

Propelling Participation

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NGO FORUM
For Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation

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Foreword

The long trodden path of NGO Forum is marked by its efforts to ensure safe, accessible, affordable water supply and sanitation facilities specially for the poor men, women and children of the unserved and underserved areas of Bangladesh. NGO Forum has been pursuing this goal with a multidimensional programmatic approach. To reach the grassroots with safe water supply and sanitation facilities NGO Forum has fine tuned between hardware and software services in line with the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation*.

NGO Forum is now providing its integrated support services in a community managed fashion, ensuring community participation. Alongside providing demand-responsive WatSan services to the community people, the Forum also undertakes advocacy, networking, information dissemination activities. NGO Forum undertakes different type of activities to identify and disseminate relevant information, lessons and best WatSan practices to a wider number of audiences. As a part of this the Forum undertook a study to assess the range of community participation in its WatSan programme. From 1999 onwards NGO Forum has been concentrating to implement its programmes extensively in selected unserved and underserved villages throughout the country with a view to ensuring 100% WatSan coverage in a wider area. The study scrutinizes the different aspects of the Community Managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum.

This scrutinization creates the scope to have a look into a number of success of the programme. As the programme ensures the participation of the community people in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and, in cost-sharing, the programme ultimately confirms the ownership of

its services to the community. The success of the programme therefore automatically goes to the community. NGO Forum shares in facilitation of the programme through its partners and helps making it successful and sustainable. Although the Community Managed WatSan Programme has the drawbacks of this approach seen to be very natural which has been explored through the study.

We reinforce our commitment to complement the implementation of the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation* by formulating innovative, need based and effective programme approaches We look forward to an uniformity between all relevant stakeholders in the sector to multiply an integrated efforts in participation of the community people to initiate a better WatSan tomorrow.

My thanks and gratitude go all the way to Mr. Ayub Ali, Demographic Analyst, NRECA International Ltd. and Mr. Md. Shahadat Hossain, Faculty Member, Department of Sociology, Dhaka University, for conducting this study with their all out dedication. I also give thanks to our partners, the community people, and all other stakeholders who have contributed in successful conduction of the study. Special thanks to my colleagues for their extending support and cooperation to make this publication successful.

I hope this Book will offer some striking features of the Community Managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum and serve the purpose of sharing important information on the successful WatSan practices, and hence prove to be useful to the stakeholders.

S.M.A. Rashid

Executive Director

NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation

Preface

NGO Forum's goal is to reach the safe water supply and sanitation facilities at the doorstep of the community people. The Forum believes that merely the commitment to reach the facilities to people is not enough, rather it is more important to ensure the sustainability of the achievements on changes of hygiene behaviour among people. Since community participation plays a vital role in ensuring sustainability and the success of the WatSan programme, hence the Forum implements the WatSan programme ensuring community participation and involving the community representatives in the overall management of the programme.

In the recent years NGO Forum has been implementing its WatSan programme in a Community Managed WatSan Village approach in the selected unserved and underserved villages through its partners. The Community Managed WatSan Village approach provides the scope to involve the people from all classes of the society including the community allies, religious leaders, and elected representatives of local government. Through institution building at the grassroots level NGO Forum intensifies its efforts to ensure participation of people in the WatSan programme. In the Community Managed WatSan Villages, NGO Forum through its partner NGOs and CBOs, forms a Village Development Committee (VDC) comprising of people from all section of society. This VDC is considered as a village level institution and acts as a spokesman of the community. The VDC is provided with necessary promotional programme support and involved in the decision-making process. The VDC takes active part in management of the WatSan programme at the village level and ensures participation of all classes of people by helping creating self-esteem and by demand creation.

The socio-econo-cultural factors influence people's participation. The social awareness and knowledge base about any development issue determines community participation in any development activity. Therefore the social aspects play an important role in increasing or decreasing the participation of people in the WatSan programme. The facilitation of Community Managed WatSan Programme helps reduce the perceptual difference of different class and section (male-female, rich-poor etc.) of society about the programme. The united efforts of social groups and different social factors sometimes influence in increasing the participation. The joint decisions through the meeting of Village Development Committee serve the community purpose which bears high significance to the community people leading to higher participation. As a result of participation the knowledge base and awareness increase leading to adopting hygiene practices in place of traditional and unhygienic practices.

The supply-driven programme sometimes creates the social conflict and jeopardises the cohesiveness among the community people raising the distribution issue. On the other hand the Community Managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum is demand-responsive. NGO Forum also follows a guideline to address the national policy objectives of sustainable WatSan promotion and hygiene practices through the strategies of cost-sharing by the community for water and sanitation technologies. The software activities of NGO Forum i.e. Training, Promotional Activities, Mass Awareness, Advocacy & Information services, distribution of IEC/BCC materials at the community level create a social mobilization and people become motivated, enlightened and take active part.

The community participation covers all aspects from decision-making to cost-sharing. It creates a sense of ownership over the programme among the community people. As a result the programme becomes sustainable and successful. Although community participation refers to cost-sharing by all recipients of WatSan services and facilities, it is found, however, that the poorest of the poor face some problems to participate in this criteria.

The community managed water and sanitation programme is designed to make the community active through different strategies and techniques that help make them aware and enable them to understand the reality through experiences. We hope to see our desired result of implementation of the Community Managed WatSan Programme and also hope that the success will sustain.

I express my heartfelt thanks to our valued facilitators for taking the pain to conduct the study which has made the publication of this Book possible. I acknowledge the hard labour of my colleagues behind the publication and express my gratitude to them.

I believe that, the potential readers will find this Book useful, informative and interesting.

Joseph Halder
December 2000

Executive Summary

NGO Forum has been implementing water and sanitation programme through its partners. It uses Community Managed WatSan Village approach for implementation of the WatSan programme. The organisation provides support to the most unserved and underserved villages focussing on WatSan programme implementation through community participation approach. To understand the level of community participation and its impact on the coverage of safe water use for all purposes and sanitary latrine use, the sustainability of achievements of the programme and over all changes in hygiene behaviour have been assessed. The social, economic, institutional and cultural issues need to be addressed with a view to consolidating the success of Community Managed WatSan Programme. The changes in the people's lives, people's perceptions, and practices of WatSan are important issues in this regard. The development of organisation at the community level and strengthening of the existing organisations, the capacity building of the community people, participation and mobility of women, self-confidence and changes of values on their relationship are substantial issues. The sustainability of people's institutions and the level of achievements are also measurable unit of success in relation to NGO Forum's WatSan programme approach. The sense of ownership of WatSan materials by the community people, their willingness and capacity to share the costs and attitude towards maintenance of the WatSan services are also the issues for the measurement of the success of Community Managed WatSan Programme.

The community participation has socio-economic dimensions, which is an important issue to consolidate the success of the WatSan programme. It has been felt that social, economic, institutional and cultural issues have a dominant and influential role in participation of both male and female persons. The participation of the community people varies in the context of existing social structure, social systems, culture and institutional arrangement of the society. However, the socio-economic and cultural factors have both positive and

negative implication in relation to participation of the community people. Therefore, the consolidation of the success has been made considering the role of those issues in the line of community participation in WatSan programme of NGO Forum. It has been found that the regional diversity and socio-cultural issues have substantially influenced the participation specially of the women participation.

Awareness building and social mobilization process of NGO Forum has substantially strengthened the issue of community participation. After selection of the villages different tools and techniques of participatory planning are used to assess the needs of the villages. This process has ensured the effective implementation of the WatSan programme in a community managed approach. Participation of various community groups has shaken the villagers to create demand of safe WatSan facilities. Through effective participation people have realized implication of using unsafe water and unhygienic latrine. The programme has been implemented mainly by the village development committees, which has ensured the participation of both male and female members of the community. The synergistic efforts of the villagers have also created the sense of self-monitoring system to sustain the targeted success of WatSan coverage and practices.

The Community Managed WatSan Programme has ensured establishing a new form of village based institution i.e. Village Development Committee (VDC). There are various type of orientation programmes for different sections of village people, which also play an important role in such institutional development and its capacity building. These village based institutions, VDCs, have been implementing the WatSan programme in association of the Forum's partner NGOs. They are also performing their role for social conflict resolutions and other social development activities. The VDC members have expressed themselves confidently that without external assistance they are capable to keep the institutions functional. The villagers' participation in a committee form has increased their self-confidence, efficiency in developing their own villages. In some exceptional cases VDCs are not that much

serious about participation of community people but in general they have achieved a tremendous success in institutionalization of VDC at the community level.

NGO Forum's Community Managed WatSan Programme has played a substantial role in changing people's attitude towards safe WatSan behaviour and practices. The community managed approach has ensured the sound health and safe environment by promoting sustainable hygiene behaviour. NGO Forum has established a demand-responsive WatSan programme approach consisting of both hardware and software supports. Alongside its hardware support the software services of NGO Forum help to mobilize people at various levels including policy-makers and policy-planners, implementers, religious leaders and other community groups. The Technical Skill Development Training courses are capacitating the community people for WatSan promotion. The active participation of the community people has made a tremendous improvement in the knowledge, attitude and practice of safe WatSan. Some indicators have proven this success as there is no bad smell in the village, no open or hanging latrine, people keep soap or ash in the latrine. It has been observed that using of slippers during toilet use has been increasing among both adult and children. Community people are becoming habituated to wash hands with soap before taking meal and after defecation. Open defecation has substantially decreased in the coverage villages. The people have gained knowledge about different alternative water technologies through participation in the Community Managed WatSan Programme. These reveal the changes of attitude and behaviour of the community people. But some people are yet to change their attitude and behaviour towards safe WatSan.

The Community Managed WatSan Programme has substantially contributed to the improvement of health condition of the people of the coverage villages. It has been observed that about 80 per cent incidences of water-borne diseases has been decreased due to safe water use in all domestic purposes and sanitary latrine use by all. The community people have also gained knowledge about health-

care. They can take immediate initiatives during incidence of diseases that has reduced the infant mortality rate. These reveal that the Community Managed WatSan Programme has effectively contributed on the improvement of the health situation of the community people.

The Community Managed WatSan Programme has been generating the employment and income generation opportunities for the villagers. The programme has been ensuring productive capacity of the community people by preventing them from diseases, which is substantially reducing the medical cost of the people. This is helping the community people to get relief from the vicious cycle of health hazard and poverty. From this realization, the community people is becoming more interested for participating in the WatSan programme. From the perspectives of capacity building the Skill Development Training courses have been creating the opportunity for partner NGO staffs. They are earning an extra income by conducting WatSan training courses for the staffs of other organizations, different community groups, and by getting better jobs in other organizations.

The community people, as the key actor of Community Managed WatSan Programme, have been involved in implementing the WatSan programme. The software services have been creating awareness on the necessity of water and sanitation technologies and its safe use. Through awareness raising the programme is becoming demand-responsive and increasing the willingness of the people to share the cost for the technologies. The findings reveal that most of the people are interested to share a certain percentage of the cost of water technology, and to buy the sanitary latrine at cost price. A very poor number of people are still out of coverage of the programme. On the other hand it has been observed that the poorest people cannot buy the sanitary latrine and also cannot share the cost for water technologies. In spite of such limitations the programme has created the sense of ownership among the community people who took active part in the water and sanitation programme facilitated by NGO Forum. The participation is increasing day by day and people are

encouraged to participate in this programme because of their willingness to have safe WatSan facilities of their own. The people have realized that the ownership and effective use of WatSan facilities cannot be ensured without cost-sharing. Cost-sharing has established their right and ownership over the WatSan facilities. The caretaker training on maintenance of the water technology has also made people aware about their ownership over the services.

The sustainability of achievements is the ultimate objective of NGO Forum's WatSan programme. Various types of awareness raising programmes of NGO Forum have created demand for safe WatSan technologies. The sustainability issue has been considered from the perspectives of permanent change in people's knowledge, attitude and practice of safe WatSan. In this regard NGO Forum has achieved a tremendous success in ensuring the sustainability of WatSan technology through providing Technical Skill Development Training on proper installation and maintenance to those. With the feasible hardware facilities almost all people of the coverage villages have achieved sufficient knowledge about WatSan and to keep them continuing with hygiene behaviour and practices. The Village Development Committee is becoming involved with other development activities alongside the WatSan programme, and with the active involvement of the VDCs the partner NGOs are ensuring the participation of each and every group of people, which also are helping to ensure the sustainability of the WatSan programme achievement through continuous monitoring and follow-up by the Village Development Committee.

Photo

Chapter - I

Community Managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum: An Overview

NGO Forum has been operating its water supply and sanitation programme with an objective of sound sanitation practices and safe water use for sound health and sustainable hygiene behavioural changes of the rural people following the community managed approach. The water supply and sanitation programme is implemented by the non-government organisations (NGO) as part of their socio-economic development and health programmes for the rural people. However, NGO Forum is the only organisation in Bangladesh which has been working as a non-government apex networking and service delivery agency in water supply and sanitation sector. It implements the programme through its partners. There are about 600 local, national and international non-government organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and private sector actors of Bangladesh working as the partners of NGO Forum. The Forum is patronising and promoting WatSan services and facilities by making those available, accessible, and acceptable to the community people through its partners. Alongside, it also provides management and capacity building support to the implementing agencies, capacitates community people through conduction of orientation & training, experience sharing and different promotional activities on water supply and sanitation. The programme is coordinated and facilitated through its 12 Regional Offices.

