process has been providing support to the community people in getting sanitary materials available at the doorsteps. NGO Forum has also the provision to produce sanitary materials establishing mobile village sanitation centre in the respective village. This process has created an immense opportunity to the villagers in getting materials at village level at a reduced cost.

**Software Services:** To increase positive impact on health through the changing of attitude and behaviour towards safe water use and hygienic sanitation, NGO Forum has been providing various Software Services to address various stakeholders including partner NGOs, local govt. bodies, grassroots people, local allies, mass-media, policy-makers, and so on. It has been facilitating various innovative software services to capacitate the community people, staff of partner organizations, religious leaders, school teachers & students, and the villagers in general, and has also been providing ancillary services in ensuring participation of the villagers. NGO Forum also sensitizes the policy-makers, local and national level allies who are in the bureaucracy and non-government sector in supporting to implement the programme.

The Software Services consist of Advocacy & Information Services, Promotional Activities, Development Communication and Training. NGO Forum maintains effective coordination

among different stakeholders. It also maintains network with sectoral and trans-sectoral organizations, WatSan private sector, opinion leaders, mass media at the national, regional, and local levels for smooth operation of the programme and for achieving the objectives.

In implementing the programme at community level, various operational mechanisms are followed to reach the goal under the Community-managed WatSan Programme. The partner organizations have introduced several activities and implementation strategies like integration of WatSan with other activities. YPSA has tagged WatSan with health, good governance and micro-credit programme in Kalabaria while SHED has integrated the WatSan programme with health programme in Mathabhanga village. This integrated strategy has effectively been succeeded in both the villages. Some other special mechanisms have been maintained such as incorporation of local government body members in the VDC, massive and rigorous participatory assessment exercises in almost all parts of the villages, maintaining regular collaboration with local allies etc. In addition to that the involvement of local club as platform of young power, Union Parishad Chairman in motivational activities, distribution of responsibilities among VDC members and local opinion leaders, maintaining of follow-up and monitoring are also some other significant mechanisms which have contributed in the smooth operation of programme. Mr. Salamotullah, the Member Secretary of the VDC of Mathabhanga states, "The local potential persons have been associated in the operational strategy of the programme, because the villagers rely on the educated persons and even on students of high school because they are the higher educated persons in our village". In line with this realization the VDC has mobilized and integrated the students in conduction of promotional activities and it has significantly contributed to the improvement of hygiene practice among community people.

Since the Community-managed WatSan Programme is a comprehensive programme that follows a process from beginning to end of the tenure of WatSan programme intervention in a respective village, it needs capacity building of the Forum's partner. And as a part of it the first and the most important activity is the training of partner NGO staff on WatSan programme and its implementation process, which capacitates the staff, who ultimately can understand the process of the programme and that makes them capable in attaining programme objectives. Mr. Salamotullah, Supervisor of WatSan programme in Mathabhanga village from SHED says, "I did not know the process of making successful such a programme by handing over responsibility to the community and the process of activating people before participating in training of NGO Forum". Mr. Bathi Mong, Coordinator, SHED, adds that "We had some idea about water and sanitation programme as a whole, but not as specific as NGO Forum trained our staff and guided us in implementing the programme. Moreover, NGO Forum provided guidelines and manuals which created ample opportunities for us in understanding the process to capacitate community people and implement the Community-managed WatSan Programme with their own plan and management".

In line with this the responsible staffs of both the partner NGOs, YPSA and SHED have been playing key role for ensuring 100% coverage of water and sanitation use in such remote villages. The efficiency, commitment, and willingness of concerned staffs have determined the success of the programme. In both villages, concerned staffs have efficiently handled the programme activities guiding the villagers quite successfully.

### ***Benevolence Beyond Duty***

*Madhuri Rani Hawlader, age 25, paramedics by profession from Galachipa Upazilla of Patuakhali district has achieved degree on Nursing from Patuakhali Nursing Institute in 1999. Then she joined in SHED as paramedic. Since her joining, she has been working in Mathabhanga, a remote village and staying with a female colleague in the village. SHED is still the only health services provider in the village. The people are very conservative in nature, where women are not allowed to talk with male members other than close relatives and households' members and strangers don't have easy access to people. However, only exception is Madhuri Rani, an outsider woman who has achieved such a position in the village, that now she is addressed with various terms like Ma (Mother), Khala (maternal aunt), Didi (sister) by the villagers as their age permits and she is also treated like a family member. She has achieved this status through passing tough hurdles in last three years.*

*After the formation of the Village Development Committee in Mathabhanga village, where the Community-managed WatSan Programme has been being carried out, a sample survey was conducted by the VDC to measure the existing situation of water use for drinking and cooking purposes and use of sanitary latrines by the villagers. She says, "As a responsible person of health and hygiene promotion and medical services I actively participated in the survey process". The VDC members with assistance from SHED conducted participatory exercises by using tools and techniques like social mapping, hazard mapping, depicting the natural resources, roads, households, settlement pattern, to identify the problems related to water and sanitation in those maps. Even though a paramedic, she was the key person in arranging sessions of PRA due to her own image to the villagers.*

*"Though I am a paramedic, but I am known to the villagers as doctor apa /didi. So they come to me whenever they face any problem and seek advice, but it was completely reversed before two years. To find out solution to meet the most crucial water problem of the village they come and seek advice from me", says Madhuri. Since it was very difficult to bring materials of latrine and other water technologies from Teknaf, that is why as per the decision of the VDC a temporary VSC has been established in front of her clinic to instigate water and sanitation coverage. She has also been responsible to oversee that programme by integrating with health programme. As paramedic "I have got the opportunities for integrating health, sanitation, water and hygiene through promotional activities. It is my pleasure to be involved in WatSan programme because it is directly linked with health programme" says Madhuri. "As per my job responsibilities I am bound to live in the village, which has created opportunities to avail advantages for conducting motivational activities in every steps of life". A whole lot of promotional activities like Courtyard Meeting, School WatSan Programme, Rally-miking etc. have been organized in the village under the direct supervision and responsibility of Madhuri Rani along with her colleagues who again is responsible for organizing some more motivational activities under health programme such as, adolescent girls' orientation meeting, awareness on cleanliness, health and so on. Madhuri Rani believes that these programmes, due to their specific objectives and target groups have played substantial role in motivating the villagers and bring success to the programme.*

