

Serving the Unserved
Consolidation of WatSan Success in CHT

Volume-I
Thrust on Capacity Building

Foreword

by S.M.A. Rashid
Executive Director

It is well-tuned that establishment of the right to safe water, sanitation and proper hygiene practices can contribute to the development pace to a great extent. But Bangladesh has not yet been able to establish the right due to different drawbacks. Some particular areas of the country have been confronting the problems of lack of access and availability of safe water and sanitation facilities. The hilly areas i.e. the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have been facing the problem immensely. Adverse geo-physical characteristics, lack of awareness among the community people, scarcity of safe water sources and sanitation facilities and less attention from different corners have made the CHT remaining in almost unserved. And having many other challenges, it has appeared as a serious set back of achieving the basic development in the areas.

Considering the needs and priority of addressing WatSan and hygiene issues in the CHT and its mandate as the apex networking and service-delivery agency of CBOs, NGOs and PSOs working for promoting the WatSan sector in Bangladesh, NGO Forum designed and initiated implementing the Community-managed Water and Sanitation Programme in the CHT in January 2004. With support from the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), UK and the European Commission, NGO Forum has been implementing the Programme in partnership with 12 local NGOs which were evolved in the CHT areas following the Peace Accord of 1997.

With a view to addressing WatSan and hygiene issues in the CHT through providing continuous services to the people of the CHT areas, NGO Forum has concentrated building capacity of the partner NGOs while they have been found managing the WatSan services in the community. Based on local culture and customs different software services with emphasis on promotional activities have been carried out in a number of communities in the areas in order to mobilize people towards promotion of safe water supply and hygienic sanitation facilities as well as maintaining hygiene habits. Aiming at establishing the access to safe water facilities, a series of alternative technologies have been introduced in the unserved communities based on the geophysical characteristics of the areas, where the demand and priority of the target communities have been greatly reflected. So as to create sanitation facilities at the vicinity of the communities, Village Sanitation Centres (VSC) have been established in the working areas of the partner NGOs while the unserved community have been covered significantly.

The major three-fold initiatives of the programme have resulted in some remarkable successes and impacts. A reflection on the successes and outcomes of the programme has been illustrated in the trilogy- *Serving the Unserved*. Thanks to everybody who got involved in the process and took the pains in documenting the successes and making those published. I hope the potential readers who have been conferring to the WatSan sector in different manner will find the publication resourceful.

Acknowledgement

At the outset, the acknowledgement should go to the partner NGOs in the CHT who have been very keen to strengthen their capacity to implement the WatSan programme in the CHT. They have upheld the programme and carried out the activities at the community level with utmost sincerity and action. This has helped resulting in some remarkable successes of implementing the Community-managed Water and Sanitation Programme in CHT. Their tremendous and valued efforts are really praiseworthy.

Our grateful thanks go to the staffs of the partner NGOs especially of Parbattya Bouddha Mission (PBM), and Human Resources Development Organization (HRDO) of Khagrachhari; Progressive, Social Advancement Society (SAS), and Ashroy Angon of Rangamati; and Tah Zing Dong, and Bolipara Nari Kallyan Samity (BNKS) of Bandarban for their extended hands in conducting the study in their working villages.

The villagers who have played their role as the key informants have contributed a lot to the study. Without their cooperation, the publication would not come true. It is our great pleasure to pay our thanks to them for their great hospitality.

We recognize the extended hand of the CHT Unit Office of NGO Forum in Rangamati for their continuous assistance in conducting the study.

Thanks to our colleagues who have helped us leading the study outputs to the published form.

The Authors

1. Background

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), the south-eastern part of Bangladesh, differs from rest of the country both in physical characteristics and population. There are twelve ethnic communities in the area, each have their own distinct culture, religion and language. The British rulers annexed the area in 1860 and gave the area a special status acknowledging the distinct identity of the indigenous population. Construction of the Kaptai Dam displacing one-fifth of the indigenous population and abolishing the special status of the area during Pakistan rule, refusal of getting constitutional recognition as separate identity of the indigenous people in CHT after the independence of Bangladesh, resulted in conflict and alienation between the Bangalee majority in the plains and the indigenous people in CHT. The people of CHT areas were deprived of the basic services. The rights to the basic facilities and entitlements were scarcely ensured there.

Traditional *Jhum* cultivation is the main source of bread of the hilly people. It is evident that they seek no help of others for ensuring their food security. But their right to food security and shelter faceted difficulties time to time due to the invasion of the Bangalee settlers. Education and health facilities did not touch the indigenous people especially of the remote hilly communities. Development initiatives like developing transportation and communication facilities, electrification and other development indicators were ignored. In order to minimize the bad impacts of the interventions, tensions and disputes, a series of negotiations took place between indigenous leaders and successive governments of Bangladesh. After traveling a long process, Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, 1997 was signed.

