

Sustaining the Success

Study Conduction:

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Foreword

NGO Forum has been on the road to usher in a better water supply and sanitation scenario for quite a while. During this long journey the Forum focused on ensuring access to basic water supply, sanitation and hygiene for the poor and disadvantaged community people. Fine tuning between hardware and software services NGO Forum has been thriving in the WatSan sector with a wide range of programmes highlighting on community needs and demand.

With a view to ensuring sustainability of the achievements NGO Forum always emphasizes on community participation. Entrusting the management role to the community leaders, NGO Forum has been implementing demand-responsive water supply, sanitation and hygiene programme for the grassroots people.

Guided by the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply & Sanitation*, NGO Forum has adopted different programmatic approaches with time, although the main theme was community participation. During the period 1999–2005, NGO Forum implemented Community-managed WatSan Programme through its partner organizations targeting to ensure 100% WatSan coverage in a village within a 2-year period. The essence of the Community-managed WatSan Programme was management by the community representatives.

Formed in a structured committee, namely the Village Development Committee (VDC) the different classes of community people were involved in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Being imparted with capacity building support the VDC played the role of managing the programme and impacted on ensuring sustainability of the programme through ensuring community participation and cost-sharing, establishing the community's ownership over the services and facilities. Through the process of carrying out Community-managed WatSan Programme the institution-building process at the grassroots level has also been targeted and eventually made possible to a great extent.

However after some years of phasing out from the community-managed WatSan village, time has come to look back and assess the level of sustainability of the achievements as well as the village-based institutions, i.e. VDC. Therefore a comprehensive study has looked into different aspects of the programme and the state of affairs after 5/6 years of phase out from the villages. Throwing light on the process, strategies methods of implementation of the programme and emphasizing on the issue of sustainability of the achievements and the functional condition of the VDC, the study has found out the contribution and effectiveness of the Community-managed WatSan Programme.

NGO Forum acknowledges the success of the programme as a result of the participation and zeal of the community people and the village-based institution, the VDC, as they are still continuing their involvement in the overall development of the village. At the same time the Forum also acknowledges the efforts of its partners in keeping up the monitoring and follow-up even after phasing out for so long.

NGO Forum feels that such approach is very much effective and has the potential for replication. The theme of management by the community itself has been proven to bring in and sustaining the success.

I would like to convey my all out thanks and gratitude to Mr. Md. Ayub Ali of Society for Research and Development Steps (SRDS) for conducting the study. I am also grateful to our partners, the VDCs, community allies and other stakeholders for their cooperation and contribution in smooth conduction of the study. I would like to give my heartiest thanks to my colleagues who have taken the pains in publishing this Book.

I hope the sector will be benefited from the findings of the Book in the light of sustainability issue since the Book highlights on different aspects of the Community-managed WatSan Programme and the state of sustainability after phasing out from the villages.

S.M.A. Rashid

Executive Director

NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation

Synthesis

The Community-managed WatSan Programme was implemented by NGO Forum as an apex networking body in the water and sanitation sector through its partner organizations across the country. In the last phase (1999-2005), NGO Forum facilitated its partners to implement the programme adopting the “model village approach”, which was designed for two years. After 3-6 years of phasing out of the villages, the study was conducted for comprehensive understanding about the sustainability of achievement of the programme, specially the sustainability of the Village Development Committees (VDC) which were considered as key actors of this Programme.

Methodological issues: This study focused on sustainability of the programme’s accomplishment and the approach and strategies of implementation of the programme. It was also aimed to understand the capabilities and experiences that contributed in community participation, creation of ownership & sustainability of facilities, etc. To capture the state of work, this study followed participatory and consultative approach in gathering primary data by using sets of designed checklist and tools developed through reviewing the purpose and objectives. To make the study comprehensive, it covered geo-physically dispersed areas under five regions e.g., coastal belt, floodplain, barind track, and upland areas of Bangladesh. From each of the areas 2 villages were selected for this study.