NGO Forum has its goal to reach the safe water supply and sanitation facilities at the doorstep of the rural people. It is not only committed to reach the facilities but also to ensure the safe

use and sustainability of the achievements on changes of hygiene behaviour irrespective of age structure, gender and social class of the society. NGO Forum believes that community participation is very important and determinant factor of sustainability of the WatSan programme and its success. As a result, it has been implementing a comprehensively designed programme on water supply and sanitation that contains integrated support of hardware and software.

NGO Forum has been implementing its water supply and sanitation programme in a Community Managed WatSan Village approach through its partner organisations. Most of the activities are conducted targeting the community participation in implementation, operation and involving them in maintenance of the supports for long-term use. NGO Forum also activates the community people in decision-making process. NGO Forum has been facilitating the WatSan activities by responding to the national urge and following the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation*.

NGO Forum's Community Managed WatSan Village approach has also created an opportunity to involve cross sectional people including the community allies, religious leaders, and elected representatives of local government. NGO Forum facilitates its partner organisations to implement the programme through forming a Village Development Committee (VDC), which is a process of democratisation of development regarding the programme implementation at the grassroots, i.e. handing over the responsibilities to the village-based institutions. The village level institution building process is, in some respect, a consequential way to ensure community participation. NGO Forum facilitates the partner organisations to form Village Development Committee as the village-based institutions and provide them with necessary

promotional programme support which sensitise the community people on the issues that helps to self- esteem them to create demand for safe WatSan facilities.

NGO Forum's Community Managed WatSan Village approach itself follows the participatory process in programme planning, implementation and monitoring. It integrates its participatory approach to the partner organisations' implementation process, which has an ethos of selecting the underserved or unserved village. With this objective the partner organisations conduct a baseline survey in few villages, from which they select the most unserved or underserved one for WatSan intervention. After the village selection the partner organisations conduct a participatory exercise, which delineates the existing status of water and sanitation, and identify the demand responsive supports to be provided by NGO Forum. Considering the problems and prospects in implementing the water supply and sanitation programme the partners prepare a WatSan plan for supporting the respective village by targeting cent percent coverage within the stipulated timeframe. NGO Forum reviews those plans as per the actual need in the village as well as the implementing strength and capacity of the respective partner, and approves the plans, and provides support to partner organisations for implementing the water supply and sanitation programme.

Hardware Support:

NGO Forum-provided hardware support consists of various type of water supply technologies like Deep-set Pump, Shallow Pump, Rain-water Harvesting System, Pond Sand Filter, Arsenic-Iron Removal Plant and Ring-well. These technologies are provided to the community people considering the geophysical variation. To respond to the feasibility and the successfulness of water technology in diversified geophysical

situation, NGO Forum has been providing the appropriate water supply technologies in different regions. In the low-water table areas the Deep-set Pump, in the shallow water table areas No.6 tubewell, in the coastal areas Rain-water Harvesting System and Pond Sand Filter have been proven as the effective technologies. The Ring-well, Arsenic-Iron Removal Plants and Arsenic Removal Bucket are the feasible technologies for the rocky soil texture, for areas with iron density in ground water, and for areas with arsenic contamination in the ground water table respectively. In response to the demand of people of different geophysical conditions, NGO Forum has been providing these technological supports to the community people through the partner organisations. Alongside the technological supports in water supply sector the Forum also provides support to the partner organisations to establish and run Village Sanitation Centre (VSC) to reach the low-cost sanitary latrine facilities to the community people. To increase the high quality support services and higher level of production, private latrine producers are also aided by the NGO Forum as its partners that contributes to the sanitation promotion as well as in building capacity of the WatSan private sector.

Photo

Software Support:

The optimum behavioural changes and positive impact on the public health are possible through the realisation by people that safe water and hygienic sanitation facilities are important human need. NGO Forum believes that this can be materialised by raising awareness and building capacity of the community people. NGO Forum's innovative software support package plays the effective role to capacitize the people and organisations by making them aware of the importance of personal hygiene and proper utilisation of WatSan facilities. To create social mobilisation NGO Forum also provides software support to its partners, training to the community people and partner organisations' staffs. To make a sustainable water and sanitation programme through community participation NGO Forum facilitates quality software programmes to mobilise people at various levels including policy-makers, implementers, religious leaders and community people. The software support also ensures capacity building of the partner organisations that confirms the participation of the people and leads the water supply and sanitation facilities towards a sustainable stage.

NGO Forum's Software Services consist of Advocacy and Information Services, Training, Promotional Activities and Development Communication. Under the Advocacy and Information Services the Forum maintains effective co-ordination among partner organisations and different stakeholders. It also formulates sectoral policy environment, need analysis, planning and management, and development assessment. NGO Forum maintains the collaboration with sectoral and trans-sectoral stakeholders, WatSan private sector, opinion leaders and mass-media at the national, regional and local levels for smooth operation of the programme and for achieving the targeted coverage. Alongside, printed and audio-

visual media, it also disseminates information through workshop, seminar, symposium and other information services among the targeted audience ranging from the policy planners to grassroots level.

NGO Forum's WatSan training package is consisted of Human Skill Development and Technical Skill Development courses, conducted for the implementers as well as the community people. The Human Skill Development courses are offered to the staffs of partner organisations to improve their basic knowledge and capacity on water supply and sanitation programme planning and management, to communicate with different stakeholders as well as community people, building

Photo

leaderships, promoting training to the community people and on monitoring and evaluation of the programme. This training facilities ultimately strengthens the capacity of the partner organisations, which plays an important role in increasing the participation of the community people in the safe WatSan promotion. The Technical Skill Development courses are offered to the community people to enhance their capacity to make them efficient and technically sound to handle the technical issues in the local level. The Technical Skill Development courses are facilitated on Low-Cost Latrine Production, Tubewell Sinking, Caretaker Training on Tubewell No.6, Arsenic-Iron Removal Plant, Rain-water Harvesting System and Pond Sand Filter. Participating in such Technical Skill Development Training courses the community people are getting expertise in the respective fields and creating opportunities to involve themselves in income generation. These training courses have also been ensuring the participation of the community people in the production of sanitary materials and maintenance of both water technologies and sanitation, and finally contributing to poverty alleviation.

The promotional activity package is an important component under software services of NGO Forum, which plays the key role in ensuring the community participation. The promotional activities are facilitated aiming to two broad objectives, i.e. capacity building of the partners and capacity building of the community allies. There are various type of awareness building activities under the promotional activity package, which are, Courtyard Meeting, Rally-Miking & Mobile Film Show and Observance of National and International Days etc. The capacity building of the local allies is ensured through conduction of School WatSan Programme and Religious Leaders' Orientation programmes. On the other hand the capacity building of the partners is confirmed through PNGO Staff Orientation, VDC Formation and Orientation and

facilitating effective collaboration with the WatSan private sector. Implementation of all these diversified promotional activities leads the water supply and sanitation programme to the success by ensuring effective participation of the community people.

Development Communication Services is one of the software components of NGO Forum under which various type of IEC & BCC materials are developed and distributed to help the conduction of the promotional activities with participation of different community groups who finally get involved in WatSan promotion. Under the development communication Services both printed and audio-visual materials are developed, which contribute to transfer knowledge for changing the attitudes and ensuring practices of safe WatSan of the grassroots people. The Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) materials also help to sensitise the community people towards gender sensitivity and create easy, instant and long lasting learning for ensuring participation of the community people in safe water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion.

Inter-Agency & Trans-sectoral Collaboration:

NGO Forum maintains an effective co-ordination and network with both the government and non-government sectoral and trans-sectoral organisations, which contributes directly or indirectly towards safe WatSan promotion. Under its networking banner NGO Forum maintains collaboration with the United Nations organisations, donors, national and international policy formulating bodies and other sectoral agencies including mass-media and policy advocacy organisations. Through sharing of experiences and success of the programme the new policy issues are identified and incorporated in the programme. Through its effective networking and collaboration at various level NGO Forum ensures community participation which finally creates an opportunity to build awareness for successful implementation of safe water supply and sanitation programme.

The hardware-software-mix programme support and inter-agency collaboration has enabled NGO Forum to design an appropriate, low-cost, and demand-responsive WatSan programme approach, managed mostly by the community people. The programme itself ensures participation of the community people, and on the other hand, participation of the community leads to a greater success in the line of empowerment of the community people including women, institution building at the grassroots and sustainability of the programme achievements.

Chapter – II

Community Participation and Socio-economic Dimensions

Socio-economic dimension covers the issues of social, economic, institutional and cultural aspects, which are substantially linked to community participation. The general features of rural Bangladesh are poverty, lack of education, lack of awareness regarding development issues, traditional value system and traditional practices of rituals and habits, which sometimes determine the nature and magnitude of people's involvement in different activities. The socio-economic condition of the rural community is naturally divergent in different level, where larger portion of the people is illiterate and living at the subsistence level or, below the poverty line. They have to maintain their families through hardship because the people are mostly seasonally employed who remains quasi unemployed for a substantial part of the year. Alongside the economic status, the social, cultural and institutional aspects of the rural communities are diversified. The social structure, power structure and economic relations of the community people play the deterministic role in selecting their priorities, their involvement in the process of activities and the nature of appreciation and rejection of activities. The institutional and cultural aspects have also a commendable role in all sorts of activities. However, various aspects which are indispensable parts are need to be accounted in designing, planning and implementing development activities in community based and community managed programme.

The diversified nature of socio-economic factors influence the human activities including their participation in development activities, which are conducted by different government and

non-government organisations in Bangladesh. The water and sanitation programme of NGO Forum implemented through partner organisations is not an exception of this fact. The impact of the community managed WatSan programme, either success or failure are assessed in the context of socio-economic and cultural dimensions of the society and institutional arrangements those are related to the programme implementation.

An understanding of sustainable changes in people's lives must take into account of their values and priorities. However, the community people have their own choice and priorities in the context of their society and community. In any community managed development programmes, like water supply and sanitation programme facilitated by NGO Forum, perceptions of different stakeholders and beneficiaries should come to a consensus through interactions. This interaction could be addressed to the highest possible level in the participatory approach of development. The participation is an area in which quite considerable experiment has taken place to identify the phenomenon as an indicator of social development. It is true that the notion of participation has currently become prominent in development thinking and practice because of its wide range of coverage of socio-economic and cultural issues including belief, values, habits, etc. of the community people. The participation is not an inflexible issue, so it has to be understood as a process of activities that leads to the empowerment of people.

Participation is defined as a socially vibrant grassroots process whereby people identify the process as their own, with occasional help from facilitators. The process is inherently educative, leading progressively to a higher level of consciousness which evolves through newer experiences of facing reality. They are then able to participate as active

subjects in the development process rather than passive objects. The community managed water and sanitation programme is designed to make the community people active through different strategies and techniques that perpetuate in making them aware and in enabling them to understand the reality through experiences.

The consolidation of success of community managed WatSan programme implemented through community participation needs to address the diversified social, economic and cultural issues, because the concepts are inter-linked to each other. The changes in people's lives, people's perceptions, and practices of WatSan are important issues for consideration. The development of organisation at the community level and strengthening the existing organisations, the capacity building of the community people, participation and mobility of women, self-confidence and changes of values on their relationship and their activities are substantial issues. The sustainability of people's institutions and the level of achievements also indicators of success. The sense of ownership of WatSan technologies as well as the programme itself by the community people, their willingness and capacity to share the costs and attitude towards maintenance of the WatSan materials are the issues for the measurement of the success of NGO Forum's Community Managed WatSan Programme.

Social Aspect:

The society and its systems govern the socio-economic activities of the members of the society. Each and every society has its own system, norms and values that are originated from the social structure and functions of social organisations and institutions. One has to maintain those systems, norms and values for harmony, peace and coexistence in the society. The social norms and values also guide the human activities and

participation. There are some social factors, which determine the involvement of community people in the related activities. There are some social norms and values which restraint people from taking active part in some activities. The social awareness and base of knowledge about any development issue are factors as well as pre-requisites for community participation in development interventions. As a result, the social aspects have an important role in either increasing or decreasing the community participation also in the water and sanitation programme. The community managed approach of WatSan programme in Bangladesh initially suffers from the crisis of social acceptance by the community. The people of the community may not accept new activities and practices in place of their traditional behaviour.

The power structure, social faction and conflict, stratification, kinship, gender and other inter-personal relations etc. are some socio-cultural aspects, traditionally originated from the social structure. The participation of community people can minimize the socio-cultural distance among different actors, which can ensure more participation. In the society of rural Bangladesh, various factions in society, conflict and distanced inter-personal relation are traditional phenomena, which have important role in socio-economic and cultural activities in the society. The diversified nature of structure and functions of community institutions and organisations has to be addressed in designing and planning of the programme for community based activities.

Traditionally, the women of Bangladesh are mainly involved in household chores. The female members only of those households take part in different activities outside the household, who have educational qualification as well as family supports. The women of the rural areas are still remaining with the traditional living pattern though they are

on the way to cross the hurdle of social boundary and becoming better off. Now a days the participation of women in development activities is gradually increasing. The women living at the subsistence level are involving themselves in income generating activities. Most of those activities are supported by national and international non-government organisations and government bodies. However, still it is not well accepted by the rural society. Due to the lack of acceptance to the people, the participation of women in development activities including the water supply and sanitation programme is comparatively lesser than that of the satisfactory level. Social acceptance of the programme by the community is a pre-requisite for assessing the community participation in the WatSan programme.