*Although as a part of her job responsibility she is supposed to organize the programmes but she has not confined herself up to official duties only. It is her conscience, her obligation, her dedication to the cause of the poor and backward villagers, who have accepted her in their hearts, that she has been actively facilitating the programme in the village. "It is my duty to abate the woe of people to the extent my ability permits me. It gives me satisfaction to be a part of the programme meant for people's benefit", says Madhuri Rani.*

## Promoting the Participation

Different type of promotional activities have been conducted to ensure participation of the communities in the overall process of the programme implementation. The conduction of the promotional activities has played an important and effective role in achieving the 100% coverage of WatSan. From the rich package of the promotional activities, NGO Forum's partners YPSA and SHED have conducted the VDC Formation & Mobilization, Community Meeting, Courtyard Meeting, School WatSan Programme, Religious Leaders' Orientation, Rally-miking, Film Show, Collaboration with LGIs and Clubs, etc. which have played an effective role to promote safe WatSan in the villages.

The process of Village Development Committee formation has associated the community people with the development efforts, because almost all the community people have actively participated in the VDC formation process and in addressing the common needs i.e. water and sanitation coverage of the village. Selina Akter, a VDC member points out, "At the first meeting a huge number of community people were present, where YPSA representatives and the local elites discussed about the water and sanitation programme and its relation to the health, hygiene and household expenditure that created interest among community people, and influenced them for participation in the programme intervention". At the beginning of the programme in the Mathabhanga village the staff of Society for Health Extension and Development (SHED) motivated the villagers about health programme and its benefits in the village. The village selection for NGO Forum's Community-managed WatSan Programme was made considering the village as unserved. In Mathabhanga village the VDC was formed with 13 members while 11 of them are male and the rest 2 are female. The villagers from all sections and professions participated in the formation of VDC through conduction of a community meeting. The VDC formation was done with the representation from all sections of the community people including different professionals, community leaders, elected representatives of local government, women representatives and so on. In both Kalabaria and Mathabhanga, the village was divided in five parts (paras), two male and one female VDC members were selected from each part. Every member was given separate responsibilities and target to enhance WatSan coverage and hygiene practices as well. In both the villages the VDCs, having representatives of all section of people and also having active participation in implementation of WatSan programme have made the programme successful.

### Process of VDC Mobilization

- Formation of VDC with involvement of committed and influential persons.
- At least one-third of the total VDC members are women.
- Incorporation of former and present UP members.
- Ensuring the participation of VDC members in organizing & conduction of promotional activities.
- Participatory need assessment by involving the VDC.
- Conduction of meetings at each month.
- Ensuring incorporation of youth club & other similar groups with the VDC.
- Facilitating para-wise follow-up and monitoring system.
- Linking WatSan programme with LGIs to manage the UP allocation for the respective village.

After VDC formation and orientation of the members, they conducted participatory exercises involving the whole community by using social mapping, hazard mapping, ranking, etc., tools and techniques of Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) to assess the existing status of Water and sanitation coverage in the village. The PNGO representatives and VDC members facilitated the exercise, where the community people actively participated and analyzed the overall situation. The people came to learn the status about concerned issues and could realize the importance of safe WatSan facilities in line with the maintenance of sound health and reduction of households' expenditure for health services. Through conduction of PRA the community people have acquired knowledge about status of health and hygiene practices, and become

capable to understand realities, which has perpetuated them to take initiatives to implement the water and sanitation programme in their villages. Nurul Mostafa, a VDC and ex-Union Parishad Member says, "Initially, participatory assessment exercises were conducted in different parts of the Kalabaria village, which covered maximum people of the communities and helped visualizing through social mapping the exact feature of the community and that has shaken the villagers regarding the WatSan issues as well. This process has made the programme people-oriented and has covered up the voice of all stakes of the concerned areas".

The output of these exercises has provided a comprehensive knowledge to the VDC members in preparing an appropriate and effective plan of action for ensuring 100% WatSan coverage within the programme intervention period. Being oriented on the WatSan and hygiene issues the VDC members started taking part in organizing various motivational activities through which they let the villagers know about the negative effects & impacts, traditional beliefs and practices regarding the water and sanitation issues. Describing the outcome of their mobilization Mr. Abdus Salam, the VDC Chairman says, "Initially it was very difficult for us to motivate the villagers to buy and use sanitary latrine, but in case of buying water technology we did not face the same challenges". Mr. Salam says, "When we started our activities, then most of the villagers expressed that their ancestors passed their lives in the traditional fashion, why they would need new habits and things. But with recurrent motivation by the VDC and the elite persons, they have become interested in safe WatSan habit".

Mr. Kamal Hossain, Treasurer of the VDC and President of *Agnibina Club* of Kalabaria village says, "People were habituated to traditional health and hygiene practices and they were not concerned about the hazardous situation of the village". "However, after participating in participatory exercises the villagers have become concerned about water and sanitation issues, and this is because of conducting motivational activities addressing concerned stakeholders through NGO intervention with the help of VDC members", Mr. Kamal adds. All other VDC members and many of the villagers have expressed themselves in line with Mr. Kamal that the participatory planning process has capacitated the VDC members in visualizing harmful feature as well as facilitating the motivational activities in association with the respective NGO.

The participatory exercises have created a sense of ownership of the programme among the villagers. These activities have created immense enthusiasm among the villagers, which has led the community to make the programme a success in line with the objectives of the Community-managed WatSan Programme. As a whole, the process of participatory exercise has worked as the initial step in handing over the sticks to the community itself to rule the villagers towards safe WatSan and hygiene practices.