Supports and services: NGO Forum as an apex networking body in the water supply and sanitation sector of Bangladesh facilitated the implementation of the programme in a holistic manner. It combined Hardware Supports, Software Services and Inter-agency Collaboration considering the challenges & potentials of this sector in a synergistic way. The Hardware Supports contributed the community people increasing their access to facilities, the Software Services attributed in raising awareness of the people on WatSan and hygiene issues that contributed in creating demand through accelerating knowledge on necessities of facilities and services. However, Inter-agency Collaboration made scope for stakeholders to come into contact, and share knowledge and learning that led them to contribute in policy formulation and creation of a favourable policy environment. The integration of hardware-software mixed support and inter-agency collaboration enabled NGO Forum in designing appropriate, low-cost, and demand-responsive WatSan programme. The Programme followed the “model village approach” where all sorts of inputs were provided through the VDC to generate a synergistic outcome. It was assumed that the VDC would be the community-based organization who ultimately would take the responsibilities of overall development of respective villages. However, it has got a shape and become capable enough to initiate and prioritize urgent development issues and ensure the availability of WatSan facilities for the community people, increase hygiene behaviour, increased knowledge and capacities in operation and maintenances of WatSan facilities, and development of overall environment of the community. It was expected that the synergistic efforts would generate a comprehensive outcome that would increase WatSan facilities, improve health and hygiene behaviour and overall environment of the community. However, the Village Development Committees have emerged as effective means to make the programme successful and capable to carry out the responsibilities for community development.

Community level institution building: Institution building process at the grassroots level was one of the objectives of the programme, which have taken a shape and has been ensuring community participation in development actions. The grassroots bodies (VDC) are functioning as organization, but still it is under the process of institutionalization. The NGO Forum's institution building efforts seem successful in meeting set objectives. The organizational structure and functioning systems are determinant factors of participation. Accommodative structure, people centred and democratic functions embrace people to take part in action. However, democratization of development initiatives are preconditions of strengthening the capacity. NGO Forum's programme has tremendously contributed in making the organization capacitated to keep functioning.

Technological consideration: The main objective of a sanitation programme was to protect and promote human health by providing a clean environment and breaking the cycle of disease. In order to be sustainable a sanitation system has to be not only economically viable but also socially acceptable and technically and institutionally appropriate. The WatSan facilities are still full functional in almost all villages showing that it is remarkable achievement. The flexibility and adaptability of technologies are the key elements of sustainability. People have innovated several technologies which are geo-physically feasible and are culturally acceptable. The introduced WatSan technologies have been well accepted by the people since those are culturally acceptable. This has made tremendous contribution in WatSan coverage in the respective areas.

Health and environment: This programme has contributed in breaking the cycle of water-borne diseases through ensuring congenial environment. Indiscriminate defecation and unsafe latrine use has been substantially reduced, and consequently the spreading of water-borne diseases has also decreased. The community people have enabled themselves to calculate health services and its cost per household and the cost incurred for maintaining hygiene behaviour. People have become aware about health hazards and its negative impact on family and economy. This ability has regenerated energy among people in favour of sustainability of WatSan achievement. In all cases the people themselves have become eager to maintain hygienic life and protect the environment from pollution for their own sake.

Structure and function: The status of structure and functionality of the organization is an indicator of sustainability. The structure of the mentoring organization-VDC has remained the same and those are coping with changing situation of the community in course of time. However, the structure and functions of the organization have been scaled up from WatSan activities to community development. After phase out, those organizations have been taking various new initiatives for the overall development of the community people. Those activities have made the organization as legend of the village, resulting in increased cooperation and collaboration within the community as well as with other stakeholders. This process has increased access of the key actors of the VDC to various level including upazila level committees. These are validating indicators of sustainability.

Operation and maintenance of WatSan facilities: Although the operation and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities is a great challenge, the overall process geared up to triumph over the challenges, increasing participation of the community people for keeping the facilities functional. In this regard, the community people, in some cases, made extra arrangement of

payment for hiring labour to do it. Maintenance of latrines is formalized within the family system. People became habituated to use it and keep it clean for the next users. Now community people do not think that keeping latrine clean is an additional task for family members, because everyone has been accustomed to do it. However, formalization and institutionalization at the family and community level of that task have been ensuring sustainability of the facilities. The trained caretakers are also active in their assigned tasks.