The social structure and function of different organisation makes difference in participation among various social strata and, or social class. The perceptual difference between the rich and poor towards the WatSan programme is also an important factor for their participation. If the development programme do not benefit the whole community then the deprived sections might think that this programme is not for them. Then the essence of the programme objectives might fail to reach its goal. Some people, who already have access to safe water and sanitation facilities, do not realise the greater importance of water and sanitation programme and they are not any more spontaneous to participate in the water and sanitation programme. But with the facilitation of Community Managed WatSan Programme, the perceptual difference among villagers of the programme intervened villages has been gradually reducing because of the impact of different social mobilisation activities as well as other interventions of NGO Forum.

The united efforts of social groups and different social factors sometimes become influential in increasing participation. The

united efforts of rural elite and the community people as a whole bear some significance to the community people. The joint decisions through the meeting of Village Development Committee serve the community purpose and get more impetus to them. In such case, community participation issues become forefront as a community initiative to the villagers, which leads to effective implementation of such programme. As the Village Development Committee is consisted of people from different social class and status that gives an impetus to the villagers also for leading to higher participation.

The power and prestige are inter-linked to each other. Social power and poverty are also related, because the power links social capital that leads to an economic emancipation of the family. The people of the poorer section of the society are taking part in different development activities, supported by the NGOs. Most of the non-government organisations operate integrated development programme with participation of their beneficiaries. Through these development interventions they have become aware about sound health and hygiene behaviour and have installed sanitary latrine in their house. Now a days, without having a sanitary latrine in the household is a prestige concern for the elite and the well off. The people of the rural area were basically used to traditional practices of open defecation, so they did not have sanitary latrine in their houses. Now the awareness and increase of knowledge base through participation in different development activities have inspired them to install sanitary latrines.

The supply driven programme sometimes creates the social conflict and jeopardises the cohesiveness among the community people raising the distribution issue. However, NGO Forum's demand-responsive Community Managed WatSan Programme does not provide anything free of cost except software support to motivate the villagers towards

health and hygiene behaviour, therefore, leaving no scope to exercise the power and availing illegal favour from this programme. Some social institutions have been developing in the community level through the Community Managed WatSan Programme, which are effectively performing the role of conflict resolutions in the village, and finally contributing to safe WatSan promotion.

Economic Aspect:

The participation of the community people in respect of cost-sharing and their household economy has the reciprocal relationship. The economic solvency facilitates the people to take active part in any activity. On the other hand, the higher participation creates the opportunity to increase income and employment. There are some influencing factors of community participation that are related with resources and economic conditions. These aspects include, entitlement, ownership, market value of respective materials, land system, distribution systems etc. In relation to NGO Forum's programme these aspects determine the position and ability of individual in community through which one can contribute to or share in Community Managed WatSan Programme. One important aspect of the community participation is community financing by paying the cost of WatSan facilities, materials and services, but the economic condition guides the ability and mentality of individuals on sharing the cost. On contrary economic conditions influence the inter-personal hierarchy, which may affect the participation of the poor in programme implementation.

Household economy is one of the determinant factors, which dominates social and economic activities of the family as well as in society. The central focus of all activities of human being is the fulfillment of basic needs and sustenance for the better

lives. According to the economic deterministic approach, the economy is supreme controlling factor of society and the dynamics. The basic structural issues determine the changes of the super structural and functional dynamics of the society. The financial ability makes the people capable to participate in social and cultural functionaries. The poor people of the community are not able to participate due to financial crisis. The economic and financial aspects influence the participation in some respects.

The rural economy of Bangladesh is unable to have access to facilities in family welfare related services due to financial crisis. In most of the programme intervention areas it is a common scenario that the people who are not participating in water and sanitation programme are very poor. They are unable to manage the cost for water technologies and sanitation to share with others. According to the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation*, each and every participant will share the cost equally for water technology, but someone or few of them are providing the total cost and the water technology is being installed at the premises of the lion-share provider.

The willingness to participate in any development activities somehow depends on economic capacity and knowledge about the issue. The poverty and impoverishment of the people restrains them from being active and participate positively in welfare activities. Though a major portion of people are quasi employed but the people who live on hand to mouth have to work for survival. As a result, they do not get the scope to think about the sanitary latrine or things like that. The economic crisis sometimes hampers the use of their knowledge. It is found that people are aware of negative effect of the arsenic contamination in water but the poor people of some areas still take the water from the contaminated sources, because, they

could not manage to buy or manage an alternative sources for arsenic-free water.

In the supply-driven approach of water and sanitation programme a huge funding was provided for water supply and sanitation construction, where the operation and maintenance issue was neglected. Through that programme the poorer section of the people had been least benefited and many facilities installed were not functioning. In response to this crisis the government and donor agencies are adopting integrated WatSan programme in demand-responsive approach. In this system the cost sharing for beneficiaries is essential as well as operation and maintenance cost to be borne by the beneficiaries.

Institutional Aspect:

The socio-economic development is the main thrust of all the development activities in Bangladesh. In initiating any development programme or project an appropriate institutional set up is required. The strength of the institutional set up is a pre-requisite to make the programme achievement oriented and successful. To implement the community managed development programme the community people need to organise themselves in a manner that best suits their purposes. They may decide a new organisation or use of existing ones over which they have effective control, as instrument of action, in the ability of organisational mechanism and support system in which the communities should have confidence. There are various government and non-government institutions and/or organisations, which are conducting the development activities targeting socio-economic improvement of people through group approach. However, with the initiatives of rural people or beneficiaries, the institution building process at the grassroots level has not yet

taken a good shape to ensure the participation of the community people in any development activities. Still the grassroots bodies are at the level of organisations that are towards the institutionalisation process. However, there are number of non-government and government bodies including community based organisations that have been operating activities for institution building to make development efforts successful to meet up the objectives of the respective organizations' vision. The institutional structure and functioning systems also determine the status of participation, because the people oriented organisations can involve people in these activities.

The institutional capacity building and strengthening the support to the community people ensure social mobilisation and smooth operation. The institutional approaches and objectives determine the expected success. NGO Forum has been working through the partner organisations that are mostly community based and people oriented that makes the praiseworthy success in the WatSan sector.

NGO Forum maintains interagency and trans-sectoral collaboration that helps people oriented policy formulation and ensures participation in the water and sanitation programme. Most of the national and international NGOs have WatSan programme which are not always demand-driven in nature, or a small component and the target group based programme. In that case there is limited opportunity for institution building in the village.

The past experiences reveal that the supply-driven approach of development activities did not sustain or had not been implemented properly. Only the grassroots level institution building might be the key criteria for effective implementation. The institution building as well as capacity building of existing

institutions at the grassroots level is encouraged to multiply the process through independent autonomous support mechanism. NGO Forum's Community Managed WatSan Programme is also promoting the same approach to the establishment of community-based institutions who are autonomous for initiating their own development.

Cultural Aspect:

The notion of hygiene and cleanliness differs among families, local communities, religions, and different groups. The ideas of cleanliness have some cultural connotation, which might have affirmative or negative impact on health, but that are culturally acceptable and having influence on daily activities as well as hygiene behavioural practices of the respective community people. The culture, tradition, habit and behavioural practices of the community people, religious and ethnic groups have a determining role in participation of the people in any development programme. The activities supporting the culture and tradition of the particular community make the implementation easier by using the community people and their experiences. On the contrary, the programme activities, confronting the existing culture of the community people, religious or ethnic groups, keep them away from participation.

The issues of water use and sanitation practices are highly correlated with geophysical condition. The people of plain land in the shallow water zone are habituated with tubewell water. They treat the pond or river water as dirty. It is a part of their culture and to make it other way round, it needs time for cultural adaptation. If it is not culturally accepted then participation might be quite difficult. In such case the institutions can play strong role in receiving, accepting and adopting new technologies for the safe source of water and ensuring participation. The *tabiz muntro* (amulet and incantation) for water purification still exists in the rural society. This superstition might get priority to some section of the people, who may not participate virtually, but due to social

pressure they might have bought sanitary latrine and installed in the house. These kinds of people might have rather passive attitude towards possibilities to prevent illness, and improve family's health through change of behaviour. Such attitude may be changed through community participation.

Culture, social institutions and social system of Bangladesh are male-dominated as well as biased. The types of duties to be done by the women are fully determined by the systems that are also dominated by the men. The women do all types of sanitation work but those are neither socially recognised nor valued economically. However, the activities performed by women need to be addressed in any development intervention for greater participation and success.

In rural Bangladesh there is a belief that when *Ula Devi* (the goddess) becomes cruel and aggressive then diarrhoea (*Ula Uttha*) breaks out in the community. In rural areas of Bangladesh, for instance, people believe that sweet or sugary food is the cause of worm infestation. Rural people believe that the excreta of babies and little children are considered to be harmless and that defecation in the open by children is acceptable and a very common practice. Alongside, there are some traditional behaviour that may not be based on the understanding of disease transmission but are basically healthy practice. The cultural factors for healthy practice need to be considered to ensure participation of the community people. It is also an important issue that the cultural views about the causes of water-borne diseases would often vary between different groups of people like, man-woman, rich-poor, old-young, and so on. The views might change with increase of knowledge and experience over time. This dynamics also to be considered for the success of development intervention.

Chapter - III

Community Participation and Success of WatSan Programme

Proper Implementation:

NGO Forum has been facilitating the implementation of the Community Managed WatSan Programme through its partner organisations in the country. The effective implementation of the programme depends on the appropriate design, plan and strategies. NGO Forum has developed an integrated WatSan programme combining hardware, software and interagency collaboration. NGO Forum has adopted Community Managed WatSan Village approach to implement its WatSan programme. The strength of this approach is, it helps to provide support intensively in a specific area or village. The programme has been designed in line with the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation*, which covers the overall vision and ultimate goal of the Government in the WatSan sector. The mission of the organisation is different from that of the Government, that is, the Government has been providing WatSan technologies in general but currently NGO Forum provides it in Community Managed WatSan Villages only. This programme approach has ensured the participation of the community people in the planning and especially in the implementation. The implementation has become easier and effective because of participation of the community people in the activities.

The implementation process of the water and sanitation programme follows a series of activities, in which community people are involved in every step. NGO Forum has a guideline to address the national policy objectives of sustainable WatSan

promotion and hygiene practices through the strategies of cost sharing by the community for water and sanitation technologies. This guideline is followed by the partner organizations, which ensures the participation of the community people in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. This series of activities with the community substantially strengthen the social mobilisation of the community that makes effective implementation of the programme.

Responding to the National WatSan Policy, NGO Forum provides support to partner organisations for implementing the water and sanitation programme in the villages which are most unserved or underserved. The partner organisations conduct baseline survey in few villages to get an understanding about the status of water and sanitation practices and its coverage. From those surveyed villages partner NGOs select villages as Community Managed WatSan Village for implementation of the WatSan programme and NGO Forum allocates hardware and software supports for the selected villages. After getting the approval of NGO Forum, the respective partner organisations, with assistance from NGO Forum, organise meeting in the villages with villagers including the local elites and local government representatives and traditional elites of the village. A Village Development Committee (VDC) is formed in this meeting with assistance from the representatives of the NGO Forum and partner organisation. The Village Development Committee is formed consisting of local elites, local government representatives, school teachers, religious leaders, Ansar/VDP representatives and different professional individuals including sufficient number of female representatives. This Committee is the representative body of all sections of people of the community where the participation of community people is ensured. Conduction of development programme through Village Development Committee is a very

effective and appropriate strategy of development in Bangladesh, though it is not yet a very familiar approach. The VDC is formed aiming to be an institution at the grassroots to strengthen the implementation and make it successful. The involvement of all sections of the community people encourages common people to involve themselves in the programme to make it successful. In the community managed approach, community people take part in social mobilisation from his/her respective area of activities that enhances the materialisation of the objectives of the programme. In ensuring participation through increasing knowledge about the water and sanitation, NGO Forum conducts orientation programme for the cross-sectional people including Imam, village elite, power and social elite, women and local government representatives that helps social mobilisation.

The Imam Pioneering People towards WatSan Promotion

Moulovi Mohammad Abdul Hye is an Imam of the Mosque of Ambaria village of Madhupur thana under Tangail District. He had some idea about the development activities of Samannita Unnayan Seba Sangthan (SUSS), a partner of NGO Forum, because it has been conducting development activities in this village for the last several years. After the village was selected as Community Managed WatSan Village for cent percent WatSan coverage, he became involved with the programme. During the formation of the Village Development Committee with people from different social status, he got priority as a religious leader. As a religious leader he has a great influence on the villagers. He participated in an Imam Orientation Programme jointly organized by SUSS and NGO Forum. He has learnt a lot about the significance of safe drinking water and sanitation through participation in this Orientation Programme. "I had wrong idea about NGO activities, which

has been changed participating in the Orientation Programme", he says. Moreover, he gained knowledge about WatSan and health education issues by reading materials, which were distributed in that Orientation Programme. He expressed his satisfaction about the effect of this programme, because he learnt a lot about the use of safe water and sanitary latrine, which he did not know before. Now he realizes, "As an Imam I should have known this matter before". "I have many things to do for the promotion of WatSan. As a religious leader, I am in a better position to do something because people respect me and follow my advice", the Imam adds.