The Peace Accord made a space for initiating development activities in the hilly areas. Along with government agencies, a many of national and international NGOs have stepped there to complement government as well as creating the space of working of their own for the people in the CHT. Some local NGOs also have evolved to accelerate the process aiming at developing their communities utilizing their own capacities and potentials.

Like many other drawbacks, the scarcity of safe water and lack of sanitation facilities have been hindering the development process in the CHT. The people have very limited sources of safe water. Their perceptions about safe water, ability to create safe sources, government's attention to the scarcity, geo-physical barriers i.e. rocky soil texture in ground and so on have kept people within the situation. The sanitation and hygiene situation is also very poor resulting in the pitiable health situation. After signing the Peace Accord, some NGOs have paid attention to the issues and started intervening with a view to making people aware about safe water, sanitation and hygiene practices, sensitizing the relevant stakeholders and identifying and demonstrating suitable alternative sources of safe water and creating sanitation facilities.

2. Development Initiatives in CHT

Following the CHT Peace Accord of 1997, both government and NGOs stepped there with some development initiatives in order to ensure the establishment of peace, settlement of the hilly people and taking the indigenous people on the development route. Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, Hill Tracts Development Board, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Land Commission were formed to effect the Peace Accord and initiate the development activities. Under the supervision of the agencies, immunization campaign in the most inaccessible areas was launched. Providing polio vaccine to the children and tetanus injection to the pregnant women and rendering medical assistance to the people from different ailments were begun. The Hill Tracts Development Board started running some residential schools in the hill

districts to spread education among the ethnic minorities. National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) identified the environmental areas to protect environment in CHT. It identified the issues like deforestation, extinction of wildlife, “unplanned” *Jhum* (slash and burn) cultivation, scarcity of safe water and sanitation, malaria and other health hazards, agricultural and employment problems caused by high water level in Kaptai Lake, hill cutting and land erosion as the major consensus in relation to environment conservation.

Asian Development Bank (ADB), German Embassy, International Development Agency, World Bank, UNDP and many other international development agencies have been supporting government and NGOs in accelerating socio-economic development in the CHT. The Water Development Board (WDB), Hill Tracts Development Board, the Hill District Councils have been implementing a number of projects.

3. Development of NGOs in CHT

After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, some voluntary organizations and various type of NGOs were formed to complement the government in rebuilding the war-devastated country, and soon after, they started working for socio-economic development of the country. They started working all over the country except CHT areas. The Peace Accord created a scope of working in CHT for the NGOs. Some national NGOs stepped there to initiate development activities. A number of local NGOs based in CHT and developed by the indigenous volunteers and development visionaries came to the field with a view to changing the socio-economic condition of the indigenous people. After the treaty the donors were sensitized to support to the development programmes in the CHT.

At the very beginning, most of the newly established NGOs in the CHT started working to establish the rights of the indigenous people. The people who took shelter in the refugee camp in India during the turbulent situation got back to the CHT after signing the Accord. The local NGOs at first tried to uphold the right-based issues. The national NGOs initiated the programmes in CHT areas on empowering the indigenous people, health, education, income generating activities, tree plantation, gardening at homestead, water supply, sanitation, etc along with the government agencies and the newly established government institutions. The local NGOs adopted the programmes and started implementing jointly with government and national NGOs in partnership mode. The international development agencies also initiated their supports to the local NGOs in planning and implementing development programmes in the CHT.

4. Addressing WatSan Issues in CHT

From the time immemorial the people of the CHT were used to set up their abode on the hilltop or beside the hills. Availability of water for drinking and other household uses was the basic requirement of the reason behind setting up the abode in a particular place. Their localities were massed centering the issue of availability of water. Traditionally they collect water from the wells dug beside *Chhara*, *Jhiri*, *Khal* or rivers for drinking and using for other domestic chores. They strongly believed that the water of the sources is not harmful to their health. They never polluted the sources believing that *Jalodevis* (water goddess) would withdraw water from the sources if they pollute those. From the belief, they did not defecate beside or nearby the water bodies. Santosh Chakma (35), a villager of Bhaibonchhara Union under Khagrachhari district argues that now the natural water sources have been polluted in different ways. Increasing population, setting up abode here and there, dumping wastes into the water bodies, decreasing trend of rainfall, etc have been the causes of it. They can now hardly collect potable water from

the sources. The women need to wait countless minutes to collect necessary water from the wells. In rainy season, the wells go under water. Then they fall into severe water crisis.