Monitoring and follow-up: NGO Forum's partners developed strong follow-up and monitoring mechanism as per the programme strategy and mechanism. The tracking of accomplishment of progress, in terms of quality and quantity, was made through structured monitoring tools and techniques. The capacity building of partners on follow up and monitoring enhanced their skills. The partners developed a monitoring mechanism by integrating the activities with their other programmes in the same areas. After phasing out, the partners have shifted the monitoring mechanism from formal to informal approach. In monthly meetings of the existing project, the concerned project staff sets an agenda on follow-up and monitoring of the WatSan issues. It has helped invigorating the issues of water and sanitation as development agenda. This process has been stimulating the sustainability of achievement of WatSan coverage and hygiene behaviour of the community people achieved about four years back. At the same time the community people have also made their own monitoring mechanism. They monitor these activities on their own at the households and community level.

Participation and sustainability: True community participation can be ensured by igniting the community people in structured process which ensures participation. People are identifying development issues and process by their own and taking development programme with their limited resources. The community people are considering the development activities as their own so they are taking active part in all spheres of the project cycle. The community participation in maintenance of WatSan hardware has been found considerably effective in almost all areas.

Involvement in trans-sectoral programmes: The capacity building initiatives and process have created scope and opportunities for community people in getting themselves involved in relevant activities initiated by other agencies. Those who have gained skill and efficiency are picked up as mentor of activities by other organization. The capacity building activities have created a great opportunity for them to be capacitated and get involved in various social development activities. Some of the VDC members have got involved in Ward Arsenic Mitigation Committee, Ward WatSan Taskforce and even Union WatSan Committees of their respective areas. Dedicated Imams and school teachers who performed effectively in WatSan coverage are invited by the UP chairman to motivate the villagers of other villages of the union. Some of them are involved in Ward WatSan Committee, Education Committee, etc. Some experienced members of the VDC are playing role in the development plan of the Union Parishad and implementation of water supply projects. A few are involved in Upazila Arbitration Committee formed by BRAC. The VDC members have unanimously agreed that the capacity building activities have helped them a lot to learn about many social issues and make them vocal to raise voice. As a result, they have got the opportunities to take active part in development activities, which is certainly a scaling up of their social status.

Hygiene behavioural change: The behavioural change refers to the change of hygiene behaviour of the community people irrespective of age, sex, and social position in family and households. Both males and females including children and elderly people have become used to use safe water for all purposes and to using sanitary latrine. Health and hygiene message dissemination in various means motivated people and enhanced their realization about the necessity. However, now a days, people's hygiene behaviour has been changed which can be termed as a qualitative benefit of people.

Knowledge base on health and hygiene education has increased as consequences of these activities. Increased knowledge has contributed in decreasing health hazards specially the water-borne diseases. The knowledge base has also enhanced the capacity of social analysis, interaction and confidence on disseminating health and hygiene message within the community. It has benefited people by reducing health care cost. However, it has substantially contributed to poverty reduction at the household level. Villagers have learnt the importance of unity in achieving any common objectives through the process. It has encouraged people to be united on common issues irrespective of their political affiliation, which is considered as democratization process of development.

Increase of social capital: The VDC members and other stakeholders including Imam, school teachers have become well known to the community people and development agencies. The VDC members have expressed their satisfaction that due to this process they have achieved social status and position. The development agencies invite them in various occasions to participate in their programme. Some of them are getting financial benefits from them. This programme has increased their relationship with a wide range of organizations and community people.

New development initiatives: The enhancement of the ways of assessing community needs and process to meet the needs have been possible through capacity building initiatives. As a result, the VDCs of some areas have taken various development initiatives by their own capacity and resources. Some VDCs have constructed road in their village with only community efforts, have overseen the educational institutions to follow-up of the progress and quality of education, have taken joint initiatives by ensuring participation of the whole community to remove water logging problems and have made a tremendous success. As a result, the honour of the VDC members have increased substantially. It has contributed in reducing economic losses by transforming inundated land into arable land that has created income and employment opportunity of the whole community. Taking development initiatives and making success in reaching the objectives are the great benefits of this programme.

New platform for decision-making: This programme has created or strengthened platforms for decision-making and resource negotiation to establish the dialogue between stakeholders and ensure a better management and distribution of resources and benefits. This has ensured access to information for all and strengthened the bargaining power of men and women in communities, to make them a better match in the discussion with the other stakeholders. It has been achieved in much respect with little exception.