"Before getting involved with the Village Development Committee and participating in the Orientation Programme, I did not know about the affect of drinking pond water and defecation into open space, now I know and advise people to make them aware about the bad impact of unsafe water and sanitation use" the Imam articulates very frankly. For the last ten years, he has been performing his duties as an Imam. However, he never discussed seriously about safe WatSan with the people. Now he has turned himself and speaks about

purity and pollution in the light of Islam. He has always been discussing about sanitation to the Mussullies being an oriented Imam. He specially gives emphasis on this matter during Khutba in Jumma Prayer. He tries to convey the message to religious people about the safe drinking water and sanitation with reference to Quran and Hadith, "Allah and Prophet Mohammed focuses on purity of pious people. Purity is the pre-condition of prayer. No one can maintain cleanliness by using the unhygienic latrine and polluted water".

He also talks about safe drinking water and sanitation at the occasion of the Milad Mahfil. He says to the people that Muslim women should maintain Purda. Without installing the sanitary latrine in the house Muslim women cannot maintain the Purda. Without establishing sanitary latrine in their houses if any one defecates in open place and does not wash hand with soap or ash he would remain dirty and Allah will not accept his prayer. The pious people hear and realize it and gradually they are using safe water and sanitary latrine. He says, " I also talk about the sanitary latrine at the occasions of marriage ceremony and other gatherings".

The Imam expresses his satisfaction about the present sanitation condition of the village. According to him more than 90 per cent of the villagers have sanitary latrines. People can not think about drinking of pond water. He feels proud and claims that he has a contribution to this change. He is grateful to SUSS and NGO Forum because they took this village as a model village and gave him opportunity to serve his community also for social development.

The Community Managed WatSan Programme increases the participation of the people through its objectives and strategies. The participation, on the other hand, in every phase of water and sanitation programme perpetuates its successive implementation. There are a number of activities like Courtyard Meeting, Imam Orientation, Advocacy Meeting with Local Allies, School WatSan Programme, etc. which are conducted in a Community Managed WatSan Village aiming to

ensuring participation of the people. These activities have created an opportunity and scope for participation of the community people in the water and sanitation programme. Community participation addresses the national policy objectives and strategies of WatSan. But in some areas safe water has become a challenge on the way to people's participation as the integrated water and sanitation programme has been threatened because of arsenic contamination in the ground water and lack of safe water source in remote and coastal areas.

The partner organisations assist the Village Development Committee in making a participatory planning and need assessment of the village. The VDC conducts the exercise by using tools and techniques of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in depicting the available resources, hazards, required resources for successive implementation of WatSan, limitations of resources and challenges to the programme in the village. The villagers develop plan and agenda for action by considering the needs for the programme. Among different activities Promotional Activities play the key role in demand-responsive WatSan programme. The participation of the community people in implementation process makes the programme easier, smooth, and cost effective. The community people, as indispensable and active part of the programme, conduct activities for the effective implementation of the Community Managed WatSan Programme.

A Success of United Effort

Kanupur and Purbo Naryanpur are two separate villages of about 300 households adjoined to each other under Borura thana of Comilla district. NGO Forum selected these villages under its Community Managed WatSan Programme. Projukti Peeth, a partner organization of NGO Forum has been implementing the Community Managed WatSan Programme in the villages through a single VDC. The

partner organization is also conducting development activities namely, Non-Formal Education, Social Forestry and Credit programme. After selection of these villages under Community Managed WatSan Programme, the villagers organized discussion forum in the villages on the implementation of the WatSan programme. From that meeting the villagers formed the Village Development Committee including school teachers, local elite, women member of Union Parishad and other villagers.

With the guidance of Projukti Peeth the VDC had taken a massive programme for awareness building of the villagers about safe water and sanitation. They had prepared a participatory plan following Participatory Rural Appraisal approach. This plan has given them a new idea about their village for taking initiatives of any development programme. The VDC invented their operational strategy for the greater coverage in safe water and sanitation. They had formed different sub-committees like Survey Committee and Liaison Committee, etc. Initially they faced some problems in implementation of the programme, because about 10% households refused to

participate in this programme. Alongside, 15 hardcore poor families were not able to participate and to install the sanitary latrine. Considering their situations the VDC saved some money from the budget of the meeting and helped five households to buy sanitary latrine. They have made a special arrangement for interest-free loan from the Projukti Peeth for the remaining 10 households with their own risk. This has helped the villagers achieving higher rate of sanitation coverage.

One of the VDC members Momtazuddin said, "I did not know, what is sanitary latrine, but now I am using that in my house and making the villagers using that". He also added that they did not understand how the open defecation causes diarrhoea and other epidemic diseases. The VDC members have mentioned that more coordination among villagers, loan for hard-core poor for buying WatSan materials and motivational activities by using audio-visual media are needed to make this programme successful. The VDC members have suggested that women participation should be increased in the programme. However, participation of the community people has made Water and sanitation programme successful.

According to the process and strategies of NGO Forum, it provides assistance to the Village Development Committee through the partner organisations for conducting different Promotional Activities. Among those Promotional Activities Courtyard Meeting is organized basically with women participants identifying them as one of the key promoter groups by considering their role in cleanliness of the household members specially the children. They are the key users of water as well as maintaining the cleanliness of latrine. The Courtyard Meeting sensitizes them about the issue as well as increases the knowledge on water, sanitation, health status, mortality & morbidity, and many other issues. The women are not only participating in the Courtyard Meeting but also motivating their neighbours towards the hygiene practices. Their active

participation in WatSan programme helps to increase the women participation and empower them in the family and also in the society.

People from all sectors in a coverage village have actively participated to increase the coverage of the safe water use in all purposes and sanitary latrine use by all household members. The contribution might be direct or indirect in the programme to its success. Every one is contributing from their respective corner for greater coverage of WatSan and behavioural changes. The VDC and elite members have influence over the villagers, who are taking active part in implementation of the WatSan programme very enthusiastically. Alongside the VDC members and the participants of the Courtyard Meeting, the school teachers and students, religious leaders and local representatives and community people are also taking part in the implementation of water and sanitation programme. They are creating demand for WatSan technologies through motivation in the society that is making the NGO Forum's Community Managed WatSan Programme implementation effective.

The young boys and girls have been participating in the water and sanitation programme of NGO Forum through its School WatSan Programme and contributing to reach the objective of the programme. This programme motivates the school students very successfully, which helps to implement the WatSan programme. The participation of the school student has made the programme implementation effective which has accentuated greater coverage and promotion of WatSan and hygiene practices.

The community level organisations and institutions have been playing a tremendous role and created an example in implementing their activities. The process of formation of the community level institution - the Village Development

Committee, and implementation of the WatSan programme through those institutions is a new one, which has brought this extraordinary success. The capacity building of community level institutions is one of the reasons that help to make the programme effective. The commitment and strategies of such institutions creates confidence and awareness about the benefit of the programme among the community people. NGO Forum's extending assistance and cooperation to those institutions make the implementation easier.

The VDC as a local institution has been playing key role in overall development of the programme intervened villages. Alongside the WatSan activities, the VDC has initiated numbers of development activities for sustainable livelihood of the community people. "The institutionalisation of the development process without outside intervention is a dream to Village Development Committee which will be possible for us", said the Chairman of a VDC. This spirit and dream have an effective role in successful implementation of WatSan programme.

The PNGOs play an important role in creating such a position of the VDC. The effectiveness and success of the programme is related to the commitment of the partner organisations. The commitment of the implementing organisations towards the programme plays an extraordinary role in boosting up the implementation process and reaching to the success.

With the implementation of NGO Forum's Community Managed WatSan Programme the community participation has substantially strengthened social mobilization, has made the participatory need assessment process of the respective villages easier, has helped to create demand for WatSan technologies among community people. It has also generated realization about serious health problems due to lack of proper hygiene

practices. The participation has created self-confidence and self-monitoring system of WatSan programme, which has helped to achieve higher coverage of sanitation in the community. Traditionally women are in disadvantaged position in the society. The community managed has encouraged the women to take active part in development activities. All these positive achievements have made the implementation of the water and sanitation programme effective in the coverage villages.

Institutional Capacity Building:

The execution of development activities needs an appropriate institutional set-up with sufficient strength and capacity to achieve the expected outcomes. NGO Forum's Community Managed WatSan Programme is being implemented by a number of partner NGOs and CBOs with a vision to ensure sound health and sound environment. The top-down and supply-driven water and sanitation programmes have failed to reach the predetermined development objectives. It has been realised by NGO Forum that development efforts would not be effective without direct participation of the target communities. With a view to making the WatSan programme effective and sustainable, institutions need to be built through involving the community people and also the capacity of existing institutions at the community level needs to be strengthened. The main thrust of NGO Forum is to build up institution at community level and to make them effective and capable to implement the water and sanitation programme in the community with other development activities by their own initiatives. The strategy of NGO Forum is institutional capacity building through its software support and inter-agency collaboration.

NGO Forum provides support for building institutions at the community level and for building capacity of the partners. The institution building process accentuates on orientation and

training programmes, which are related to the respective sections of community people. The Village Development Committees are oriented on some development planning and initiatives which guides them for self-esteeming and getting an institutional shape. The objectives are also to make those institutions self-managed and self-regulatory in implementation process of the WatSan programme in future. On the other hand, NGO Forum also provides training and software supports for capacity building of partner organizations which ultimately help smooth implementation of WatSan programme.

CCDA Counts it a True Partnership

With an overall goal of emancipating the rural poor and destitute from the clutches of poverty, malnutrition and poor health condition, Centre for Community Development Assistance (CCDA) came into being in 1990. Initially its activities were implemented in two unions under Daudkandi thana of Comilla district. The specific objectives of CCDA are motivation, awareness building, uplifting the socio-economic status, health-care, utilization of local resources. At present CCDA has been working in four thanas of Comilla district. Its activities are social afforestation, non-formal education, women in development, micro-credit for income generation, fisheries development, water and sanitation, mother and child health-care and family planning programme. It has also been operating agro-based income generating activities and arsenic mitigation programme in the rural areas.

Among the programmes of CCDA the safe water supply and sanitation is assisted by NGO Forum. CCDA has integrated the WatSan programme with its own maternal health-care programme and credit programme to make the WatSan programme successful. It has been distributing water technologies and low-cost water-seal latrines on installment basis along with motivation on sanitation and

primary health care. This has turned the respective community people mobilized and participating in safe WatSan promotion.

In the last year there were three villages undertaken under NGO Forum-facilitated Community Managed WatSan Programme for cent percent coverage of water and sanitation. The villagers have formed Village Development Committees including people from different sections of the village. The participation of women has also been ensured in the Village Development Committees. The participation of various cross-section of people made things easier to the staff of CCDA. Md. Samad, Executive Director of CCDA mentioned that the WatSan programme is an integrated programme of hardware and software support. Moreover, the WatSan programme coinciding the strategy of other development intervention by the organisation. The new strategies have given them new lessons that are cost-effective and time minimized intervention. The social mobilization for the WatSan programme has been integrated with motivational activities of mother and child-care programme that has been played a substantial role in effective and proper implementation of WatSan programme. However, both programmes operated simultaneously in the village level that has been saving time of staff and creating opportunities for extra work.

"The WatSan programme through community participation is relevant to the objective of the CCDA", said Mr. Samad. Nothing can be achieved at village level without direct participation of the community people. The hardware and software support of NGO Forum has played a substantial role in ensuring the participation of the community. He also added that the pre-condition of participation is awareness building and feeling of ownership of the programme activities. The integration of WatSan activities with other programmes of the organization lead to ensure participation and reach to success. The same vision of both organizations helps to make similar strategy for the success. "When the ultimate goal of both the service providing partner and the service-receiving partner is same then the service-receiving partners can take any strategy in respect to the local experiences to reach the goal", Md. Samad expressed very confidently.

NGO Forum's institution building process has geared up the community people and the partner organisation to a great extent. In most of the cases VDC members organise the scheduled meetings by their own initiatives in their respective villages. The VDC members also are able to conduct scheduled meetings, to review the activities of previous months, to set action plan and to set agenda for the next meeting without assistance of the partner organizations. The members of Village Development Committees are very much active in operating their activities. They review the progress of Courtyard Meeting, School WatSan Programme, and other promotional activities, status of coverage of sanitary latrine and safe water and hygiene practices. The VDC members take necessary initiatives to solve the problems, which they face during the implementation of the programme for increasing the rate of WatSan coverage.

Initially the VDC members could not understand the ultimate impact of the WatSan programme. But after their involvement

in the Community Managed WatSan Programme and being oriented by NGO Forum, they have perceived the programme benefit and trying to implement it with their common initiatives. Now the activities of Village Development Committees have been performed systematically. The villagers consider the VDC as a village based institution and they abide by the planning and initiatives taken by the VDC. This has been possible due to the participation of the community people.

The community people and different stakeholders opined that NGO Forum-facilitated Community Managed WatSan Programme has been effective in the capacity building of partner organisations. The partner organisations have voiced in the same way that the capacity building of their staff have been ensured by being the partners of NGO Forum. They also said that most of the community-based organisations and local NGOs start with inefficient staffs. They have limited opportunities to capacity building of their staffs. NGO Forum prefers those NGOs and CBOs, which work intensively at community level. Most of the partner organisations get opportunity solely from NGO Forum to train up their staffs. However, the trainings of NGO Forum have been playing an effective and substantial role in capacity building of the partner NGO staff.