The hilly people had no idea about safe water and sanitation or the necessity of those. They suffered a lot from water-borne diseases but did not have the idea about the causes. As a result, the demand for safe water options and sanitation facilities were never driven by the community people of the CHT. When the government tried to provide safe water options to all people over the country through hand-pumped shallow tube-wells, it was claimed that the hilly adverse characteristics hindered the process. Lalit C Chakma, Executive Director of Social Advancement Society (SAS) argues, “Government might have the allocation for providing support with alternative water technologies in the CHT. But the local government agencies did not always provide enough support to the community. On the other hand, the NGOs got allowed the scope of working there after signing the Accord. This is not sufficient period for them to contribute to safe water supply and sanitation sector within the period. Moreover, the NGOs also paid less attention to the sector”.

5. NGO Forum in CHT

Considering the safe water scarcity in CHT areas, adverse geo-physical condition, unlike condition for easy water technology installation, irregular terrain and scattered housing and living pattern, cultural and socio-economic situation among the indigenous community, very low sanitation coverage and minimal attention to the sector, NGO Forum has undertaken Community-managed Water and Sanitation Programme in the CHT. The Forum has been implementing the programme since January 2004 with a target to support the development of sustainable community-managed and community-owned water and sanitation programmes and strengthen the capacity of the local NGOs and member of the community groups in order to provide and maintain safe water supply and sanitation facilities and encourage behavioral change in hygiene practices in the underserved rural areas of the CHT. As the apex networking and service-delivery agency of the NGOs who are working for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene promotion all over the country, NGO Forum feels the necessity to address the issues in the CHT utilizing its specialized experiences and expertise.

In order to implement the Community-managed Water and Sanitation Programme in the CHT, NGO Forum has been maintaining partnership with 12 local NGOs. All the NGOs have been evolved in the hill districts within the CHT areas and started working in the areas targeting the disadvantaged indigenous communities. With technical and facilitation support from NGO Forum, the NGOs have been implementing the programmes in 72 poor communities in the CHT areas i.e. in Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban districts

6. The Partners in Place to Implement WatSan Programme

All of the local NGOs implementing the Community-managed Water and Sanitation Programme in the CHT in partnership with NGO Forum started working in the CHT areas after signing the Peace Accord. Some of them started working on some particular programmes with supports from national and international development organizations. Most of them failed to sustain the programme designed by their own. Some failed to get attention of the donor agencies. None of them had previous experiences of implementing community-managed water and sanitation programme. The partnership with NGO Forum in implementing water and sanitation programme in the CHT has capacitated them a lot in many dimensions.

Conceptualizing the WatSan issues

The partner NGOs are now intimately oriented to the issues relating to water and sanitation programme. They now have the perceptions over the concepts and viewpoints through training, sharing, meeting and the process of implementing the programmes. Newton Chakma, Programme Director of PBM (Parbattya Bouddha Mission), Khagrachhari upholds, “The partnership with NGO Forum and the adoption of community-managed approach have changed our ideas that without building effective awareness among the community on safe water and sanitation, technological support would not yield desired results”. Durbadal Chakma, Programme Director of HRDO (Human Resources Development Organization), Khagrachhari expresses, “We gathered the ideas on the thematic issues of WatSan programme through training, sharing, review meeting and so on with NGO Forum”. Lalit C Chakma, Executive Director of Social Advancement Society (SAS), Rangamati says that the programme has helped them creating the ideas to make the interventions effective in community. “We had no idea about the issues like people’s participation, ownership, empowerment of women, etc. The programme gave us the views”, says Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya, Executive Director of Ashroy Angon, Rangamati. Aung Shwe Sing, Executive Director of Tah Zing Dong, Bandarban informs that the staff of Tah Zing Dong have extracted the basic ideas about the water and sanitation programme as well as other development programmes through implementing this Community-managed Water and Sanitation Programme.

Integrating hardware with software

Combination of hardware and software services in WatSan programme always yield effective results. This is now well-tuned among the small NGOs in the CHT. Newton Chakma of PBM says, “Technological support is not enough to create positive changes in improving public health through providing water and sanitation services without blending it with software services. We need to motivate people first saying that drinking and using safe water and sanitary latrine and hygiene practices can reduce diseases and expenditure for treatment of diseases”. The NGOs can now understand that mobilization of the community towards changing long-drawn-out practices is the difficult job. They also strongly believe that without making people believed that safe water, sanitation and hygiene practices are essential for keeping health well, providing hardware services is meaningless. Lalit C Chakma of SAS argues that government used to install water technologies in the community and provide sanitation materials to the people through Union Parishad without orienting them about the necessity of those. “The intervention resulted nothing. Software services through promotional activities should be provided first before providing hardware services”, he opines.