Efficiency and accountability: The needs for efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of investments have been increased. Increasing resources do not guarantee efficiency and

effectiveness and for this a lot of efforts such as institutional set-up, human resources development, etc are required. The Community-managed WatSan Programme facilitated the capacity building that enhanced efficiency and accountability of stakeholders that lead to sustainability of achievements.

Sectoral issues: The potential and influential people who actively participated in the Community-managed WatSan Programme have gained experiences. The Union Parishad has used them in their respective UP where Union-based Total Sanitation Programme has been implemented. This programme has substantially developed human resources in water and sanitation sector, who are contributing beyond their communities that has increased their power and prestige within the community as well as to the local level administration.

Commitment and confidence: Appropriate information and knowledge make people enabled to rational thinking and capable to identify their own needs and necessary initiatives in solving the problems. It is realized by the organization and community people that dissemination of knowledge should be the prime objective of any development intervention.

Institutionalization: Institutionalization of programme should be the key areas for the sake of sustainability of achievements. The programme has enabled the community people to institutionalize the activities. However, for the pavement of such process organizations need to establish a mechanism through incorporation of various potential stakeholders in the process and continue follow up activities more frequently.

1. Backdrop

NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation is the apex networking body of NGOs, CBOs and private sector operators (PSOs). NGO Forum has been facilitating the implementation of WatSan programme through its partners across the country since 1982 in compliance with the GoB policies and strategies. Presently, the water supply and sanitation programme in Bangladesh has got a momentum by ratifying several strategies. Similarly, NGO Forum has changed its implementation strategies and process on way to adapt with the national context. NGO Forum introduced Community-managed WatSan Programme approach in the sector. This approach continued till 2003. Again it has made a strategic shift from community-managed approach to community-led sanitation programme approach in compliance with the national sanitation campaign 'Sanitation for All by 2010'. The ultimate goal of the programme is to bring total sanitation coverage.

'Sanitation for all by 2010' is the national target of the Government of Bangladesh. This ambitious target was set to comply with the UN declaration. In September 2000, 191 member states of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly pledged to meet their eight priority needs by the year 2015. The attention has resulted in the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the UN. Environmental sustainability has come to forefront as a priority need of developing nations. Throughout the process, the notion of "environmental sustainability" is transcribed as a means of securing universal environmental sanitation for all inhabitants of the world. Environmental sanitation has also been considered to have greater implication for reducing child mortality – another millennium development goal of the United Nations. With a view to complying with the declaration of United Nations, respective governments and other developments agents and wings have been complementing to implementation of water supply and sanitation programme in achieving the total sanitation.

NGO Forum has been dedicated to promote the water supply and sanitation sector programme along with Government of Bangladesh. Being the apex networking body in the WatSan sector NGO Forum coordinates and facilitates the implementation of its programmes through partner NGOs, CBOs and private sector actors. Being the facilitating organization it provides WatSan supports in relation to hardware & software facilities while it plays the key role in maintaining inter-agency coordination and collaboration in the sector involving sectoral and tran-sectoral agencies and stakeholders. NGO Forum also maintains a close collaboration with GoB, UN-bodies, mass media and other relevant stakeholders with a view to ensuring a favorable atmosphere in the sector for smooth implementation of WatSan programmes in line with the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply & Sanitation*. Being an adaptive learning organization NGO Forum has always been perpetuating WatSan programmes with changes, revision and modification of approach and strategies corresponding to the sectoral needs.

In the immediate past phase, NGO Forum facilitated the implementation of the Community-managed WatSan Programme through forming Village Development Committee (VDC) with expectation of long-term sustainability of the programme achievements. It was also presumed that VDCs would be the actor as well as mentor of community level development activities. These will be performing as a sustained institution in future. Keeping this objective in mind the VDCs were formed and capacitated while those functioned following specific guidelines developed under the programme. Strategic support in relation to programme facilitation were

provided by NGO Forum for two-years. Achieving the hundred percent water supply & sanitation coverage the respective villages had been phased out. The ultimate responsibility of proceeding any development initiatives and sustaining the achievement is endowed upon the VDC. Since the VDCs perform as the key actors on behalf of their respective community, the WatSan coverage and other relevant development through the VDC has been considered as community initiatives and achievements. Now after years of phase-out of the programme a comprehensive assessment has been done with a view to getting a comprehensive understanding about the functions of VDC, the community organization, in sustaining the safe WatSan habits, other development initiatives and intervention, issue-based social awareness building and conflict resolution, and performance in social activities.