### ***Village Level Institution Takes the Lead***

*Komal Kodar, age 46, the Chairman of the VDC and inhabitant of Kalabaria village, started his profession as village doctor after completing Medical Faculty of Palli Chikitschok (MFPC) training in 1982. During that time, people generally suffered from various water-borne diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery etc. Mr Kodar says, "YPSA has been operating activities for socio-economic development of disadvantaged and poor people of the community since long back. However, water and sanitation issues were not addressed in a comprehensive manner. The YPSA workers frequently visited for operation, monitoring, follow up of ongoing programme, and discussed several development issues of the village. One day Mr. Shamim and Ms. Priti Chakraborty of YPSA met with me, discussed about the problems of safe drinking water and sanitation situation of the village, and showed interest to initiate the WatSan*

programme and seek for support from us to implement the programme". He says, "As a village doctor I also felt the problems but could not find any ways to address the issue. But when the YPSA personnel expressed interest to take initiatives to address the problems, I became enthusiastic, with their assistance invited all the people of the village, and discussed ways to solve the problems. Through a meeting all the people formed a VDC and selected me as the Chairman of the VDC". After the VDC formation the VDC members identified the problems of the village in respect to water supply and sanitation through participatory exercise and chalked out an action plan for 100% WatSan coverage in the village within the given time-frame.

"As VDC Chairman I have additional responsibilities to ensure the success of the WatSan programme in the village, but I have an extra advantage as well, because of being a village doctor. When any one call me as doctor to attend patient I get the opportunity to visit each and every households. I do not need to think about extra time to motivate people and monitor these activities. It is to mention that the VDC includes 2 ex members and 2 present members of the Union Parishad and one female member. Being influential and responsible persons, they come to the meetings with their own responsibilities without waiting for invitation. We invite both present and previous chairmen of the Union Parishad in the VDC meeting", states Mr. Kodar.

Various activities have been conducted in the village like Courtyard Meeting, Rally-miking, Imam Orientation, Postering, School WatSan Programme, Tea Stall Sessions, etc. with the initiative of the VDC. All these programmes have addressed separate groups of people of the community, which have resulted in a consolidated impact on household level. A temporary Village Sanitation Centre has been established with assistance of the partner organization in the village and hygienic latrines have been distributed among the villagers with cost price as per NGO Forum's system. Mr. Komal Kodar has taken the key initiatives to inform people not to break water seal of the slab. "As a village doctor one of my most important activities is to promote sanitation facilities and safe drinking water in the village", says Mr. Kodar. The installation process of sanitary latrine is also informed to the villagers, whether they have installed it properly are also followed up and monitored by the VDC.

While implementing the programme, poverty has been felt, as the main constraint. A section of the community is living in poverty, who live from hand to mouth. It has been found very difficult to bring them under the programme's fold because they do not have any capacity to buy the sanitary latrine and unable to share the cost for water technologies. To meet their demand the Union Parishad Chairman and the club have provided 20 and 3 sets of latrine respectively from their own fund. "As Chairman of the Village Development Committee I had to propose them to provide such assistance", Mr Kodar adds.

Mr. Kodar says, "Hygiene practices e.g. hand washing with soap before meal, hand washing with ash or soap after defecation, use of sandal during defecation, etc. have been increased due to programme intervention. I frequently visit houses for attending patients and advice them on hygiene practices for keeping sound health".

After installation and use of the sanitary latrine and safe water the incidence of diseases among the villagers have been reduced significantly. The prevalence was so high earlier that as a village doctor in specific season Mr. Komal Kodar could not get enough time to attend all the patients but now the severity has been reduced after the intervention of Community-managed WatSan Programme. For the sustainability of the achievement of WatSan programme the VDC will continue to monitor the activities with their own initiatives for the sake of themselves. "I am committed to make the programme sustainable for long time and when people will be habituated to this system, then they will not go back to traditional hygiene practices" expresses Mr. Kodar.

Some creative ideas and process have been introduced and followed by VDCs, i.e. involvement of youths in VDC, follow up and monitoring by youths and students. This idea has come out from the participatory exercises and it has been included in the process and has created an immense impact in making the Community-managed WatSan Programme a success.

For rapid coverage of sanitation the VDC members have taken special initiatives. A few people who were not interested to participate in the programme, have been forced to establish the sanitary latrine. The Village Development Committee have been following the process of organizing sub committee meetings in each para, which have strengthened the activities as well as ensured the coverage. Special initiatives have also been taken to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged households even by their own contribution. Since there are some elected UP members in the VDCs, they availed some sets of latrine as per the allocation procedure of Union Parishad, which they have provided to the poorest households. The club president Mr. Kamal Hossain in Kalabaria village has provided latrine sets from the welfare fund of the club. This process has also contributed to achieve the coverage of sanitary latrine.

### ***More than A Businessman***

*“I am contributing in social work within the range of my capacity, I feel proud of it, it makes me proud and happy to think I am contributing in prevention of diseases for thousands of people”, says Nurul Islam as he is busy supervising four employees at work at his Village Sanitation Centre at Sitakundo. Established back in 1994, his VSC’s production range was limited only to a few sets of latrine per month. But gradually with time goods of different kinds alongside good quality of sanitary latrines are now being produced where four employees help Nurul Islam. The expansion, especially the production and sale of a large number of sanitary latrines owes to the intervention of sanitation programme in the area by YPSA, Sitakundo, a local partner organization of NGO Forum.*

*Over the time the buyers of the sanitary latrines have been increased and expanded to many villages around the area. But the number of sale in the programme villages of YPSA is higher than that of other villages. The number of sale per month is 45-50 sets of sanitary latrine. Different types of latrine technology have been produced at the VSC based on the demand from the buyers and also as an option of choices for them. Nurul Islam says, “People from different villages and different socio-economic strata normally come to purchase sanitary latrine from my VSC and a significant number of them demand water-seal latrine. I advise my customers to buy water-seal latrines since it is very much hygienic. I consider it my duty to tell them not to break the water-seal and explain the use of the water-seal”. Nurul Islam informs that the VDC members from the community-managed WatSan programme villages supported by NGO Forum come to the VSC to make order for sanitary latrine. Normally people were not interested in water-seal latrines because of the inconvenience of its use for requirement of lot of water. But as the VDC members have the orientation of the benefit of water-seal latrine, they have either been making the orders by themselves on behalf of people or motivating people to use it. As a result demand of water-seal latrine has increased.*