On an average three to four staff of each partner organization have received training from NGO Forum on different issues relating to safe water and sanitation. Most of the partners hold the view that they have definitely been benefited from NGO Forum's training. Rajia Sultana, a staff of Society Development Committee (SDC), a partner organisation of NGO Forum mentioned that she became very much aware about the facilitation of promotional activities under WatSan programme

as well as other development programmes. She added, "After participating in the training I can now easily link the health and sanitation issue with the income generating programmes for poverty alleviation that helps me to motivate the people". However, the training programme has also sharpened their knowledge that leads to active participation. Sikandar Ali of Bangladesh Organization for Social Services (BOSS) has got training on Communication and Facilitation. He stated, "Before participation in the training programme on the Communication and Facilitation, I could not understand how to solve some of the problems that was raised in the field. After getting training I can manage people by my own capacities, and I need not depend on the immediate authority for everything".

Dipali Turns Herself a Social Mobilizer

Dipali Kirtonia was born and brought up in Dhaka City. After her marriage she came to Faridpur with her husband. Her aim in life was to be a teacher or a social worker. After settlement in Faridpur she tried to get an opportunity to involve in teaching, but became frustrated as she failed to do so. However, after a few years she got the opportunity to be involved as a social worker in a development organization named Society Development Committee (SDC), a partner organization of NGO Forum located at Boalmari thana under the Faridpur district. SDC executes its development activities on micro-credit, education, afforestation and water and sanitation programme.

Dipali Kirtonia has been working in this organization since 1997. At first she was involved in micro-credit programme of her organization. She did not get interest in micro-credit programme alone because she thought that through the credit programme the rural poor are superficially benefited but they are exploited to some extent. She showed her interest to work with education programme. Finally she was assigned to perform her duty in the Community Managed WatSan Programme. She found interest in water and sanitation programme.

Dipali started to work as a social worker without any specialized knowledge. She had no specialized skill to communicate with rural people and to motivate them. As part of the WatSan facilitation programme she participated in Training of Trainers (TOT) and Training on Community Managed WatSan Programme organized and conducted by NGO Forum. Through participating in those training programs of NGO Forum she developed some skills which helped her to work with rural people successfully. Furthermore, the training skills help her to train others. As a core group trainer she took the responsibility to capacity building of the organization. She said 'We, all staff were same before participation in the Training of Trainers, but after getting the TOT, I have become superior to them.

Now I know something better what they do not know. When I teach them they honour me as trainer. And thus I am considered as an important resource person of the organization”.

Through participation into the training on Community Managed WatSan Programme she learnt the technique of rapport building from the training programme. She learnt how to encourage villagers to improve the water and sanitation status. She also learnt the way to increase the participation of community people in the Community Managed WatSan Programme. Dipali said that she knew what she was doing and she was confident to conduct the activities in improving the water and sanitation status. Previously she had to face different kinds of problems related to the programme but now she can solve all kinds of problems regarding community mobilization on WatSan promotion. According to her, there is a great difference between a trained and a non-trained person who work in the same set-up. Her learning in the training programme helps her not only to work in the WatSan but also helps to work in other development activities. It made her confident in community development activities. She mentioned that through participating in training program of NGO Forum, she not only acquired some idea on water and sanitation programme but also became encouraged to build up her own capacity as a social worker and a resource person in the WatSan sector.

The training also helps the partner organisations in communication development and social mobilisation, which are the core issues of development activities. This training helps the staff to create awareness and to motivate the community people easily. Some of them have mentioned that this training has also created an opportunity to extra income by conducting training to staffs and group members of other organizations. It also helps to increase the participation of the community people in WatSan programme. The efficiency and mobility of the respective partner NGO staffs of NGO Forum have been increased through receiving various type of trainings, which is

an important factor of institutionalisation process. Community participation enhances the institutionalisation of Village Development Committees and partner organizations. And finally it helps to increase the coverage of safe water use and sanitary latrine.

Knowledge & Attitude Changes and Hygiene Practices:

Behavioural change of human being depends mostly on knowledge and attitude. Knowledge about anything might increase rapidly which can influence the changing of attitudes. However, the behavioural change is very difficult. The behaviour is deep-rooted in memory, which is socially constructed, in human mind. Human behaviour is instinctive which is controlled by the super ego. The super ego guides man to behave rationally, which is accepted by the culture of the society. However, the changes of habit and behaviour need the cultural changes. As a result, once anyone becomes habituated to certain behaviour, it is very difficult to escape from that habit. Traditionally the community people of rural Bangladesh is habituated to open defecation and unsafe water use due to lack of knowledge and unavailability of safe sources of WatSan facilities.

The knowledge, attitude and behavioural changes determine the success of safe water use in all purposes like drinking, bathing and washing and sanitary latrine use by all household members. To ensure the success of water and sanitation programme it is necessary to create demand of WatSan technology and to make those technologies available at the doorstep of people. For creation of demand various kind of motivational activities are necessary that enable the community to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the

programme. NGO Forum believes that if people understand the necessity of hygiene practices and safe water use, they will automatically search, buy and install both safe water and sanitation technologies in their houses. In rural Bangladesh open defecation or unhygienic latrine use are still a general practice. The community people need clear understanding about the bad effects of such practices to improve the situation through demand creation and wider coverage.

The software services of NGO Forum have been playing an effective role in increasing the practical knowledge about different issues of safe water and hygienic sanitation and its necessities in everyday life. To change the attitude people needs sufficient knowledge base on the safe WatSan issues. By facilitating the software services like training, promotional activities, distribution of different printed materials, audio-visual material, show, etc, the partner organisations mobilize the community people which increases their knowledge regarding safe WatSan and hygiene behaviour in the community. The BCC materials have been proved very effective to make the people informed about the safe and unsafe sanitation practices. Ashutosh Moulik of Anderkota village, in Gopalganj district has mentioned, "We did not know about the bad effect of open defecation and hanging latrine use. After participation in the Courtyard Meeting organised by Palli Bikash Kendra with assistance from NGO Forum, the people came to know that the people of this floodplain area suffer from water-borne diseases. The main reasons for this were indiscriminate defecation by the villagers and use of unsafe water". "Since we came to know the reasons, we became united for promoting sanitary latrines in the village. During the inception period of the programme in the village the coverage of sanitary latrine was only 21% which has been increased to 80% within the last one and half-years of intervention", he added. The village people manifested that with their united

strength they got success. The villagers mentioned that there were some households having unhygienic latrine, which were damaged by their united effort. It was possible because of knowledge and attitudinal changes among most of the villagers. But it has been found that the children and old people still need to change their hygiene habits.

Most of the villagers of the coverage villages are now well informed about the messages and aware of the use of safe water for drinking and other household works because of the conduction of the promotional activities by the Forum's partner organizations. Most of the people in the programme intervened villages have got adequate knowledge about safe water and sanitation, its importance and impact in their daily life. From that understanding most of the people are practicing hygiene behavior to a great extent. Alongside, it has been observed that though the people highly praised the safe WatSan system, still some old people were found not using the facilities properly. However, most of the community people have been found very positive about the impact of the NGO Forum's WatSan programme in their WatSan and hygiene behavioral changes.

Shamsunnahar, a housewife of the Kolijug village under Daudkandi thana, Comilla said with confidence "We now know about the harmful consequences of the use of unhygienic latrine and unsafe water use. We also know about the consequences of drinking arsenic contaminated water on human organism". The villagers, particularly the Village Development Committee members of most of the villages felt that they have achieved a great progress in the field of hygienic WatSan practice. "We wait even two hours each day for getting arsenic-free water but don't drink contaminated water. We have learned it from NGO Forum's meeting", said Nirmala Kirtonia, a housewife of Anderkota village under Gopalganj district. Because of these activities people have gained knowledge about alternative water technologies. All these have

happened as a result of the active and fruitful participation of the community people.

A remarkable change in behavior related to sanitation practice has also been observed in the villages where NGO Forum-supported WatSan program has been implemented. The villagers have mentioned that no human excreta at any place in the village would be found in the coverage villages because the habit of open defecation has been changed. The members of Village Development Committees and the community people are the key players to change people's behavior. People have been aware about the disadvantages of unsafe water use and unhygienic latrine use. Almost all people of all ages are acquainted with hygienic hand washing practice. However, there are still many things to do to reach the goal. Because behavioral change is a continuous phenomenon that needs time and nursing to mature this change. The change among villagers is going on gradually.

The Visionary Villagers

Anderkota is an underdeveloped village of Kashiani thana under Gopalganj district. It is situated in the middle place of Chanda Beel (Chanda floodplain). About 2000 people live in the village. All of them are involved in fishing and farming by occupation. A very few of them are in service. The village remains under water for 6 to 8 months of a year, isolating the clusters of households from each other. Boats are the only mode of bridging those clusters of houses. They have very limited access to education. Absolutely they have no access to modern means of amusements. Most of the villagers are hard-core poor. From generation to generation they were habituated to drink pond or river water. Open defecation was a common habit among these villagers. In every year a number of people died of diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases.

Gono Bikash Kendra (GBK), a partner organization of NGO Forum started its development activities in 1997 with Credit and Education Programmes in this village. In 1999 with assistance from NGO Forum, GBK selected this village as Community Managed WatSan Village for ensuring safe

drinking water and sanitation. The villagers formed the Village Development Committee consisting of 15 members of different social status to implement the Community Managed WatSan Programme. With the guidance of GBK the VDC ensured a tremendous success. Through various initiatives the VDC tried to increase WatSan coverage in the village. Various motivational activities namely, Courtyard Meeting, School WatSan Programme, Rally/Miking, etc. were organized with participation of the villagers. Women have actively participated in WatSan promotion. All these activities have made the rural people aware about sanitation and safe drinking water. The participating villagers have also conveyed the messages of safe WatSan to their neighbors which has been ensuring the participation

of them, and has changed the traditional habit of water, sanitation and hygiene practices of the villagers to a great extent.

It has been assessed that the sanitation coverage has been increased to 90 % from 15 % within two-year period. The rest 10 percent coverage could not be attained because of geophysical condition and financial crisis. Few households could not buy sanitary latrine because of their extreme poverty. GBK distributed interest free loans to buy sanitary latrine along with other activities. The villagers have expressed their desire to reach the target within the shortest possible time. There would be no unhygienic latrine in the village. A markable number of No.6 tubewells had been installed in the village which ensured the safe water supply for the villagers. With all these initiatives the number of diarrhoeal incidences have been decreased. But all the No. 6 tubewells are now arsenic contaminated, so they have to collect drinking water from two arsenic-free deep tubewells only provided by NGO Forum in the village. There is no feasible pond in this village for the installation of Pond Sand Filter (PSF). But NGO Forum has taken necessary steps and establishing Rain-water Harvesting Systems. With united effort through participation the village has reached to an exemplary village of WatSan coverage.

Lack of awareness, low level of literacy, inadequate access to information and insufficient hygiene knowledge are major factors for higher levels of morbidity and mortality particularly in the poor communities. Knowledge on the primary health care and hygiene promotion, better information flow, successful hygiene education can be effective to improve the health situation. The community people have realised that for their survival they need to protect themselves at least from water-borne diseases. Now, the prevention of water-borne diseases has become easier, through using of sanitary latrine and safe water in almost all domestic purposes.

NGO Forum's promotional activities like Courtyard Meeting, Religious Leaders' Orientation, School WatSan Programme,

Rally/Miking and other orientation programmes have a direct impact on ensuring coverage and raising awareness about use of safe water and sanitary latrine. These activities help to motivate people to use safe water for every household purpose, particularly for drinking and cooking, use of sanitary latrines and to maintain sound environment for personal hygiene. This helps to reduce the incidence of diseases.

The partner organizations arranged a Rally/Miking in the coverage villages where all sections of people including youth, children and women participated by holding posters, stickers and banners highlighting the messages of safe water and sanitary latrine use. These events helped to raise awareness on WatSan and to change attitude of many of the villagers. The partner organizations also organized film-show in the villages or in the school premise, which created enthusiasms among the villagers, and it was proved useful for raising awareness on water and sanitation in the village. Such activities ensured the participation of community people in these activities and make the things realistic.

The villagers informed that many households had sanitary latrines and many had homemade unhygienic latrines in the villages. A significant percentage of people were habituated to open defecation, particularly in the bushes, shrubs and other places. At present, there have been significant changes in attitude, behavior, and practices of the villagers in regard to safe WatSan and hygiene practices. The villages which are situated on high land and the soil condition is good, people dig a hole in the earth and put one ring and one slab and easily have a sanitary latrine, which is low-cost. On the other hand, the water-seal (ring-slab) latrine has proved to be the most feasible option for the villagers in all respect. However, still the very poor people do not have sanitary latrines, because they cannot afford to buy sanitary latrine and at the same time many

of them do not have the land to install it. Most of these uncovered people are still in the habits of open defecation, which is a matter of concern for the villagers. Though in many cases the attitude of the villagers towards the sanitary latrine and safe water use has changed but financial constraints have restrained them from safe WatSan behavior.