2. Community-managed WatSan Programme: an Overview

NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply & Sanitation, as the apex networking and service delivery body in water supply and sanitation sector of Bangladesh, has been facilitating the implementation of WatSan programme through its partners for more than two decades. In course of time and based on the context of development approach, it shifts its programme implementation strategy responding to the socio-economic perspective and government's policy changes. NGO Forum operated its water supply, sanitation and hygiene programmes with the objectives of ensuring safe water & hygienic latrine use and hygiene practices by all people for sound health following its Community-managed Approach. The water supply and sanitation programme was implemented by the non-government organisations (NGOs) & CBOs as part of their development and health programmes. The NGO Forum has been facilitating and promoting WatSan services and facilities by making those services available, accessible, and acceptable to the community people through its partners. As part of its Software Services, NGO Forum provides management and capacity building support to its programme implementing partners, capacity building support to the community people through conduction of orientation & training, experience sharing and conduction of different promotional activities on water supply and sanitation. Since the Community-managed WatSan Programme focused on comprehensive WatSan coverage through building the community level organization, namely VDC, and keeping it functional in future, capacity building got utmost priority at organization and community level. NGO Forum has the set goal to reach safe water and sanitation facilities at the doorsteps of community people. It committed to reach those facilities to the community people. It considered the issues of sustainability of achievements in terms of hardware, software and behavioural changes irrespective of age, structure, gender and social classes. Sustainability of WatSan programme was impossible without ensuring people's participation, increasing demands of facilities, growing interests on safe WatSan and changing the states of mind of the concerned human beings. NGO Forum believes that community participation is important and determinant factor of sustainability of the achievement of WatSan programme and its success. Consequently, it had implemented a comprehensive water supply and sanitation programme integrated with hardware and software at the community level and also included inter-agency collaboration to make policy influence for enhancing support to the programme implementation.

NGO Forum had implemented Community-Managed WatSan Programme in target villages through its partner NGOs. The programme was exclusively designed centering the villages. Each of the villages was divided into a cluster. Formation and capacity building of VDC were

the ground work for programme implementation and transferring the responsibility to community representatives for WatSan development of the respective villages. The cross sectional people including community allies, religious leaders, and elected representatives of local government had been involved in the process through Village Development Committee. However, the VDC was the focal point of activities.

The Programme ensured community participation in implementation and operation, involved people in maintenance of facilities for long-term use. The programme capacitated and activated community people in decision-making process for ensuring better outcome by conduction of orientation, training, sharing of information with various stakeholders, etc.

NGO Forum facilitated its partner organisations to implement the programme through formation of Village Development Committee (VDC), which was the process of democratisation of development at the grassroots level. It aimed at handing over the responsibilities to village-based institutions. The village based institution building process was, in some respect a substantial way to ensure community participation in the whole project cycle. NGO Forum facilitated and capacitated partner organisations to form Village Development Committee as grassroots level institution and extended support to them with necessary promotional programmes to sensitize the community people on WatSan issues. The VDC was provided with necessary supports for creating demand of safe WatSan facilities among the community people.

The Community-managed WatSan Programme followed participatory process in programme planning, implementation and monitoring throughout project cycle. It integrated its participatory approach for selecting the underserved or unserved villages. Accordingly the partner organisations conducted baseline survey in couple of villages. Out of those villages, they selected the most unserved or underserved one for WatSan intervention. After selection, partner organisations' staff conducted participatory situation analysis to delineate existing status of water and sanitation of the respective village. Through these situational analysis they identified the demand responsive supports to be provided. Through the process of situation analysis the prospect, challenges and constraints were also identified to get comprehensive understanding to determine implementation strategy and location specific process. Considering the problems and prospects of implementation of water supply and sanitation programme the partners prepared an action plan for supporting the respective VDC by targeting cent percent coverage within the stipulated time-frame. NGO Forum reviewed those plans to assess the real need of the village as well as to assess the strengths and capacity of the respective partner. Accordingly, it provided supports to partner organisations for implementing the water supply, sanitation and hygiene programmes through the Village Development Committees.