Designing WatSan programme

The partner NGOs have learned how to design WatSan programme from the process of implementing the programme with technical support from NGO Forum. Durbadal Chakma of HRDO expresses, “We are well-oriented to the thematic issues of water and sanitation and have the practical experiences to design the programme at community level”. Newton Chakma of PBM mentions, “We had the experience on providing hardware support only to the community and now we can now realize the necessity of providing software services for creating effective community mobilization. The hilly homesteads are scattered from one another. If we target to address 20/30 families in a package, it would not yield good result. We have the idea now how to design the programmes to reach the people with effective solutions”. Lalit C Chakma of SAS says that his organization learned some lessons from the process of implementing the

programme. “We are now able to design water and sanitation programme. Community management, community ownership, people’s participation, empowerment of women, ensuring the quality of inputs everything would be emphasized while we will be designing any programmes in future”, Lalit expresses. Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya of Ashroy Angon informs that they were not even able to write a report. “The experience of implementing water and sanitation programme in partnership with NGO Forum has changed our organization significantly. We can now design and implement any programme. Some donors already have supported us observing our capacity and potentiality in implementing the programmes”, he expresses.

Building organizational capacity

Newton Chakma of PBM says that training from NGO Forum has capacitated his organization to great extent to implement water and sanitation programme. “The staff of PBM participate in every training programme provided by NGO Forum. We have water and sanitation programme supported by other donors. We are utilizing the ideas learned in the training in the programmes let alone in other programmes”, he mentions. Durbadal Chakma of HRDO says, “Training, sharing, review meeting and cooperation with NGO Forum have capacitated our organization. We also learn from the meeting with community allies and consider those as the elements of capacity building”. Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya of Ashroy Angon expresses, “We had no capacity on how to run an organization, how to mobilize community, how to write report and how to manage office, staff and accounts. We had a micro-credit programme but failed due to lack of expertise. We encourage our staff to be involved in the programme. Some received all types of training that NGO Forum provided. Training and experiences of conducting the programmes in community have built capacity of our staff. We have been successfully implementing some others projects”. Aung Shwe Sing of Tah Zing Dong mentions that commitment and close contact to the programmes by all staff have capacitated their organization. “Proper perception about development programmes has been attained through training and conducting the activities in the field. The process has helped us to build up our organizational capacity”, he says.

Case-1

Ashroy Angon can now shelter many projects at its compound

“After the establishment of Ashroy Angon in 1997, we started a micro credit-programme in some villages with a view to alleviating poverty among the poor people of the CHT. We also introduced awareness programme on health among the people who received micro credit. In 2001, we were bound to wind up the programmes. Because we did not have sufficient funds for running it”. Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya, Executive Director of Ashroy Angon informs.

Ashroy Angon is a local NGO that was evolved in Baroichhari under Kaptai Upazila in Rangamati district with a view to working for the disadvantaged poor people of the CHT. The organization made partnership with NGO Forum in 2004. It has been implementing the programme in 10 villages/paras in Gilachhara and Gaindhya Unions under Rajasthali Upazila in Rangamati district targeting 1,384 people of 272 households who did not have safe water and sanitation facilities or proper knowledge and practices about hygiene measures before. With capacity building and technical support from NGO Forum, Ashroy Angon has been conducting various software services to build awareness among the people as well as the hardware services to create people’s access to safe water and sanitation facilities.

“We did not have any type of capacity to run any programme. The partnership with NGO Forum has opened a window for us to take the opportunities of enhancing our skills. We did not have the capacity even to write a quality report. We did not know how to run an office efficiently, how to manage tasks and how to monitor the activities. Our staff have received training from NGO Forum on community mobilization, accounts management, organizational management, TOT, cultural programme, etc to implement the water and sanitation programme in the target communities. The trainings have also gave the ideas about how to organize programmes in community, how to approach the community people, how to disseminate the messages and so on”, Prokriti informs.

Nanda Dulal Barua, Director of Ashroy Angon informs that they did not have systematic order of writing report, preparing bill, voucher, etc. “We at present regularly maintain it. Our staff have had sluggishness before in conducting community programmes. The trainings of NGO Forum helped them a lot to overcome the situation. They are now master in organizing and conducting the programmes in community. The community people are now well aware of safe water, sanitation and hygiene and they have received the messages very positively. We justify it observing their practices”, Nanda says.