*Nurul Islam instructs his customers about the installation process of latrines. “I feel very proud and satisfied when I hear that people are using sanitary latrine and practicing hygiene behaviour”, says Nurul Islam. Mr. Islam adds that the quality of the products of the VSC has been maintained very strictly which has increased the sale. A significant step taken by Mr. Islam is that he sells latrine with credit, which helps the poor villagers to establish sanitary latrines. This initiative has expanded the coverage and helped reaching the objective of the Community-managed WatSan Programme. He has*

*provided 70 sets of latrines last year through mobile sanitation centre. He informs that he has been shifting towards the village and expanding production. Alongside, he has been supporting the buyers by providing transportation at a lower cost. "It's not business alone, I care beyond that. My centre has created scope for expanding business for me with the creation of demand through Community-managed WatSan Programme. I owe my responsibility to contribute in achieving the goal of the programme. By motivating people to install sanitary latrine, instructing them the installation process, use and maintenance, reaching my support to the buyers I am trying to accomplish my responsibility. It gives me a lot of satisfaction to be a part of the programme".*

Regular monitoring of the WatSan progress by the VDC members have also created an image of them among the villagers. The VDC members maintain the provision of sudden visit to households as part of their continuous monitoring system. During the visit they observe the maintenance and cleanliness status and ask about the regular practice of the safe WatSan facilities. These processes have contributed increasing the hygiene practices among the community people irrespective of all ages and classes. Alongside, the young group of club members and school students also conduct the monitoring activities at door-to-door and report to the VDC members regularly. This follow-up and monitoring strategy has contributed achieving a great impact on WatSan coverage and maintaining of hygiene behaviour.

The Community Meeting is one of the processes of accelerating the male people's voice into the community development programme. These Meetings have ensured the scope of knowing about their own programme. The involvement of the male members of the community in the process, and making them responsible for the programme implementation has determined the extent of success of the programme. The Community Meeting has been conducted in the villages as one of the important activities of NGO Forum with participation of the male members in every six-month. In the Community Meeting the achievement status of WatSan is also reviewed household-wise which clarifies the WatSan coverage in the village. The Community Meetings have contributed a lot in mobilizing the male members of Kalabaria and Mathabhanga towards the importance of safe WatSan and hygiene practices and finally they have been guiding the villagers accordingly.

Organizing Courtyard Meeting in each and every para of the villages has addressed almost all section of the women of the villages. The process has perpetuated to emerge women as separate force to ensure safe water and sanitation coverage. The women groups have played an important role in follow-up of the programme in their respective areas on the coverage and hygiene practices. The process of compartmentalization of the village into different segment for operation of Courtyard Meetings and sharing information among people of neighbouring households have created a positive impact on hygiene practices and WatSan coverage as well. Ms. Bakul Begum of Kalabaria says, "We motivated our neighbours and maintained strictly the rules and regulation of implementation as we learnt from different Courtyard Meetings. As a result, women of our neighbouring households became interested in the programme and started to participate in the promotional activities". She also adds that the water-borne diseases in the villages have been substantially reduced, and important change have taken place in the village that no one now gets bad smell while passing throughout the village, and none defecates in open space, whereas it was a common phenomena before one year. "We have influenced those who did not have clear ideas about the availability of sanitary materials and the procedure of installation. The Courtyard Meeting participants informed the VDC members to take necessary steps to bring those who did not have solvency under hygienic latrine coverage", Ms. Bakul Begum discloses herself.

Some women cannot participate in Courtyard Meetings due to business and family affairs, but the participating women share the discussed issues with others who fail to participate. Ms. Sima Begum, an adolescent girl of Mathabhanga mentions, "Initially we thought that the WatSan programme is of NGO Forum's partner organization, SHED but after few days of intervention we could realize that it is for all the people of our village. So we have become involved in and shared with the villagers to motivate them to be involved with this programme".

Several issues are discussed in Courtyard Meetings, some among those are importance of safe drinking water, washing hands before handling food and after latrine visit and other common aspects of health and hygiene practices. Maximum women come to the Courtyard Meeting and what they learn they discuss with their relatives and neighbours, which is the most important tool of motivational activities of hygiene practices and also ensuring the coverage of WatSan. Ms. Rokeya Begum of Mathabhanga says, "For ensuring better health and keeping the members free from water-borne diseases every household should have safe water access, sanitary latrine and should maintain hygiene practices. We have discussed it in Courtyard Meeting". Some of the village women in Kalabaria mentions that they did not know the place where the sanitary latrine and other sanitary equipments were available. But now "We know about the places and availability of sanitary materials". They also adds, "We have also learnt the ways of keeping the latrine clean, using the sanitary latrine, making children habituated to use latrine, and also teaching on how to keep latrine clean and useable". These are the results of Courtyard Meetings in both the villages under the Community-managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum.