There has been laudable progress in the use of safe water for every domestic purpose like drinking, cooking, washing, and bathing specially with the coverage of No.6 tubewells in the coverage villages. But in the recent years the arsenic contamination in the ground water has been curbing the success. However, it has come out that the community participation is not the only way to success of the water and sanitation programme in Bangladesh, and this is a tragic fact in regard to Arsenic contamination in the ground water. Almost all tubewell in some areas have become unused due to arsenic. The community has been found united for the water and sanitation programme implementation but there needs to be available sources of safe water. A Journalist of Jessore Region mentioned that there is a cultural constraint in taking drinking water from other sources than tubewell. Due to the availability of groundwater people of the region are not habituated to drink pond or river water. If any one advice them to drink pond water instead of arsenic contaminated tubewell water, people are not ready to drink that.

Community people are becoming habituated to wash hands with soap before taking meal and to wash hands with soap or ash after defecation. Bindu Bashi (75), a housewife of Paylatala village, under Morelganj thana, Bagerhat disclosed, "There is soap or ash in the latrine of all household, and the rate of using slippers during toilet use is increasing among both adults and children". It has also been found that open defecation has substantially decreased in programme intervened villages. "No

human excreta beside roads” - said Mohadev Bhokto, a school teacher of Anderkota village, Gopalganj district. Another school-girl named Lina Akter seconded this fact, "No bad smell in the village i.e. no open or hanging latrine practice by the villagers". But this is not the general feature of all WatSan coverage villages. There are few villages where 2% to 6% people are not participating in the programme and remaining out of the safe WatSan coverage.

Improvement of Public Health Situation:

The health education and awareness-raising programme have an impact on the knowledge base and attitudes towards the water and sanitation in WatSan coverage villages. The community people are involved in the water and sanitation programme which has played a substantial role in improving their health condition. The frequency of the incidence of diseases in the programme intervened villages has decreased. The improvement of health condition is indicated as “Sale of oral saline has decreased at programme villages”, stated by some village doctors. The villagers in some area have stated that before two years a significant percentage of people used to drink pond or, river water and were affected by various water-borne diseases like diarrhoea & dysentery. At present the cases of diarrhoea and dysentery have almost removed. There had been few case of diarrhoea infection, but no death was reported in the village. However, before the WatSan programme intervention, people, particularly children were dying every year due to diarrhoea. Because of the campaign and motivational activities, many people gave up the habits of open defecation, which also helped to a great extent in reducing the incidences of diseases, health hazard and deaths in the village. The hygiene education conducted by the partner organizations and NGO Forum representatives has given a comprehensive

idea about the health hazards and about the preventive measures of those to the villagers.

A resulted effect on decrease of water-borne diseases as well as improvement of the general health status of the people is significant. However, still few people have belief on traditional fake treatment and medicine. Though achievement is tremendous but a few number of people become affected by dysentery and other water-borne diseases like fever and skin diseases. In some regions many people specially the children and old men take bath in pond, ditch or river water due to unavailability of safe water in the dry months. But a few people still take bath because of their habit. More promotional and motivational activities through visual media are required to disseminate the comprehensive idea about health hazards and necessary preventive measures to achieve the goal of WatSan programme of NGO Forum.

The people from most of the villages have mentioned that though incidences of water-borne diseases have decreased, but still there are some exceptions. The community participation is enhancing the promotion of health & hygiene education among mass people, because through participation the community people have gained knowledge about health-care that has an impact in reducing infant mortality rate. With the change of knowledge and attitude the culture related to some specific diseases have also been changed. Now almost all the people have knowledge about diarrhoea that it is not anything other than germs of the specific disease. "Safe WatSan and knowledge of health education have driven away *Ula Devi* from the village", said Rehana Akter, a housewife. She also added, "The improvement of the health status in the village has occurred as a result of strong and massive participation of the community people. No individual or any specific group of people can do such activities, it needs united efforts". However,

united and uniform effort of NGO Forum, PNGOs and the villagers has made this success in ensuring WatSan and health improvement.

Women Empowerment:

For both men and women it is important to have access to the safe water and sanitation facilities. It is crucial specially for women because they are the principal managers of domestic water needs and family health care. To meet the health objectives the government has changed its policy towards an integrated approach which combines provision of safe water and sanitary latrine with health education. However, health education has been considered necessary because continued practice of indiscriminate defecation and use of contaminated surface water for non-drinking purposes including bathing, washing utensils, etc. have serious effects on health. The approach also emphasises on the health education to put greater attention on women because women have the control over family hygiene practices. NGO Forum has been implementing the WatSan programme following the National WatSan Policy adopting an integrated community managed approach of water and sanitation programme giving special focus on ensuring the participation of women.

A large number of women in the village have been trained as caretakers responsible for minor repairs such as replacing worn-out parts, regular maintenance and cleaning of tubewell platforms. In many regions it is revealed that the women are the best in taking care of tubewell and other technologies, because they are benefited most from these technologies. Many of them stated that the scepticism about the capacity of women has been replaced with acceptance after participation in the WatSan programme of NGO Forum. The participants also mentioned that naturally women would perform efficiently

because they are taking the tubewell and sharing a certain percentage of cost for tubewell, and getting knowledge about the best use of the resources through training. The households who do not have any safe water technologies at their homestead, the transportation of water mainly becomes the responsibility of women and children of those families, who normally have to carry the water from a far distance. As a result of having access to water technologies the human drudgery is reduced and their time is also saved. Alongside, the knowledge on health awareness due to health education, conducted by NGO Forum has increased substantially which perpetuate to enhance the capacity of the women. The Forum's training services also has increased their technical know-how in achieving the targeted objectives of the maintenance of water and sanitation facilities.

Community participation issues cover the participation of trans-sectional people irrespective of age, sex and social class of the society. It demands that different knowledge, roles and responsibilities, needs, priorities and control over the resources of both male and female need to be considered for the smooth operation and implementation of the water and sanitation programme. The implementing partner organizations have been trying to ensure all these criteria as facilitated by the NGO Forum.

Courtyard Meeting - The Secret to Women Participation

"The rural illiterate women met together and discussed the matters related to safe water and sanitation programme and its importance in the Courtyard Meeting. They also tried to promote safe WatSan through dissemination of relevant messages among their neighbours", disclosed a man of the Kolijug village under Doudkandi thana. Kolijug village is not different from the other villages of Bangladesh. But the women who participated in Courtyard Meeting have become

acquainted with knowledge of safe water and sanitation and this is different from that of other villages. Saleha Begum, a housewife and one of the participants of the Courtyard Meeting said, "We were not familiar with safe WatSan and health education before participation in this Meeting but now we know about safe and unsafe water and sanitation". She added, "I hesitated to participate in a Meeting like this, but now I get interest to participate, because I can learn about different issues that are related to sound health and environment. Another woman Shahida uphold the significance of the Meeting, "I did not know about the arsenic contamination and its impact on health situation, but now I have learnt the way to keep ourselves free from arsenic contamination". It has been observed that not only they have learnt a lot about safe WatSan from the Courtyard Meeting, they also have become aware about child health-care, maternal health-care, etc. Anju, a woman, mentioned that they believed that the stool of children not to be so much harmful, so they did not care about the indiscriminate defecation of children. However, it has changed after participation in Courtyard Meeting.

The women now can conduct Courtyard Meeting by themselves. They discuss different issues like advantages of safe WatSan and disadvantages of unsafe WatSan, necessity of taking preventive measures against unhygienic WatSan, way of ensuring participation,

etc. and disseminate these among their neighbours. Through this process the participants have also become capable of motivating people to safe WatSan practices. The Courtyard Meetings have finally helped to increase participation of the village women towards safe WatSan and hygiene promotion.

Though the traditional gender biased division of labor disregarded the importance of the priorities and responsibilities of both male and female but that has been taken into account in the NGO Forum's community managed approach of water and sanitation programme. The participation depends on whether the programme has been designed by keeping enough space for involvement of women. NGO Forum's water and sanitation programme has enough scope for participation of women though the level of participation is still to reach to the desired level.

Different stakeholders and community people have mentioned that women participation is quite good in water and sanitation programme in all the intervened villages supported by NGO Forum. It is impulsive that women are involved in different activities related to water and sanitation. They are coming up as masons and trained caretakers of tubewell. It is encouraging that women are taking decision equally with their husbands in the installation of tubewell and sanitary latrine in the house. A student of class eight of Paylatala village under Morelganj thana, Bagerhat mentioned that the women and girls are participating in different activities related to water and sanitation which was unexpected a few years back. She also added that male members are also participating in the programme through Village Development Committee. The scepticism about the capacity of women has withered away from the village due to their active role and result oriented activities.

The community based programme approach of NGO Forum has been appreciated by different groups of people. The combination of awareness raising, motivation and material support have made the community participation effective. Some local journalists who had visited some of the areas where the water and sanitation programme has been implemented by the partner organizations of NGO Forum assessed, "A good progress has been achieved in these areas. In many cases use of safe water was increased substantially and particularly great progress has been made in sanitation coverage. Specially the women have achieved a great success in the field of sanitary latrine installation and in ensuring its safe and proper use". "But the community participation is being hampered, where there is no sources of safe water due to arsenic contamination in the groundwater", commented Fakre Alam a journalist in Jessore.

Women participation is quite good in some areas, under NGO Forum-facilitated WatSan programme. Women are involved in different activities. The water technologies have been taken care of and maintained mainly by women. Alongside, women are also taking decisions about the installation of sanitary latrine and tubewell in their houses. This has only been achieved through the participation of people in the water and sanitation programme of NGO Forum. Alongside the female the male members are also participating in the programme through Local Discussion Forum, Village Development Committee, Religious Leaders' Orientation, and many other programmes operated by NGO Forum. These programmes reveal that women are coming out from the household boundary and taking active part in different development activities. Momena Begum of Pakundia stated, "You find the women working as caretaker of the tubewell as well as you will find the women are producing ring and slab for sanitary latrine

in the village. Before a few years it was absurd but now it is a common scenario".

Momena Fights over Favour

Momena, 40, lives in Ahotia village of Pakundia Thana under Kishoreganj district. Her peaceful family life was destroyed when her husband got married to another woman. Momena was compelled to leave her husband's residence with her 3 children. After separating from her husband she started a journey of sufferings. She took shelter into her father's residence. But her father and brothers were unable to bear their responsibilities. In these circumstances she had to work as a maidservant in the residence of a local elite, because she had not any specialized skill to get a job in any sector. But the income from her job was insufficient to maintain her family of four members. Therefore, Momena was looking for opportunities to earn extra income.

Momena came to know that an NGO named Palli Bikash Kendra (PBK), a partner organization of NGO Forum, had established a Village Sanitation Centre in that village, where a few female workers were needed for making rings and slabs for sanitary latrine. She became interested to do this job and subsequently she contacted a representative of PBK. She was suggested to participate in the mason training programme of NGO Forum organized by PBK. Accordingly she participated in the training programme and completed successfully. After completion of training she started to work in that local VSC. Since last year Momena has been working in this centre. She gets at least 2000 taka per month through this work. " Now I am not frustrated about my family. I am very much confident with my skills as a mason and satisfied with my monthly income". There are few people who do not appreciate the activities of Momena. Sometimes they criticize Momena and women like her. Momena does not care for the criticism and she is proud to become a mason, and express herself, "Now I go to make sanitary latrines in other villages sometimes. I don't feel shy and do not bother about the criticism of others". Momena added that before starting this job she could not

manage food for her children. Though her elder son was suffering from a serious disease, she could not arrange proper treatment for him because of her extreme poverty. Now she is able to manage the required food and other necessities for her children.

Recently she has built a tin-roofed house with the cost of about Tk.

7000. She also spent Tk. 5000 for the marriage ceremony of her only daughter.

According to Momena the opportunity to work at the VSC helped her to accomplish the above duties. Once she was helpless because she had not any earning sources. Now she is not helpless because she earns a good amount per month and her elder son also earns a little through working as a day laborer. Her youngest son now a school student of class four. Momena says, "When we were suffering then our relatives did not care for us. Now my relatives are much concerned about us and they frequently visit us, because we are economically solvent and need no help from other relatives". Through hard working she achieved the freedom from economic and social problems. Her husband again expressed his desire to take her into his residence. He offered Momena that he is agreed to divorce his second wife but Momena refused the proposal. Now Momena has the freedom to decide because she is not dependent on any body.

Md. Kubbat Ali of Dhopapara village under Faridpur district said, "Society has been changing and the opportunity & scope

for gaining knowledge have been increasing day by day. With the realization of the people that women have active role in family for maintaining and ensuring hygiene practice of their children, the participation increased rapidly". People are actively participating in water and sanitation programme and trying to ensure the participation of women. The women could not take part in meetings like Courtyard Meeting, and VDC meeting before but now people have become aware about the necessity of WatSan. As a result, the males do not make any restriction on the females to take part in such meetings. Not only that women are taking part in the training of caretakers of WatSan technologies which has increased the mobility. The participation in water and sanitation programme has also capacitated the women that have created the sense of empowerment. A tubewell caretaker stated that "Neighbors call me for repairing their inoperative tubewell, and that makes me proud".