Ashroy Angon has provided some hardware supports to the target community to make access to safe water sources. It also has been running a Village Sanitation Centre (VSC) to give people the opportunities to create access to sanitary latrines. “We are now capable to enlarge the VSC in future to create more sanitation coverage in CHT, says Prokriti. He also informs that they did not have any programme from 2001 and up to the partnership with NGO Forum. “The partnership with NGO Forum, experiences of implementing water and sanitation programmes in community and our changed approach to the donors have become valuable to convince them towards providing their supports to us for other programmes. BRAC, Helen Keller International and UNDP have started providing supports to us considering our experiences. We have been successfully implementing their programmes and yielding effective outcomes”, Prokriti informs.

Although a provision of engaging only one Community Mobilizer in the programme from Ashroy Angon, all staff including the Executive Director have given their inputs to the programme. Prokriti expresses that they had taken the programme of their own.

Mobilizing the community

The partner NGOs have been successfully mobilizing the community in their working villages towards using safe water, sanitary latrines and maintaining hygiene practices. The promotional messages have been being disseminated among every member of the community. They are now capable in following techniques of mobilizing the community people effectively. They first create close contact with the influential people in the community like UP member, community leaders i.e. Headman, *Karbari*, religious leaders, school teacher, village doctor and so on. They treat the persons as community allies and utilize their influences in mobilizing target people towards using safe water, sanitary latrines and maintaining hygiene practices. Nanda Dulal Barua, Director of Ashroy Angon mentions that their staff have learned the techniques of community mobilization from the programme. “We have been utilizing the experiences and lessons also in other projects. And we can now easily motivate people towards believing the messages and taking those in practices”, he says. The partner NGOs use the techniques of organizing and conducting courtyard meeting, community meeting, household visit, rally-miking, etc to mobilize the community. They found the use of IEC and BCC materials, film show and popular theatre effective in this regard.

Managing the programme by the community

The partner NGOs have received the community-managed approach very positively since they have found that this approach can strengthen the community-feeling among the people. “The approach can effectively create ownership-feeling among the community people”, expresses Lalit C Chakma of SAS. He argues that if the programme is not made community-owned and community-managed, the outcomes would not sustain in the community after winding up the project. Tilok Jyoti Chakma of PBM informs about their observation that the community-managed water technologies have been encouraging people living in a place permanently since they can now find water facilities established in their community. The other partner NGOs also opine for the necessity of community-managed WatSan programme while they expresses that they have already started to adopt the approach in other projects.

Ensuring community participation

The community mobilizers of the partner NGOs give due emphasis on the participation of the community people in the process of implementing the programme in their community. They utilize the influence of the community allies making close ties with them in organizing the community mobilizing events. They have come to understand that without ensuring community participation and creating ownership feeling among the community people, the outcomes of the programme would not sustain. Hence, they ensure the participation of the poor and women in the meetings, process of formation of Village Development Groups (VDG), selection of places and suitable alternative technologies, sharing the cost for the technologies, etc. The active participation of the community people in the process has made the feeling of ownership on the technologies among the community people.

Establishing right to safe WatSan facilities

Durbadal Chakma of HRDO expresses boldly that access to safe water and sanitation is the basic human right. “As a development organization we uphold it and disseminate the message to the community people”, he says. Suman Chakma (35), a villager of Bhaibonchhara Union under Khagrachhari district says, “We did not know that getting water and sanitation facilities is our right. HRDO has helped us learning it”. Tilok Jyoti Chakma of PBM says, “We have made people known to their right to water and sanitation. That is why they can now raise their demand for alternative technological support”. Like Durbadal, all other partner NGOs believe that government should provide the necessary services to the people in the CHT. They should find the priority since they have been deprived of the services for many decades. They have been committed to sensitize concerned stakeholders on providing the services to the disadvantaged indigenous people. Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya of Ashroy Angon mentions that they had included water and sanitation programme in a project (Community Empowerment Project) funded by UNDP under its CHT Development Facilities Programme considering its priority.

Empowering the women through WatSan

The partner NGOs emphasize on ensuring participation of women in the programme since water, sanitation and hygiene are the prime concerns of women. They, therefore, always try to ensure more than fifty percent presence and active participation of women in VDG meetings and other promotional activities. They train up one woman out of two caretakers on O&M of the alternative technologies. Their opinions are considered first in selecting the place of installation

and type of alternative technologies. Lalit C Chakma of SAS argues that water and sanitation are the appropriate areas by which women can be empowered in their communities since these are their everyday's concerns and they are the mainstream beneficiaries in the field of WatSan.

Environment conservation through WatSan intervention

Water and sanitation facilities can help protecting the environment. The partner NGOs strongly support the statement. Newton Chakma of PBM explains that open defecation can pollute water sources and environment. Unsafe water is the serious cause of diarrhoea, dysentery and many other vector-borne diseases. In the CHT among the indigenous community people, the diseases are high. On the other hand, they defecate in open places. Thus it causes harm to the environment and health of people. The partner NGOs are now aware of this concern, and disseminate the messages among the community people in their working villages with a view to ensuring environmental sustainability.