### ***Rain-water Redeems Khadija's Plight***

*The Rain-water Harvesting System installed at her home-yard has made the life of Khadiza Begum (26), much more easier and full of relief and reliability. She says, "I found an immense change in the village in respect to the water supply and sanitation coverage. Even two years back I did not know whether rainwater is drinkable or not, but now I know if a person gets proper information and knowledge about anything they can achieve it. The people had traditional practices of drinking spring water though most of the time it had been collected from unsafe and dirty places. Before getting this technology we had a dug well that provided water during rainy season, in dry seasons we had to collect water from the spring. Before setting up the Rain-water Harvesting System in my house I had to go to collect water from the spring of the hill, which needed at least 1.5 hours. To reach the source of water I had to go to the hill following the canal through the jungle where there was always the risk of snake and many other wild animals. Not only that it was a very much laborious job for a woman. I could not go alone for water collection and had to call other neighbouring women to accompany me. Since many of us collected water together, it made the water sources diluted and filling the water pot was time consuming. But now I am free of the risk and extra labour. I have got the information and also training on maintenance of the RWHS. Now it is very easy to maintain it and I am taking care of it".*

*Khadiza says that to get the Rain-water Harvesting System they had to go through a process. Her husband participated in the VDC meetings and felt enthusiasm about the water technology. He applied for Rainwater Harvesting System for his own. The Village Development Committee and SHED personnel approved it and sent to NGO Forum office. The RWHS was constructed under the supervision of the partner organization. She had to share Tk. 1,800 from the total cost. However, after the installation of the System the engineer has trained her on its maintenance both theoretically and practically, and also has given her a tool box and manual for taking care of the system.*

*Now she is maintaining the RWHS and expresses her satisfaction that in this remote village getting such a technology is a grace of God, which has been made successful with an effort of NGO Forum and specially the VDC members. It has reduced health care costs and many other drazary. It has also reduced the risk of collecting water from spring at the hill top and saved time for this purpose. The cost for maintenance is insignificant and required materials are available. Khadiza adds, "I clean it every two months that requires some bleaching powder, and physical labour. the 3,200 liters of water from this technology have been serving my eight member-family for six months for drinking and cooking. Sometimes neighbours also collect water from my plant when they fail to collect water from other sources. This technology has given me relief from hardworking so I use and maintain it with care and sincerity".*

School WatSan Programme has been conducted in the Morishbunia KG and Junior High School as an important activity under the programme. The total number of students in class VI and class VII is 125. The students are among the most educated persons in the village because there are only a few people in the village who have passed SSC. Due to lack of education, the village people acknowledge the students' knowledge and respect the students. The students and teachers have taken part in the programme. Alongside, the SHED staff has also visited the school to motivate the students. When the teachers found gaps in the class they have discussed about the water and sanitation status of the village as well as its linkages with health following the directions of the materials provided by the NGO Forum. The School WatSan Programme has capacitated the student-children of the village and has oriented them on the importance of safe water and sanitation programme. This has created a tremendous impact on the students and in their families, because the teachers have asked the students to discuss this matter at home, with peer groups and all neighbouring families. Some of the teachers of the school are also members of VDC, which has helped to gear up the effect of programme implementation in the village. The students and teachers have contributed a lot to motivate the villagers. This process has resulted in significant and effective WatSan coverage in the village.

### ***Teachers-Students Ally/League Make a Difference***

*Md. Morshed Kamal Tipu, age 28, headmaster of Morishbunia KG and Junior High School has been working since 2000. Basically Morishbunia is the southern part of the Mathabhagna village, where the villagers established the school. In October 2002 the School WatSan Programme was conducted in his school where students of the school, teachers, and villagers also took part. As the headmaster of the school, Mr. Morshed played a very crucial role in implementation of the School Programme and thus contributed to a great extent in commencing WatSan success in the village. The programme consisted of rally, miking, discussion on different WatSan issues, and its impact on human life. Among various discussed issues are cleanliness, advantage of safe water use, process of purification of water, use of sanitary latrine, negative impact of unsafe latrine use, rule of latrine use and relationship of latrine use and diseases. These activities have shaken the mind of the students because they had traditional ideas and habits in their mind. Initially some of the students were not convinced by the issues discussed by the SHED representatives, but when the teachers discussed they were convinced and behaved accordingly.*

*The students were advised to share their learning to their parents, relatives, peer groups and neighbours. When teachers discussed about various kinds of diseases and germs, the students could not understand and had no minimum idea about different diseases. Initially the students were pressurized for wearing clean clothes. Due to hilly area there are massive mosquitoes in the areas, the students did not know that mosquitoes were the causes of malaria disease. They were advised to use nets to protect themselves from malaria. However, the school WatSan programme was organized very rigorously and most of the villagers became aware about the programme and its objectives. Alongside each and every week WatSan, health*

*and hygiene issues have been discussed with the students. Each and every month the SHED workers come to school and share with the students on different topics on health and hygiene. Each and every month the SHED workers come to school and share with the students on different topics on health and hygiene. That has made a tremendous success in coverage of both water and sanitation specially water coverage in the village.*

*Mr. Morshed says, "After 1975 only three persons from the village passed SSC. No one has intermediate or graduate degree in the village, there are only one graduate schoolteacher who graduated from Chittagong College in the year of 2000. People are very simple in nature. They respect educated persons, therefore, they treat students as their teachers, since the students are teaching them many important issues". He also adds, "You as an outsider can not believe how much respected I am by them because I am a schoolteacher and a highly educated person in the village. If I consider anything as bad each and everybody will say that is bad. Taking the advantages of my qualification and profession, when the SHED personnel invited me to attend their programme I participated and started to take part in motivational and promotional activities of water and sanitation. Following my advise my students started making people aware and motivate to use safe latrine and drink pure and safe water. This effort is being continued by them. They have been carrying out WatSan campaign sometimes individually and sometimes in groups. It is a fact that the rendering of different motivational activities have been able to make the people realize the importance of safe water, sanitation and hygiene".*

*He adds, "People have been involved in the programme as there has been severe drinking water crisis in the village, otherwise it would have been difficult to involve them in the sanitation programme. People need to be educated and motivated on these issues. The behavioural change is significant among many students as well as community people. But there are few people who have misconception about the water and sanitation programme". There is a need of education, when the people will be educated they will realize the situation and change their attitude and behaviour" points out Mr. Morshed, the teacher, who believes in the value of education.*

Rally and Miking have also been conducted as one of the important activities in disseminating messages to both the communities. The VDC in association with the partner organizations has conducted the rally and miking. With the initiative, taken by the respective partner organization, the VDC has conducted the activity while the community people have provided full cooperation in succeeding the programme. During rally and miking various posters and festoons on WatSan and hygiene issues have been displayed chanting different health and hygiene related slogans by the participants to make people understood about WatSan issues and to motivate them in practicing safe water and hygienic sanitation facilities. Abdus Shukur, an 80-year old villager of Mathabhanga has become exulted and expresses, "In my life I have never found any rally in the village like the one organized by SHED on safe water and sanitation where people irrespective of age and sex have participated with profound enthusiasm. I also have not missed the chance to participate and enjoy the moment full of joy even at this ending stage of my life. I have got some important messages on water and sanitation though, perhaps, it is too late for me, but the messages have been reached to many more among the villagers", the old man concludes with satisfaction.