2.1 Hardware Support

Under the Community-managed WatSan Programme, NGO Forum provided hardware support including of various type of water supply technologies like, Shallow Pump, Deep-set Pump, Pond Sand Filter, Rain-water Harvesting System, Arsenic-iron Removal Plant and Ring-well/Dug-well. These technologies were provided to the community people considering the geophysical variations. The hardware support was provided by creating demand among the community people on WatSan facilities. Responding to the feasibility of water technologies in diversified geophysical situation, appropriate water supply technologies were provided. Deep-

set Pump in low-water table areas, Shallow Tubewell in shallow water table areas, Rain-water Harvesting Systems and Pond Sand Filter in coastal belt were proven as the effective technologies. The Ring-well, Arsenic-iron Removal Plants and Arsenic Removal Bucket were feasible technologies in rocky soil texture. These type of technologies were provided to iron density and arsenic contaminated areas respectively. In response to the demand of people of different geophysical conditions, NGO Forum provided those technologies to the community people through its partner organisations. Besides water supply technology it also provided support to partner organisations for establishing Village Sanitation Centre (VSC) to make available low-cost sanitary latrine facilities at the door-steps of community people. In increasing quality support services and production of facilities, the private latrine producers were provided training supports. This process and supports were provided with to the partners for contributing to the promotion of sanitation as well as capacity building of the WatSan private sector.

2.2 Software Services

Behavioural change can make a positive impact on public health. The realisation of people about necessity of safe water and hygienic sanitation facilities are important to change their behaviour. NGO Forum believes that raising awareness, capacity building of community people, and making available and accessible of the WatSan facilities the behavioural change can be achieved. As a result, the NGO Forum has developed huge number of innovative software support packages that played effective role in capacitating people and organisations about importance of personal hygiene and proper utilisation of WatSan facilities. With the objective of social mobilisation, NGO Forum provided Software Services to its partners community allies. It imparted training to the community people and partner NGO staffs and provided orientation on the programme implementation process and strategy to the concerned stakeholders. To make the Community-managed WatSan Programme as a sustainable water supply and sanitation programme, it facilitated quality software programmes to mobilise people at various levels including policy-makers, programme planners & implementers, teachers & religious leaders and community people. The software supports enhanced capacity of partner organisations and community people that led water supply and sanitation facilities towards a sustainable stage. However, the Software Service Package was considered as the key element of Community-managed WatSan Programme of NGO Forum.

NGO Forum's Software Services consisted of Advocacy and Information Services, Training, Promotional Activities, and Development Communication. Each of the services has several sub-components for making it holistic to address the whole issues. Under the Advocacy and Information Services, NGO Forum maintained co-ordination among partner NGOs and different stakeholders. It created favourable sectoral policy environment, needs analysis, planning and management of the programme operation, and development assessment. It also maintained collaboration with sectoral and trans-sectoral stakeholders, WatSan private sector entrepreneurs, community allies, political and social leaders and mass-media representatives at national, regional and local level for smooth programme operation. All these activities were implemented for achieving targeted sanitation coverage. Beside, it also disseminated information through organizing workshop, seminar, symposium and other information services among the target audience ranging from the policy-planners to grassroots people using print and audio-visual media.

For the capacity building of community people, partner organizations and the VDC members NGO Forum has developed a wide-range of WatSan training package. These packages consisted of Human Skill Development and Technical Skill Development courses for programme implementers and stakeholders. The Human Skill Development courses contributed improving basic knowledge and capacity of partner NGOs staffs on water supply and sanitation programme planning and management, communication with stakeholders as well as community people, building leaderships within the catchments. It conducted training to the community people on monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Training facilities ultimately strengthened the capacity of the partner organisations, which played an important role in increasing the participation of the community people in the safe WatSan promotion.

The programme was designed to establish a sustainable water supply and sanitation programme at the community level to develop technical skill and capacity of respective stakeholders. In attaining the programme objectives NGO Forum developed a bundle of technical capacity building training packages for the concerned stakeholders. The Technical Skill Development courses enhanced the capacity of community people and made them efficient and technically sound to handle the technical issues at the local level. These courses were on low-cost latrine production, Tubewell sinking, caretakers' training on Tubewell No.6, Arsenic-iron Removal Plant, Rain-water Harvesting System and Pond Sand Filter, etc. The community people came to know the technical know-how of WatSan facilities that created opportunities to involve themselves in income generation. Those training courses ensured participation of the community people in production of sanitary materials and maintenance of both water technologies and sanitation facilities which contributed to poverty alleviation, reducing health service cost.