Contributing to poverty reduction through WatSan intervention

Lalit C Chakma of SAS says, "There is a strong link between health and poverty. Ill health can reduce the productivity and income of a person. Good health is the precondition of good productivity. The lack of safe water and sanitation causes water-borne diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery, jaundice, etc, and it leads to ill health and low productivity of a person. Provision of safe water and sanitation services can reduce the concentration of the diseases and help people keeping good health. Water and sanitation programme thus can contribute to poverty alleviation process". Newton Chakma of PBM explains it in different way. He argues that the hilly people collect water everyday from *Chhara*, well and *Khal* spending a lot of time and energy. If the safe water sources were installed nearby, both time and energy would be saved. The time and energy can be utilized in other productive activities. The partner NGOs try to make the community people understood about the links while they have been conducting different promotional activities.

Addressing geo-physical and cultural bottlenecks

Aung Shwe Sing of Tah Zing Dong says that mobilizing the community towards changing the behavioral pattern is very difficult in the perspectives of CHT. The hilly people are accustomed with their beliefs and practices of hundred years. It is always difficult to bring about the changes in their behavioral pattern. "But we try in different ways and succeed", says Aung. Rehana Chakma, Community Mobilizer of PBM says that they sometimes seem failed in mobilizing people to receive the messages. They then convince the influential people of the communities to utilize their influences. Besides the messages, they cite practical examples to make their sense. Considering the working hours of the indigenous people, they meet people at their convenient time. Lalit C Chakma of SAS mentions that hilly characteristic is the major obstacle to addressing the water and sanitation issues. Forests have been depleted. The natural water bodies have been dead due to adverse interventions. The requirement for containing natural flows of water is getting absent. On the other hand, easy technologies are not feasible in the areas due to the rocky soil texture in the ground. Considering the reality, they always keep in mind the cultural bottlenecks and mobilize the community adopting different promotional activities with the cooperation of community allies. Bearing in mind the geo-physical characteristics, they have been promoting the feasible technologies like Ring-well, Rain-water Harvesting System (RWHS) and advocating for promoting Spring Water Capping, Gravity Flow System and so on.

Case-2**Executive Director for executing directions with commitment**

Aung Shwe Sing (Mong Rea) is the Executive Director of Tah Zing Dong (TZD). TZD is a local NGO emerged in Bandarban in 1999 with a vision of working for the poor disadvantaged indigenous people of the CHT. The organization has made partnership with NGO Forum in 2004 to implement Community-managed Water and Sanitation Programme in some villages of Bandarban district. Under the programme, TZD has been working in six villages of Rajbila Union under Bandarban Sadar Upazila for mobilizing people towards using safe water, sanitary latrines and maintaining hygiene measures and for creating access to safe water facilities. TZD has made partnership with NGO Forum to implement the programme considering the safe water crisis and untouched sanitation facilities in the hilly hard-to-reach localities. “We did not think of getting economic supports, rather from our development view of working for the indigenous communities to provide safe water and sanitation services, we made the partnership”, expresses Aung.

Before the partnership, the staff of TZD were very new in conducting the activities of water and sanitation programme. For building the capacity of the staff of his organization, Aung has always encouraged them to receive training from NGO Forum. He ensured them receiving training on programme management, organizational management, accounts management, field and event management, conduction of events, community mobilization, etc. “The purpose of the encouragement is to build up the capacity of the staff as well as TZD so that they can assist the programme effectively and give inputs to other programmes in future”, Aung says. Aung always gets involved in the programme and encourages other staff to be involved in it with a view to implementing the programme successfully to create expected results. “It is now our organizational programme. We have taken it as a challenge and with our commitment we must make it likely to create awareness among the community about safe water, sanitation and hygiene and access to safe water and sanitation facilities. We have to make it a success”, Aung expresses.

Aung feels proud of having partnership with NGO Forum since his organization has been receiving the basic views of development and techniques of designing and conducting activities at community level. “We fell that we have been working on water and sanitation with a small support but doing a great work through the programme”, expresses Aung.