Since the religious leaders are very much respectable to the general community people who are religious-minded also, Religious Leaders' Orientation programme has been conducted in both the villages as an important programme in succeeding the WatSan programme specially to motivate the people towards safe WatSan and hygiene. The religious general people participate in weekly prayers in Mosques, where the Imams, being oriented on the importance of safe

WatSan address the Muslims highlighting messages like cleanliness is the most important part of Islam as well as purdah is also important. By establishing sanitary latrine and safe water sources people can maintain cleanliness and side by side can achieve the grace of the Almighty Allah. This process has been very effective in motivating the village people and in successful implementation of the programme for 100% coverage of water and sanitation in the villages, Kalabaria and Mathabhanga. The Religious Leaders' Orientation has enhanced the comprehensive process of implementation of WatSan programme and has led to reach the 100% coverage of WatSan and the significant increase of hygiene practices.

Incorporation of the elected representatives in the VDC from the lowest administrative unit of the Government, the Union Parishad, is one of the most important strategic initiatives under the Community-managed WatSan Programme. The elected representatives have applied their power to influence the villagers, which has resulted in the effective implementation of motivational activities as well as ensured the better hygiene practices in the villages. All the present & former UP members, irrespective of political affiliation, have been involved in the implementation of water and sanitation programme which has created an extra enthusiasm among the villagers to make the programme a success.

Some of the existing and ex-members of Union Parishad have also been involved as the members of VDC, who have actively participated in all meetings for decision-making, implementation, follow up and monitoring of the WatSan programme in both Mathabhanga and Kalabaria villages. These initiatives alongside their involvement have created interest among community people towards the success of the programme. Alongside, the VDC has invited the Chairman of Union Parishad and has ensured his presence in several VDC meetings, which has influenced to get a momentum of the programme success. Moreover, the villagers in Kalabaria have got a few sets of sanitary latrine free of cost from the Union Parishad to make the village cent percent covered with safe water supply and sanitation. Mr. Raihanuddin, the newly elected Chairman from Kalabaria says, "Sometimes we had to make the people, even the poorest, afraid by saying that if they did not establish and use sanitary latrine no assistance from the Union Parishad would be provided to them". "Among the hard core poor who are still striving for establishing sanitary latrine, a very few of them have been assisted by Union Parishad members, and local clubs with hygienic latrine facilities to bring the village under 100% coverage", the Chairman adds. Participation of local government representatives like Union Parishad chairman, members, female members of Union Parishad has worked as a turning point for success of the programme. However, the presence and participation of them have influenced the conduction and participation of the villagers in motivational activities. Alongside, Upazilla Nirbahi Officer of Sitakundo has perpetuated tremendously in speeding up the WatSan coverage in the Kalabaria village. He has visited the village several times, which has made the villagers more enthusiastic irrespective of economic and social class. However, involvement and active participation of local government bodies have made it smooth to attain the objectives of the Community-managed WatSan Programme.

### ***People's Representative Invokes Mass Mobilization***

*"As elected representative of the villages, I have got the opportunity to serve people through Community-managed WatSan Programme and I have availed it to work effectively for the sake of the community" says Mr Rafiqul Islam, a 47 year old UP member who is the VDC member of Kalabaria village. He is two times consecutive elected member of the Baroiadhala Union Parishad and the inhabitant of the Kalabaria village, who has played an important and effective role in succeeding the Community-managed WatSan*

*Programme. Mr. Islam started his carrier as schoolteacher (1976- 1986) but later on he left the teaching profession and involved in agriculture and social welfare related activities in the village. Mr. Islam says, "If any welfare related activities starts then initiators generally prefer to invite me first as an activist and then as elected representative of the Union Parishad. Before going to plan the implementation of Community-managed WatSan Programme supported by the Forum I was called as an activist and catalyst of implementation. Initially the community meeting was organized and a Village Development Committee (VDC) was formed from that meeting. All the participants agreed to include me as one of the VDC members".*

*After formation of the VDC, and being one of the members of the VDC Mr. Rafiqul Islam has taken part in several activities for the successful implementation of programme activities in the village. Through the participatory exercises various problems have been identified and prioritized by the VDC as well as an action plan for the water and sanitation programme implementation have been prepared. As elected members of the UP, Ex-UP members and other members of the community have been visiting from door-to-door, the villagers have realized that it has an importance, otherwise those people would not take part in these activities.*

*"As a member, I got 7-8 sets of latrine, which have been distributed among the destitute and poor households of the village that has also played substantial role in coverage of WatSan in the village. I have visited from door to door to conduct motivational activities in the village as elected representative as well as for monitoring the use of sanitary latrine and the changes of hygiene practice and behavioral pattern of the villagers", Mr. Islam says.*

*In the Monthly VDC Meeting every member has to present the achievement and overall progress of the programme of respective paras. It has introduced a very effective monitoring system for cent percent WatSan coverage, Mr. Islam opines. He adds that the visit of ministers, UN representatives and the Executive Director of NGO Forum was an instance for encouragement of people. Such visits have encouraged the villagers to implement the programme and that has got a momentum for the villagers.*