The observation reaches to the assessment that through the facilitation of the Community Managed WatSan Programme participation of women has been ensured up to a significant level; but it should be further continued. In this regard, participation of the male members also to be increased, because, they take decision at family and community levels. Women of the rich households do not participate adequately in the WatSan programme. Women in the programme intervened villages have achieved the position in the family and community to take part in development activities of the village but in few places women are still facing some crisis. The cultural barrier, fundamentalism, lack of knowledge are still having in our society. But the situations have been changing very rapidly in the WatSan coverage villages.

Poverty Alleviation:

The social structure is the web or relationship among different social institutions and members of society. The institutional changes in the grassroots have linkages with poverty. Illiteracy, ill health, lack of employable skills, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, lack of analytical ability to understand the causes of poverty, superstitious belief and practices etc. are the root cause of poverty. The water and sanitation programme facilitated by NGO Forum has been promoting water and sanitation technologies and various software which enable the villagers to adapt those as cross-cutting issues.

Normally the linkage between the Community Managed WatSan Programme and the poverty of people is direct. Alongside, the programme, which is implemented through participatory manner, has indirect role in poverty reduction. It is true that WatSan programme has produced some skilled people who are employed as the mason, core group trainer of the partner organisation, Pond Sand Filter and Rain-water Harvesting System mechanic, and private producer. However, it is observed that there is a substantial relation between the expenditure and savings of the households through safe water use in every purpose and sanitary latrine use properly. Because these activities prevent them from the diseases that indirectly prevents the re-creation of poverty. It helps to keep up the productive capacity of the human being through preventing the diseases. Alongside, the new income generating opportunity creation also has an impact on the poverty reduction through the water and sanitation programme facilitated by the NGO Forum.

Swapan No More a Household Servant

Swapan got married nine years back and now he is the father of a son. His family failed to provide any support to start his life. Moreover, he had not any specialization in any activities to get a job. Completing

only the primary education Swapan Kumar Sarkar started to work as a servant for household work in Shatkhira town with a very low salary due to extreme poverty of his family. But it was very difficult to manage the family of three members including his boy child, wife and he himself. Then he started to pull van and to carry goods from one place to another. Through van pulling he became introduced with Rishilpi, a partner NGO of NGO Forum, located near Satkhira town. He started to carry goods of this organisation, but income from the van pulling was also insufficient to maintain his family and the work was very hard for him. Therefore he was looking for a better opportunity.

Rishilpi offered him the opportunity to participate in Mason training programme of NGO Forum. Swapan said, "I tried to know the prospects of this training and became interested to participate in it". Accordingly he participated in this training programme and then started to work at the Village Sanitation Center (VSC) of Rishilpi, established with the assistance of NGO Forum. He started to produce rings and slabs of sanitary latrine. Now he earns about Tk. 1500 per month from this activity. He works at best 20 days per month at the Rishilpi VSC, so he gets scope to work outside the organization as secondary sources of earning. From those sources he also earns a little amount. His wife also earns Tk. 500 per month by supplying low home-made handicrafts to Rishilpi. His only son reads in class one and the son gets Tk. 200 per month from the school of Rishilpi as part of their financial assistance programme to the destitute student. These incomes help Swapan leading his family modestly.

According to Swapan, working as a mason is the breakthrough of his living. Before this work he worked hard but was unable to maintain the family properly due to insufficient income. He always had to take loan in the lean employment seasons from others for survival, but now he is able to manage his family without taking any loan and help from others. He says, "The mason training of NGO Forum gives me an opportunity to leave the too hard-working job like full time van pulling and less attractive jobs in agricultural sectors in which my other brothers are still involved. Before working as a mason I did not get my regular meals to eat but now I can manage enough meals and three times a day".

Now Swapan thinks about his life in a different way. He has again admitted himself in the Secondary School Certificate programme under the Open University. He says, "I could think about my education due to higher income from his present occupation. "He knows that without education, the quality of life can not be improved. He also expresses his desire to educate his only child properly". He admits that involvement with Rishilpi and participation in NGO Forum's mason training programme not only gives him economic opportunities to build up life but also gives him insight to understand life properly. He says, "The vision of my life has totally been changed through participation in NGO Forum's training and working as a mason at the VSC of Rishilpi".

Though not direct, there is a linkage of water and sanitation programme and income generation activities but there is an indirect relationship between hygiene practice, health improvement and poverty reduction, the community people pointed out. The Community Managed WatSan Programme

plays an important role through generating employment, skill development of existing human resources and efficiency of the community people. The Community Managed WatSan Programme has the option to train the masons, private producers, core group trainers and other persons that increases the capacity of these people in operating the activities efficiently. The programme of NGO Forum also provides support to the private producers to ensure cost effective WatSan technologies at the doorsteps of the community people. This process also creates employment for private producers and increases their income.

Entrepreneurship Ensures Rashid's Economic Emancipation

Rashid Fakir (32), an inhabitant of Borikhali village under Morelganj thana in Bagerhat district. He was brought up in such a large and economically poor family that he even did not complete his primary education because in his childhood he had to work in the field with his father and brothers for the survival of the family. When his 3 elder brothers became capable to earn more, then they became separated from the joint family of his father. He served in his father's family for the last five years as the main earning member being the youngest son of his parents. Finally he has also become separated from his father. Now his family consists of him, his wife and his only daughter. He has been running the business of producing the ring and slab for sanitary latrine since last ten years. At first he managed his initial capital from a close relative. He faced the problems of capital crisis in his business. His business was not so good that he could get loan from the Bank. Sometimes he took loan from the local elite at a higher rate of interest. So he was searching for loan at less interest. He was informed about the activities of NGO Forum. He came in connection to the Executive Director of the Community Development Center (CDC), a partner organization of NGO Forum.

The CDC selected Rashid Fakir as the private producer for supporting WatSan programme through providing rings and slabs at the doorsteps of the people. He was also selected for getting the interest free loan because he was already involved in this business and he would be able to increase the production for selected Community Managed WatSan Village as well as for other villages. He received Tk. 15,000 as loan from the NGO Forum and got training as a mason. Before getting the loan he could at best make 30 sets (one set consist of 5 rings and 1 slab) per month. But after getting the loan he started producing 60 sets per month. Before receiving the loan he was unable to maintain his family by his income but now his income has increased to Tk. 4000 per month, with which he is able to maintain his family properly. He usually sells the rings and slabs from his center that is situated in his own residence. But in the rainy season he sends those materials by boats to the remote areas.

According to him the quality of his goods is now very high after receiving the training from NGO Forum. Nobody has complained about the quality of the goods so far. During

selling he gives advice to customers about installation and proper use of sanitary latrine. He says, "I am not only a businessman of rings and slabs to the customers. I feel that it is my responsibility as a trained person to advice the villagers about the good uses of sanitary latrine". The loan from NGO Forum has helped him getting rid of economic problems. He now lives a happy life and contributing to social development.

"Poverty is not just a state of deprivation but it is also a state of vulnerability. Even an episode of ordinary illness can turn into a crisis", said S.A. Samad, Executive Director of CCDA, a partner NGO of NGO Forum in Comilla. He also added that the treatment for both chronic and sudden illness is both expensive that lead to poverty again. The illness and impoverishment is a vicious cycle. In the poor household, if any member becomes sick that increases the emergency health expenditure for that family, which again increases vulnerability to illness within an entire household. To the poor whose prime employable asset is their physical labour, sound health is more than a consumer need, it is essential to the family's productivity and to maintain bare sustenance. From this perspective it is assessed that the Community Managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum has been contributing to the poor villagers in reducing their poverty.

Family health is a key determinant factor in the capacity of a poor family to move towards a poverty alleviation process of savings, investment, assets building and income generation. The cost of ill health to a poor family is not only the direct cost of consultation, medication and related expenditure, the indirect costs are always substantial. Such incidence of illness leads to the income erosion of the poor households that again perpetuates to vulnerability. A substantial number of such incidences can be overcome through hygiene practice and

behavioural changes of the household members. The people of the WatSan coverage villages have reported that they are getting benefit in relation to poverty reduction through hygiene and safe WatSan practices.

Cost-Sharing and Ownership:

The ownership may have different forms, but the WatSan programme is operated to establish the community ownership on different WatSan technologies and on the overall programme. The active participation, efforts and contribution of any kind create a sense of ownership among the contributors. NGO Forum implements the water and sanitation programme through its partner organizations in the community in participatory approach, where the community people are the key actors in implementing the programme. A sense of ownership has developed among the participants of the community. As part of the effective implementation of the programme the hardware and software support is provided to the community through partners. The hardware, especially different water technologies, feasible in different geophysical condition, are provided to the community with their sharing of a certain amount of cost as defined in the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation*. Proper maintenance of the WatSan services are ensured through the participation of the user of those. The sense of ownership is growing among the community people who took active part in the water and sanitation programme facilitated by NGO Forum.

The establishment of local ownership and responsibility over the WatSan services are the main consequences of people's participation. The Village Development Committees and communities are trusted by different stakeholders because of the people's self-management capacities and collective initiatives. Fokre Alam, a journalist of Jessore mentioned, "The

Community Managed Water and Sanitation Programme of NGO Forum has gained the reliability to that extent, which is no doubt an example of a successful model of community managed development programme". The Community Managed Water and Sanitation Programme has become effective and popular to the people of the community because it has made the cost sharing issue easier through its strategy and approach.

To materialize a self-sustaining Water and Sanitation Programme and to ensure a sustainable development in the sector people's participation is required throughout the project cycle, in the planning phase, in the implementation of activities up to monitoring and maintenance of the WatSan technologies.

The community participation under NGO Forum-facilitated WatSan programme has ensured the easy access to the water technologies for the community people. The participation of the community people is essential for ensuring and making the cost sharing. People are interested to share a certain level of cost for ownership and establishment of control over the WatSan technologies provided by the NGO Forum through the Partner organizations.

The maintenance of the tubewell and sanitary latrine have been good. Though two persons are trained as caretaker for each water point and the community people have been given idea about the maintenance of latrine through different meetings, but every one of the respective beneficiaries takes care and maintains WatSan services with their own initiatives. The conduction of promotional activities and material supports to the community-based organizations have encouraged the community people to work for greater participation in the WatSan programme. The community people have the opportunity to take active part in the decision-making process

and also in the overall implementation of the water and sanitation programme.

People feel that the sense of community ownership has evolved among them due to NGO Forum-facilitated Community Managed WatSan Programme intervention. Before intervention of this programme people did not have the experience of activities like participatory community managed programme and the issue of sharing cost. The issue of cost sharing in WatSan programme of NGO Forum covers in two steps, investment cost and recurrent cost. The investment cost is that needed to construct, expand, upgrade or replace water supply systems. The government, donors or NGOs usually carry the investment cost. On the other hand the recurrent cost is that needed to keep the system functioning and providing the required service level whilst ensuring efficient and effective use. The recurrent cost is carried by the user of the technology. However, the National WatSan Policy (1998) refers to the cost sharing (investment cost) of water technologies. The National WatSan Policy (1998) defines, "As water is increasingly considered economic as well as social good, water supply service is provided based on user demand and cost sharing. In the near future concerned communities shall share at least the following portions of costs: (a) 50 per cent for hand tubewells in the shallow water table areas, (b) 25% for hand tubewell in low water table areas, (c) 20% for deep hand tubewells and other technologies for difficult areas". NGO Forum under its Community Managed WatSan Programme maintaining this mandate in full swing. As a result the communities are becoming responsible for operation and maintenance of water supply facilities and bearing all recurrent costs. The cost sharing issue is inter-linked to some extent with the ownership. The software programme creates the sense of ownership and the cost sharing issue establishes the legal right. NGO Forum is basically creating the sense of ownership.

The sense of ownership over WatSan technologies has been developed among the community people in the coverage villages of NGO Forum. They are interested in buying the sanitary latrine at cost price. The water technology owners know that they commonly own the water points because they have shared a part of the cost for that. Momena, Helena, and Mehera 3 caretakers from Kishoreganj district said that in some cases equal sharing of cost for water technology might not be possible. Helena said, "When we received the tubewell from the Palli Bikash Kendra (PBK) then it was a very lean season for employment for the day laborer. There are three families of our group who were extremely poor. At that time they were not able to manage their meal three times a day. It was not possible to pressure those families to share the cost for tubewell and finally the rest of the group members paid the full amount of their sharing cost. Although they could not pay but they are also owners of the water technology".

Some of the stakeholders have mentioned that though the programme has achieved a substantial success but the cost sharing issue is still a challenge for the better implementation of the Community Managed WatSan Programme, because of extreme poverty of a section of the society, lack of coordination and bypassing of the National WatSan Policy by different organizations and so on. Such limitations hamper the programme and national objectives. To reach the objective and greater success those issues need to be considered from all corners.

Sustainability of WatSan Achievements:

The sustainability is the main objective of Community Managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum. NGO Forum has been conducting the WatSan programme to ensure sound health and environment of the people, to empower the

community people specially women, and to build the capacity of the community based institutions. These objectives can be materialised by ensuring the sustainability of the achievements of WatSan programme. The sustainability issue needs to be considered in relation to (a) attitude and behavioural perspectives of sustainability, (b) technological perspective of sustainability and (c) institutional perspective of sustainability. The attitude and behavioural perspectives refer to the use of the WatSan materials in relation to socio-economic dimensions, the technological perspective refers to the quality and sustainability of WatSan technology and the institutional perspective refers to the institutional capacity. The effectiveness and efficiency of users and implementers of WatSan programme facilities are other key dimensions of sustainability.