Using IEC and BCC materials in WatSan promotion

Shanti Moni Chakma (33), a UP member of Ghagra Union under Kawkhali Upazila in Rangamati district says that people understand the pictures and the messages of the posters those are shown to the people. And people also receive the messages from the films and theatres that Progressive arranges in community. Pakhi Tanchangya (45), a villager of Ghagra Union under Kawkhali Upazila in Rangamati district informs that she understands the meaning of the pictures of the posters but does not read because of her illiteracy. “The pictures are interesting and I learn how to use latrine and what should be done to keep health well”, she expresses. Rehana Chakma of PBM says that they always make people understood the pictures and messages so that they can be influenced to understand the necessity of safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Observing the outcomes of using IEC and BCC materials in mobilizing the community, all partner NGOs have come to the understanding that using IEC and BCC materials can play an effective role in mobilizing the community. Lalit C Chakma of SAS expresses that the messages and pictures of the IEC and BCC materials we are using in the field are appropriate. “We have made people able

to understand the messages. Absorbing the learning we have also made posters for some other projects”, he says.

Selecting suitable technological option

The partner NGOs understand that suitable alternative technologies should be introduced in the community. In the selection process, the need and priority of the community along with their acceptance should be taken into prime consideration. Aung Shwe Sing of TZD argues that much pressure on a technology can be an obstacle to sustainability of a technology. His observation is that ring-wells sometimes cannot lift as much water as the community demands. “Therefore, more supports can minimize the pressure and maximize the sustainability of the technologies”, he argues. He also opines for household-based RWHS since they observe that community prefers it.

Rehana Chakma of PBM says that most of the target people are too poor to buy quality ring and slabs for making hygienic latrines. They are suggested to make a hole beside their home. A slab or wooden frame is suggested to make to cover the hole leaving a tiny hole. The tiny hole is also suggested to cover after defecation. But they usually suggest people to use concrete rings and slab in constructing sanitary latrines. Every partner NGO has established Village Sanitation Centre (VSC) in their working areas to accelerate the process of increasing sanitation coverage in hilly areas. Mahir Uddin (38), a mason working in a VSC of Progressive in Rangamati informs that he can sell 20-30 sets of latrines every month. The indigenous people buy the sets. Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya of Ashroy Angon expresses that they will enlarge the VSC in future to spread the sanitation coverage even outside of their working areas.

Building capacity of programme personnel

Training, attending in meeting, sharing, reporting and involving in organizing programme in the field are the techniques of building capacity of the staffs of the partner NGOs. Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya of Ashroy Angon says that he always encourages his staffs to receive training from NGO Forum and get involved in the process of implementation of the project in the field. “Now all of my staffs are capacitated. They are giving inputs to other projects utilizing the experiences and learnings”, he says. Newton Chakma of PBM says, “PBM never misses any training programme offered by NGO Forum. 3 staffs of PBM always participate in the training programmes. Rehana Chakma is the programme staff. She has been good enough to perform her duty effectively. Tilok Jyoti Chakma also has received training on various themes and he can now give resourceful inputs to many programmes of the organization”. Durbadal Chakma of HRDO says, “Besides training, our staffs have been enriched with knowledge and experiences through attending sharing meeting, review meeting, collaborative meeting with stakeholders, journalists and even also with community allies”.

Case-3

Coordinator can now bring many programmes together

Tilok Jyoti Chakma (32) had been working as Coordinator-Credit Programme in Parbattya Bouddha Mission (PBM), Khagrachhari. One day he was given a new duty under the Community-managed Water and Sanitation Programme. Community Mobilizer (CM) of the Programme Rehana Chakma had been working for the programme in the field. She needed guidance, support to organizing programme at the field. Tilok accepted the assignment. But he had no idea about the programme. He participated in the training programmes organized by

NGO Forum thereafter. He learned about safe water, sanitation, hygiene, health, community-managed WatSan programme, PRA, TOT, etc.

“Participating in the training programmes, I can successfully guide the CM and give the directions in organizing fields and implementing the programmes. I get the feedbacks from the CM. If found any problem or gap, I help her identifying those and give necessary directions”, he says. Tilok usually visits the fields every month and other times if needed. He sometimes helps organizing programmes in the field when the CM feels like. “Sometimes I contact to the community allies like UP chairman/members, headman/karbari and other influential persons in the community to utilize their influences in raising awareness among the community people on safe water, sanitation and hygiene. It would be difficult if I tried to guide her without getting the ideas through training”, says Tilok.

Tilok did not realize that access to safe water and sanitation is the right of people. He has learned it from NGO Forum. He then suggested the CM to disseminate the message among the people in community who have been deprived of their right. “The BCC and IEC materials have helped us making the people understood the necessity and the model of safe water sources and sanitary latrines. The promotional films, drama have also helped people understanding about the messages”, Tilok says.

Tilok has helped the community to raise appropriate demand and getting the technologies and installing in the way as such they demanded. “I got the training on it and that is why it has been possible for me to guide the whole process”, says Tilok. “I sometimes also facilitate school WatSan session and community meeting. The students and the people always receive the messages with positive attitudes and it gives me much pleasure”, Tilok expresses.