*He further adds, "Some more initiatives have been taken for the success of the programme. As a member of the Union Parishad I have been inviting the Union Parishad Chairman in the VDC Meeting. Sometimes the Chairman has attended the Meeting and realized that it is a very good initiative which has inspired the villagers. The chairman also has allocated some sets of sanitary latrine through the UP Member of the respective village, which has helped to bring cent percent coverage of the village in the case of drinking water supply.*

*Mr. Islam thinks, "People have learnt that they can do anything they want in a united manner. They have got the inspiration and achieved the confidence. The people have also realized that we should not wait for the help of others. Thus they have solved the water crisis with their own initiatives and with voluntary contribution of their own with facilitation by the implementing agencies. Now the people own the programme and they also would like to make the programme sustainable through their own initiatives. The people have achieved the power to materialize any initiative. If necessary they will seek advice and technical know how regarding the programme activities. As a UP member as well as a villager I have realized that we can do and we will take necessary initiatives to solve such problems with our own initiatives in the future in the village and in the union".*

*He advocates for the people who are very simple – if they get the inspiration from any corner they can do any complex work. "I have been able to inspire the villagers, and I have got the opportunity to serve people and I have tried to do it", a self-satisfied and dedicated Rafiqul Islam states.*

Involvement of young generation in the process has worked as one of the important catalysts for the markable success of the Community-managed WatSan Programme. The young group in both the villages have played an effective role in implementation process, and monitoring of WatSan coverage and hygiene practices. Members of the local club in Kalabaria have been very active to play the motivational role under this programme. In raising the latrine coverage in the village the club members have visited door to door and if found negligence they have informed the VDC while the VDC has taken initiatives for ensuring the coverage through their regular motivations. The villagers have mentioned it very candidly that the sanitation coverage has been achieved faster due to use of youth power of Agnibina Club of Kalabaria village. Like the Kalabaria village, the youth group of the Mathabhanga village have also played their role positively in raising the WatSan coverage, especially safe water use in the village. The young boys and girls having secondary level education have played their role with tremendous success as they are respected to the villagers.

### ***Youth's Zeal Stimulates Power in Social Action***

*Kamal Hossain, the president of the Youth Club has played a very much zealous role in implementing the water and sanitation programme in the village. Though Mr. Hossain started his carrier in Bangladesh Navy but could serve only two years. He left the job in 1994, and came back to the village. Then he started agriculture farming, small-scale business and established poultry firm. Alongside, he involved himself in many social welfare activities. Being the president of the club he has been providing support to implement education programme, participating in village salish, supporting the activities of NGOs in the village and taking part in welfare activities. The club has youth development activities and it is also supporting the poor and disadvantaged people of the community. The club has not received any support from donors, but provides support for treatment to destitute, helps poor students, supports in marriage of poor girls, and other social activities. Basically, WatSan programme has achieved the success through the participation of the young generation. Mr. Hossain mentions that the involvement of the young generation has geared up the programme itself because they monitor the programme in each and every step.*

*Mr. Hossain says that when the YPSA officials discussed about water and sanitation issue very few people understood it and gave importance except a few knowledgeable people. The club members understood the importance of the programme and committed themselves to support the partner organization of NGO Forum. With the objectives of cent percent coverage, a 15 member VDC have been formed including 7 members of the club. The VDC and club all together have conducted participatory exercises to identify the problems and making prioritization of problems. The power of young generation has been used to organize the whole process of activities as well as motivational activities. "I understood the programme activities. Therefore I have used young power of the club in implementing the programme, which have proved very effective for the success of the programme", says Mr. Hossain.*

*Mr. Hossain informs that meetings have been organized in different paras with support from the club members where issues of negative impact of open latrine on health, importance of safe water use and importance of hygiene behavior have been discussed. The women members also have discussed issues of water & sanitation in their respective paras. The invitation and arrangement of meetings, place and time fixation have been done by the club members.*

*The VDC members have been given target in installation of sanitary latrine. If any member fail to motivate people, the VDC members and club all together visit the households and motivate them to install*

*sanitary latrine and use it properly. Such activities, especially the active involvement of the club members alongside the VDC have played an effective role in 100 percent coverage of WatSan. The club has provided 4 sets of latrine to four poorest of the poor households from its own fund and another few households have been provided with partial cost of latrine from the club's fund.*

*Mr. Hossain demands that, one can easily understand the changes that have taken place between pre and post intervention period of the WatSan programme in the village. There was bad smell on the road which has disappeared, the incidence of diarrhoea has decreased, and basically the water-borne diseases have been decreased massively and remarkably. He also adds that people from outside the village especially who come on temporary basis during crop harvesting period to live in the village, may do unsafe open defecation, so there is a need to take initiatives to stop such incidence. He adds that though the coverage has reached near to hundred percent (97%) but traditional behavioral practices could not be changed within such short time. So the continuous monitoring will be needed from the VDC. However, most of the club members have been doing it with their self-responsibility. The club can take the responsibility to continue the programme in the village in future days too.*

*Mr. Hossain points out that for the sake of sustainability self-initiative is very important. However, in future the seven members of the VDC as well as club along with other interested persons will continue to follow-up and monitoring of the achievement after withdrawal of support of NGO Forum under the supervision of the club, assures Mr. Hossain on behalf of the club.*

*"Being the president of the club I have done work for the improvement of WatSan situation and health and hygiene status, which has directly or indirectly impacted on households' economy as household expenditure on some specific items have been reduced. The club will be more active and vocal for the sustainability of the achievements and technologies as well", Mr. Hossain expresses his pledge.*