NGO Forum believes that the ethos of capacity building of community people helped creating demand of WatSan facilities. In relation to the WatSan sector promotion, promotional activities and knowledge dissemination are considered as means to stepping towards capacity building. Accordingly the promotional activities were facilitated aiming at two broad objectives, capacity building of partner NGOs, and capacity building of community allies. Various type of awareness raising activities were conducted in the intervention areas. The promotional packages consisted of Courtyard Meeting, Community Meeting, School WatSan Programme, Religious Leaders' Orientation, Rally-miking & Mobile Film-show and observance of national and international days, etc. The respective partner organizations organized rally-miking in the coverage villages. The community people ranging from youth & children to women and other community allies participated by holding posters, stickers and banners highlighting WatSan messages. It had immense impact on raising awareness on WatSan issues that helped in changing attitude of the respective villagers. The implementing agencies organized film-shows in the target villages and school premises for creating enthusiasm among community people, students, youths, as well as for raising awareness on water and sanitation. The process of these activities ensured participation of community people and made things happening. However, the promotional activity package was found an important component under Software Services of NGO Forum in implementation of Community-managed WatSan Programme. Since the programme was designed centering the grassroots people creation of demand on WatSan facilities was not possible without making people aware. As a result, the promotional activities played key role in increasing demand and also ensured participation.

The human capacity, skills and utilization of their potentials are the means of effective and smooth implementation of development programme. NGO Forum believes that without realizing the needs and effective use of those human resources, it is difficult to generate fruitful outcome of interventions. So capacity building of people was considered as the key tool in implementation of the programmes effectively. Hence, NGO Forum initiated to make inbuilt capacity building mechanism within the designed programme. The capacity building of stakeholders, especially the local allies were ensured through conduction of School WatSan Programme and religious leaders' orientation programmes, etc. On the other hand, the capacity building of the partners was confirmed through NGO staff orientation, VDC formation and orientation, and facilitating effective collaboration with the WatSan private sector. Implementation of these diversified promotional activities led the water supply and sanitation programme to the success.

Development Communication services is one of the Software Service components of NGO Forum under which various types of IEC & BCC materials were developed and distributed. It helped the conduction of promotional activities with participation of different community groups in WatSan promotion activities. The Development Communication services developed both printed and audio-visual materials to contribute to transfer knowledge among the stakeholders for changing their attitudes and practices on safe WatSan. Without changing behavioural pattern sound health could not be ensured. To address this issue the Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) materials were developed to sensitize community people towards gender sensitive, instant and long lasting learning on safe water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion. The promotional activities helped in sanitation coverage, awareness raising and knowledge dissemination among the community people.

2.3 Inter-agency Collaboration

Inter-agency and trans-sectoral collaboration was important component of NGO Forum's Community-managed WatSan Programme. As an apex networking body in the WatSan sector it maintained wide-range of collaboration and cooperation within and outside the sector. It maintained an effective co-ordination and network with both the government and non-government sectoral and trans-sectoral organisations, which contributed directly or indirectly towards safe WatSan promotion. As a part of networking, NGO Forum maintained collaboration with the United Nations organisations, donors, national and international policy formulating bodies and agencies and sectoral agencies. It has strong relationship with mass-media and policy advocacy organisations. By sharing programme experiences and success, new policy issues were identified and incorporated in the programme by revising the process, activities and strategies. NGO Forum ensured community and stakeholders' participation through its effective networking and collaboration at various levels. It finally created opportunities to build awareness, and made the programme successful. The integration of hardware-software mixed support and inter-agency collaboration enabled NGO Forum in designing appropriate, low-cost, and demand-responsive WatSan programme approach.