NGO Forum as a networking body in the field of water and sanitation has been providing support to its partner organisations with an objective to implement community managed, and low-cost sustainable water and sanitation programme to ensure sound health and better life. Through a process of adequate people's participation in a transparent democratic system, a development programme can be sustainable. Therefore, the increase of coverage of water and sanitation and its sustainability have been highlighted through the experience of the water and sanitation programme of NGO Forum. The water and sanitation programme of NGO Forum is designed and implemented in a community managed approach through the active participation of community people irrespective of class and gender. On the other hand, in ensuring participation the programme have been designed with combination of hardware and software of water and sanitation services. Initially the software programme is conducted in the selected areas for programme implementation to create demand for the services in the society. Then the appropriate

and feasible low-cost WatSan technologies are provided to meet the community demand.

Democratisation of development through people's participation is not only ideological but a practical phenomenon as regard to sustainability. NGO Forum, a networking body, has been facilitating the implementation of the water and sanitation programme in a democratic process where the implementing agencies have been ensuring the participation of each and every group of people. The people are having the equal opportunity to participate and to play the role for effective implementation of the programme. These activities are conducted by following the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation* with a view to making the programme achievement sustainable.

The sustainability of the water and sanitation technology has been ensured through the participation of community people. The sustainability depends on the quality of the materials and technical knowledge of caretakers and users for proper maintenance. NGO Forum provides the training to masons and private producers of sanitary latrine to maintain the quality of the sanitary materials and also conducts training for the caretakers to make them capable of proper maintenance of water-technologies. It also provides equipments and manuals on latrine production, installation and maintenance and on repairing of water technologies to respective persons to ensure the quality of the services. With the better use of all these the community people take care and maintain water technologies very efficiently that helps for the sustainability of the water technology. The main condition for sustainability is the knowledge base that is gained by the villagers in the programme operated villages. That is finally leading to ensure the sustainability of the respective services. However, the essence of sustainability of WatSan technologies lies behind the

habit and knowledge of the community people, which is being ensured by NGO Forum with the implementation of demand-responsive WatSan technologies through its partners.

The sustainability of the achievements and behavioural changes and its practices are interrelated. The behavioural changes of hygiene practices of the community people determine the sustainability of achievements. The understanding and knowledge of the community people on the issue are also considerable factors of its practices. The people of Community Managed WatSan Villages have changed their behaviour and are continuing the safe WatSan and hygiene practices. The village people have gained much knowledge to continue it in the long run for their survival. It has been assessed that cost sharing and institutionalisation of the programme at the community level has also been ensuring the proper use of WatSan technologies.

The behavioural changes and sustainability of the WatSan programme's achievements are also interdependent. If the community people are not habituated to use the technologies, they do not maintain it carefully. As a result, the technologies become inoperative. Due to lack of habituation and insufficient knowledge about WatSan the sustainability issue becomes a challenge to the programme. It has also been observed that some old and illiterate people have accepted the WatSan programme as good thing, but still they can not maintain, because of their habit of defecation in bushes and/or in open place. Some of them do not use sufficient water in the latrine for despatching waste from the latrine after defecation. They also added that it would take another one or two years to change their habit and activities. This is also a challenge for the sustainability of the achievements in behavioural change and hygiene practices, which they have learnt through Community Managed WatSan Programme.

The community participation and the achievements of coverage, maintenance, cost-sharing and proper implementation of the water and sanitation programme for safe water use in all purposes and installation and use of sanitary latrine have reached to a considerable level of sustainability in the coverage villages. Optimum changes have been made in water and sanitation sector through an integrated and united efforts of the community people. However, the efforts of the programme would be able to shift the responsibility to the community people through its appropriate design and strategies of implementation. Those strategies will also ensure the sustainability of both programme achievements and people's changing attitudes and behaviour.

Students Teaching the Villagers

"School WatSan Programme is boosting up community participation in the Community Managed Water and Sanitation Programme and also establishing the background of sustainability of its achievements at the grassroots level", said Ranju, a student of class ten of Ambaria High School. The Samonnito Unnyan Seba Sangathon (SUSS) of Madhupur thana under Tangail district is implementing the WatSan Programme in Ambaria village with assistance from NGO Forum. As part of the WatSan programme, NGO Forum has been facilitating the partner organisation to operate activities among students of the school to make the water and sanitation programme successful through ensuring community participation.

Ranju articulated, "Now we have realised that the WatSan programme is not the programme of SUSS or NGO Forum, it is the programme of the community people that should be managed, operated, monitored by the community people for their own interest to reach the targeted achievements. The villagers have achieved their WatSan coverage within a very short time. Ishrat Jahan, a girl student of the same school has mentioned that the students are

playing very effective role in motivating the illiterate villagers to ensure their participation in the programme of the community people. She disclosed herself, "Knowing from NGO Forum and SUSS staff about the bad effect of unhygienic practices, we disseminate the same to our neighbour and request them to install and use sanitary latrine. They realise the affect of unhygienic practice and most of the villagers have already installed sanitary latrine in the village". Zakaria, the first boy of class ten said, "We have a system that if someone finds the practice of open defecation by the roadside or at any open place by any child they prohibit him and go to his parents and request them to habituate their child to use safe latrine".

Some other students of class ten mentioned that previously they read in their books about the advantage of hygiene practices for passing the examination, but did not understand its importance in the daily life. The students became aware about the deleterious characteristics of unhygienic practices

after participation in the School WatSan Programme, where it was presented through visual mode. In raising awareness about hygiene practices in the village the students are playing the key role because the School Programme has made them capable to understand the importance of safe water use in all purposes and use of sanitary

latrine properly for safe and sound health. The students also mentioned that they are the teachers of the illiterate villagers specifically on water and sanitation issues.

The sustainability of the water supply and sanitation coverage depends on awareness, self-responsibility and above all on habit of hygiene practices. Fatima Begum of the same class added that when people will become habituated in using the sanitary latrine, they will avoid open defecation and unhygienic practices. Initially students are taking part in making them habituated in hygiene practices. Each class of the school has a Class WatSan Committee who monitors their neighbouring household and motivate people to buy sanitary latrines. The School WatSan Committee regularly reviews the performance of the Class Committees.

The students of the school have been playing the key role in promotion of water and sanitation. The students have expressed their desire that they must continue WatSan programme in the school for cent percent coverage and for its sustainability. If they continue this programme students will learn more about water and sanitation programme. Alongside other stakeholders and catalysts the students have been thrusting it to the doorstep of success.

In the water and sanitation programme of the NGO Forum the community participation and institutional sustainability are strongly related. Institution is the rules and regulations that keep the programme functioning. NGO Forum provides various supports to build up institutions at the community level. The Community Managed WatSan Programme is implemented by the Village Development Committee, which is a new form of institution at the village or community level. The VDC members have reported that the programme has helped them to realize the necessity of community initiatives and community level institutions. From this realisation the Village Development Committee has been performing its activities for

self-sustenance and well functioning. The VDC works as a village level organisation consists of people from different strata of the society. Because of its united strength the community people can fight against the problems related to WatSan. From the self-realisation and understanding about the existing situation of the village, members of VDCs are committed to keep their initiatives functional, which is putting forward the issue of sustainability.

The community management is a way to achieve self-reliance where people are no longer dependent on the benevolence or assistance from the outside to secure common interest. Through the community management, the VDCs have achieved the analytical, productive and organisational capacity to design and to formulate strategies. These capacities have been contributing to the improvement of the life of VDC members and ensuring their independent status. The Village Development Committees have proved its capacity and institutional strength by taking initiatives for the overall development plan of the village. This process has been ensuring the sustainability of the institution.

The VDC Volunteers for Village Development

The village development committee was formed at the village Kolijug under Daudkandi thana of Comilla district by CCDA, a partner organization of NGO Forum. It was selected as a WatSan coverage village in the year of 1999. The Committee was formed in the same year. The Committee consists of 16 members who represent all sections of the community people namely village doctor, school teacher, local government representative, local elite, common man, and woman. The committee was formed for facilitating overall development issues in their village especially for smooth implementation of the water and sanitation programme.

The VDC members organize meeting in every month. Through the meeting they distribute responsibilities to the Committee members for mobilizing villagers towards the practice of safe water and sanitation.

The members of this committee are determined to continue the overall development activities of the village. According to the chairman of the committee, "It was our aim to achieve cent percent coverage of sanitation. We have already reached at that

goal. Already cent percent sanitation coverage has been achieved in this village through the participation of the community people. There is not a single household in the village without sanitary latrine. Now we want to continue the WatSan activities through our involvement with other development activities like reduction of poverty, infrastructural development, education, creating health facilities, etc."

The Village Development Committee now playing an important role in infrastructural development of the village. The members contributed very much for constructing the new roads and repairing

the existing roads. With the help of the Union Parishad Chairman the VDC constructed new roads and repaired old ones. Sometimes they give voluntary physical labour for this purpose. Now the committee is very much concerned about the electricity facilities in the village. They have already met with the Rural Electric Cooperatives. According to the suggestion of the Cooperatives they have taken an initiative to raise fund for getting electricity connection. These things have been geared up by the initiative of the Village Development Committee. One of the VDC members said that after the formation of the Committee they have learned many new things about social development. Rafiqul Islam one of the VDC members who is also a UP member said, "I am frankly speaking that though these activities are our own responsibility but we did not take any initiative due to lack of knowledge. We could not realize things well before as we can perceive those now".

The VDC has also taken initiative to extend education in the village. They motivate villagers to send their children to school. There is only a primary school in the village. That is not enough for them. For this purpose they have set up another school for girls. The Village Development Committee also works for arbitration. They give fair judgement and try to solve all type of conflicts in a consultative process. They ask people not to go to thana or court. Rafiqul Islam also said, "We have already established social cohesion in the village by giving fair judgement". As a result, people need not go to thana or court. Now the Village Development Committee is not a committee for the implementation of water and sanitation programme only, but it has become a village-based institution for the welfare of the villagers.

The community participation is an important instrument for ensuring the resources for the development and its efficient use. It also minimizes the misunderstanding and possible disagreements because all people are collectively working in the Community Managed WatSan Programme from planning to implementation. It also has made the programme cost-

effective because the people instead of the outsiders have taken the responsibility for implementing, which has reduced administrative as well as other costs of the programme implementation. The water and sanitation programme of the NGO Forum has made the programme cost effective. It also has increased the efficiency of the local people. It has been observed that the staffs of the implementing agencies have become efficient in maintaining development programme alongside the WatSan programme. It has been mentioned by most of the executives of NGO Forum's partner organizations that the training programme of NGO Forum has increased the efficiency of their staff. This is the precondition for the sustainability of the WatSan programme.

However, alongside the efficiency of the implementing organizations, the people's participation has also been effective in the water and sanitation program at the community level. The participation allows the people to have their voice in determining objectives from the experience of the community. In the participatory and community managed programme the people have the opportunity to incorporate and support the programme with indigenous knowledge and skills that make the programme effective. The local knowledge and skills have an important role in reaching objectives of the programme, which can be addressed through the community participatory approach. The people of Ahutia village under Kishoreganj district have informed that in the rainy season they could not install sanitary latrine because the groundwater comes up at that time. So they have adjusted the timeframe for the implementation considering the local constraints. The indigenous knowledge has been addressed in the participatory approach that helped to make the WatSan programme sustainable. The community participation has created the option for incorporating such knowledge, which increased the effectiveness of the water and sanitation programme.

It is evident from the opinion of people that the participation of the community people helps to break the mentality of dependence. The participation in WatSan programme creates self-awareness and confidence of the people. Now the people of Anderkota village under Gopalganj district are examining their problems and think positively about its solutions. Now the people have the control over the issues of water and sanitation that affects their lives. "Before participating in the programme we did not have any control over the issues of WatSan and diseases that are broken out through the unhygienic practices. Now we can control the diseases," said Unnyati Moulik. Now the village people of the WatSan coverage villages can plan and implement any development programme with minimum assistance. The participation breaks the people's isolation and does the groundwork for them to have a substantial influence on development and also to have greater independence and control over their lives. The people of all the villages have achieved the capability to realize their problems and to make plans for the necessary solutions.

The WatSan coverage has increased tremendously in most of the villages. Within the last two years average sanitation coverage rate of the coverage villages has risen up to 90 percent. This achievement has become possible due to participation of all section of the community people. NGO Forum's water and sanitation programme is designed as a demand-responsive programme, where the demand is created through massive social mobilization. The coverage also depends on the participation of the community people. The coverage of the water and sanitation has reached to cent percent where the participation is higher. The participation ensures this coverage involving more people into this safe WatSan and hygiene promotion campaign.

The externally-motivated development programmes often fail to sustain, where the participation of community people is not ensured. The arguments which link participation with sustainability is mainly economic, but other issues of the WatSan programme are ownership, maintenance and cost-sharing. Alongside the economic issues the social, cultural and institutional dynamics also become intervening variables of the sustainability of the programme. More generally sustainability refers to continuity. It emphasizes on participation as fundamental need for a self-sustaining momentum in the water and sanitation areas. The Village Development Committees have got such level of momentum in ensuring the participation and conducting the activities that lead the programme towards sustainability. An integrated effort of NGO Forum, partner organizations and community people have made WatSan a successful community managed programme.

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