## **Sustainability of the Achievements**

In case of sustainability the community people have now been standing on the realization that they have achieved a tremendous result in the coverage of safe water and hygienic sanitation, and now it is their responsibility to continue with the safe WatSan facilities. Alongside the WatSan coverage the achievements of health and hygiene status have been significantly increased in both the villages. In the baseline survey two main problems like water and sanitation were identified in the villages and both the villages were identified as unserved in terms of safe WatSan facilities. The identified sanitation situation was found severely despicable in Kalabaria in respect to water supply, whereas water supply problem was acute in Mathabhanga village. Now both the villages are covered with safe water & sanitation facilities and the concern is to make the achievement sustained. The issue of sustainability is defined in two terms, sustainability of technology and sustainability of hygiene practices. The sustainability of achievements depend on the practices of hygiene behaviour and realization of needs for making linkages with WatSan and health status including the sustainability of technologies in terms of operation and maintenance status. In Community-managed WatSan Programme implementation various kinds of hardware supports have been provided in both the villages. Various kinds of water technologies e.g. Ring-well, Arsenic-iron Removal Plant (AIRP), Rain-water Harvesting System, Deep Set Pump etc. and sanitary latrines have been provided to both the villages. The technologies provided in both the villages are appropriate in respect to the geophysical condition and affordability as well. The villagers have not faced any problem in owning the water supply technologies in their respective village sharing a very

minimum cost. The operation and maintenance of water technologies are satisfactory. Trained caretakers from the users group have been involved in caretaking of the technologies.

### ***Caretaking Community Asset***

*Mowlovi Mohammad Mohsin, 60 years old, is the caretaker of the ring well set-up with assistance from NGO Forum and SHED at his courtyard involving other beneficiaries of 20 households. Before installation of the ring-well there was a dug-well at his courtyard, in which water remained available for a maximum of four to five months. Through the rest of the months they had to collect water from springs located in the hill. To solve the crisis of water Mr. Mohsin and his neighbours decided to install a ring-well as solution of the problem of drinking water of those households. It is to be mentioned here that the settlement is very scattered and land formation is rough in the village. Mr. Mohsin says, "The collection of drinking water happened to be a very hard and laborious job for women, because mostly, they had to collect water from springs and canals. But now a permanent safe water source is at my courtyard, it is my responsibility to protect and maintain that with care. The community people have selected me as caretaker for this water technology and NGO Forum has trained me as a caretaker of the ring-well. They also have provided me a toolkit for maintenance and repairing. Now I am capable to repair any minor problem".*

*Mr. Mohsin says, "We the people of such disperse and inaccessible villages were habituated to drink water from the general sources like springs and canals and also habituated in defecation in jungle and bushes from the immemorial time. We did not have any idea about water technologies that has recently been used and we did not know about negative impact of drinking water from canals and springs. Now the information about drinking unsafe water and scattered defecation and its relation with health status and health expenditure has been reached to the villagers of Mathabhanga. Now we know by drinking safe water and avoiding open defecation we can save our lives and can reduce the expenditure for health. By knowing all these messages and specially as a caretaker of the ring well, I cannot ignore my responsibilities and neglect my duties assigned by neighbours and the providers of the technology. NGO Forum and SHED are outsiders, but they have been giving hard effort for the improvement of the situation of the village. In response we should honour them and perform our duties to the point. "He adds, "I am committed to maintain the ring well by any means and through these services I am serving the people. NGO Forum and the community people have created an opportunity for me to serve the people by staying at home. The ring-well has been considered life-saving and convenient water technology by people. Taking proper care of the technology is therefore my utmost duty".*

*He also expresses his satisfaction that initially it was thought that it would be very difficult to change long traditional habits, but people have been able to achieve the primary objectives and could set a milestone. If people have become habituated with good things by giving up a bad one, they can not go back to bad one again. Same thing has happened in the case of water and sanitation programme in the village especially in the case of water supply technologies. People have become convinced of the benefits and therefore it is expected that they will stick to it. Even though Mr. Mohsin is not getting any financial benefits from taking care of the ring-well he feels that he along with his neighbours own the technology and by taking care of it for people's cause his ownership is reinforced and he feels the self-satisfaction over the responsibility he is carrying. "I shall carry on this responsibility in the days ahead and serve people", says dedicated Mohsin.*

Various promotional activities have been conducted to make the community aware about the importance of and accomplish bringing in 100% safe WatSan coverage and subsequently to raise the hygiene behaviour to a significant mark in the community. The processes of

implementation of such comprehensive activity have created an immense impact in relation to health and hygiene promotion based on safe water supply and sanitation coverage in Kalabaria and Mathabhanga villages. Among the implemented activities participatory need assessment, Courtyard Meeting, School WatSan Programme, Community Meetings, etc. have been mentioned by the villagers repeatedly as the most useful ones. The villagers also have expressed themselves about the effectiveness of promotional activities with specific impacts that Courtyard Meetings have changed the hygiene habits of children and women. School WatSan Programmes have impacted on the schoolboys and girls in changing their habit and have mobilized them working as change agents in their community. These promotional activities have been conducted with the aid of various communication materials like Posters on Safe Water, Environmental Sanitation, Personal Hygiene, and colourful Stickers, Leaflets, Flip-charts, etc. which have played an effective role in creation of needs and helped to increase the hygiene practice among the community people. In both the villages, people have reported that these materials have met the objectives of its own. Especially in remote areas it has tremendous impact on illiterate people as well as other section of people including children and adolescents. Such programmes have important and effective role in achieving the target of the programme and now the villagers are aware and motivated enough to continue their hygiene practice based on safe WatSan facilities.

With conduction of the promotional activities various community groups have become aware and oriented on the importance and mechanism of safe WatSan programmes. It becomes evident from the statement of a VDC chairman, "We have achieved the capacity of designing and implementing such a programme, we have learnt ins and outs of this programme planning strategy, understood to handle the bad elements of society, learnt about the positive forces on steering of implementation, monitoring mechanism with community representatives and finally they have made the programme success". Such expertise and confidence of community people can help to sustain WatSan programme at the community level.

Samia Begum a young woman says, "Initially we thought that it is a programme of YPSA, but after few day's of participation in few meetings I have come to realize that it is not the programme of YPSA, it is the programme of the villagers. We have actively been involved with the programme and participating in different motivational activities with our own initiatives". Ownership of the programme among the community has been created, and this is the key issue that is making the villagers endeavouring towards sustainability of the programme achievement.