Addressing demand, needs and priorities

Amitav Tripura, Chairman of the Ganchban School Managing Committee informs that the CM of HRDO first tried to raise the demand and priority of the community for water technology. They demanded for ring-well and contributed 10% of the cost, most of which was met up by their labours. HRDO installed the technology where the community i.e. the VDG selected the site. Aung Shwe Sing of TZD says that they have selected the working villages in remote and hard-to-reach areas considering the extreme needs of the community. Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya of Ashroy Angon says, “When we find that our effort is not sufficient to cover every family with safe water options in our working villages and see water crisis in other villages, we create an option of installing 6 ring-wells in the villages under a UNDP funded project. We have considered the needs and priority of the people”.

Monitoring the quality

Newton Chakma of PBM says that he regularly follows-up the programmes. He considers the presence and spontaneous participation of the community people in the meetings as the indicator of measuring the acceptance of the messages and activities by the community people as well as the performance of the staff. His organization has assigned a person to monitor the tasks that the CM does in the field to ensure the quality of outputs. Durbadal Chakma of HRDO says that HRDO tries to ensure the effective outputs of the programme through ensuring strong coordination between office and working field. Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya of Ashroy Angon monitors the activities through ensuring the involvement of senior staff in most of the activities. Aung Shwe Sing of TZD emphasizes on taking the programme as of their own as well as of their organization. “If it happens, quality of outputs must be ensured”, he expresses.

Collaborating with the catalysts

The partner NGOs maintain collaboration with concerned government bodies, other NGOs, local allies, journalists and so on. Bhubanjit Karbari, a traditional community leader in Chowdhurypara of Ghagra Union under Kawkhali Upazila of Rangamati district informs that Progressive always lets him know about the activities and seeks his cooperation in organizing the events in his village. Priyolal Chakma, a UP member of Bhaibonchhara Union under Khagrachhari Sadar Upazila expresses that HRDO always maintains close contact with him, invites him in meetings and seeks suggestions and cooperation. Shantimoy Chakma, Rangamati Correspondent of *The Daily Star* expresses that the initiative of organizing field visit for the journalists by NGO Forum has helped the local journalists getting views about the programme and the local NGOs who are implementing it in the CHT. “They now contact with us, share the success, problems and look for cooperation”, he informs.

Newton Chakma of PBM says that they maintain collaboration with local DPHE. “DPHE sometimes visits our fields. We report about our regular activities to district and Upazila administration”, he mentions. Aung Shwe Sing of TZD says that they maintain collaboration with other NGOs to avoid duplication of implementing same programme in same areas. They regularly attend the meeting called by the district and upazila administration. Lalit C Chakma of SAS mentions that there was a collaborative body titled CHT-NGO Forum. “It appeared as a platform of maintaining collaboration among the local NGOs working in the CHT. But government has proscribed its existence. We are maintaining collaboration among us in different another form, and that is ensuring a significant success in the sector”, he talks about.

Planning for the future

Prokriti Ranjan Tanchangya of Ashroy Angon expresses his hope that they must run water and sanitation programme in their locality to spread the outputs of the programme in other areas in the CHT where water and sanitation services have not yet reached. Lalit C Chakma of SAS mentions that the experiences through implementing the programme would be useful in future to take the programme in other underserved areas. Durabadal Chakma of HRDO expresses that they have a plan to implement the programme in integrated approach in future. Newton Chakma of PBM talks about that it would take time to make the alternative technologies and the messages of sanitation and hygiene accepted and effective among the indigenous communities in the CHT. “Poor people cannot contribute to make their share. Considering the reality we must continue the programme”, he expresses. Aung Shwe Sing of TZD says that they will take initiative to sustain the outcomes of the programme in the programme villages and also continue implementation of the programme in other underserved villages in the CHT in future.

References:

1. Alam, Md. J. B. et al (2006) – Impact Assessment due to Rural Electrification in Hill Tracts in Bangladesh for Sustainable Development; International Journal of Environmental Science and Technology, Vol. 3, No. 4, Autumn 2006, Pp. 391-402
2. Arens, Jenneke and Chakma, Kirti Nishan (2002) - Bangladesh: Indigenous Struggle in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. <http://www.conflict-prevention.net/page.php>
3. Haque, Mahfuzul (2001) – Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh : Physical Environment; Chittagong Hill Tracts: State of Environment, FEJB, Dhaka, Pp. 45-58
4. Uddin, Muhammed Kamal (2006) - Rights of Indigenous People and Minority Issues in Bangladesh. www.ipra2006.com/papers/IPRC