The Community-managed WatSan Programme followed a model village approach where all sorts of inputs were provided to generate a synergic outcome such as hundred percent sanitation coverage by making available that facilities to all, increase of hygiene behaviour,

enhancement of knowledge and capacities in operation and maintenance of WatSan facilities, and development of overall environment of the community. In making the programme a success, integrated hardware and software services were implemented and collaboration with relevant agencies, working in the WatSan sector, was maintained. It was expected that the synergistic efforts would generate a comprehensive outcome to increase WatSan facilities, improve health and hygiene behaviour and overall environment of the community. The Village Development Committees emerged as the effective means and made the programme a success.

3. A Way towards Community Institution Building

The Community-managed WatSan Programme was designed to focus on the grassroots level institution building to capacitate the community people for keeping them actively involved in programme implementation through imparting training. The implementation strategy was in-built mechanism of both structural and functional attributed as part of programme. The socio-economic development by reducing vulnerability to health hazards, households' cost reduction for health services and keeping human being as active work-force were the thrusts of the programme to ensure the sustainability of programme – achievement with the utmost priority. Taking the sustainability issue into consideration, the Community-managed WatSan Programme created scope for building community level organizations that led to institutionalizing the process of the programme implementation and its success. The first step of such institution building was formation of the Village Development Committee. NGO Forum believed, in initiating any development programme, an appropriate institutional set-up is essential. This realization guided NGO Forum to design Community-managed WatSan Programme as “model village approach”. NGO Forum facilitated its partner NGOs to implement the programme using VDC as the community-level catalyst. It pushed forward to establish a philosophical basis of the approach and to build a community organization with the long-term development vision. Considering these issues, NGO Forum and its partners moved forward to collective action for translating the vision into action. It developed the mission that led to reach the goal through the intervention process. Since the programme was designed for organizational development and enhancing organizational capacity for WatSan programme implementation it prepared guiding principles and mode of operation incorporating the process of community participation.

In the process of implementation of the Community-managed WatSan Programme, people's participation is a key concern. That's why the community people needed to organise themselves for building such an organization as to be initiator, actor as well as mentor of development activities as per the need of the respective areas. In making the things happening the implementing agencies – Partner NGOs & CBOs – facilitated the community people in formation of Village Development Committee involving all section of people irrespective of sex, class and religion. Being involved in the process of the programme they became oriented and capacitated to take the role of action at the village level. Accordingly, the VDC established effective control over the society as an agent of actions. It built an organisational mechanism that supported the programme operation and developed a support system on which the community people got confidence. As a result, VDCs finally got an institutional shape and yet has been functioning in line with the set objectives of the Community-managed WatSan Programme.

However, with the initiative of rural people, institution building process at the grassroots level got a substantial shape for ensuring community participation in development activities. Still

grassroots bodies (VDCs) are existing in an organized form and now under the process of institutionalisation. Moreover, although various non-government and government agencies have been providing support to build community-based organisations at the grassroots but in most cases they are struggling hard in this regards. NGO Forum's institution building efforts seem successful in meeting set objectives.

The institutional structure and functioning system are determinant factors of participation, accommodative structure, people-centred and democratic functions embraced community people to take part in action of the organization. Democratic organizations create the sense of ownership of the participants and enhance them to be active in the process. However, the community organizations were developed in such a way where everyone of the community became part of it. So, NGO Forum took initiatives to strengthen the capacity of those organizations with the aim of making them more capable in ensuring the better implementation of development initiatives with special focus on WatSan.

The activities of institutional capacity building and strengthening support to the community people ensured social mobilisation and smooth operation of the programme by the community-based organization named VDC. NGO Forum had provided support through its partner organisations to the community people that made praiseworthy success in WatSan sector. Alongside, NGO Forum maintained inter-agency and trans-sectoral collaboration that helped people oriented policy formulation and ensured participation. The Community-managed WatSan Programme was found different from the traditional water and sanitation programme operated in Bangladesh.

The Programme is implemented following the demand-driven approach, where the Software Services contribute immensely to the creation of demand among the community people. The past experiences reveal that the supply-driven approach of development activities did not sustain or had not been implemented properly. Hence, only by ensuring the grassroots level institution building might have been effective for sustainable programme implementation. The institutional building as well as capacity building of existing institutions at grassroots level encouraged for replicating the process through independent autonomous support mechanism. NGO Forum's Community-managed WatSan Programme followed the approach to establish community-based institutions who have already become autonomous for initiating own development with sufficient managerial capacity. However, the programme paved the way of community level institution building to some extent. VDCs structure and functions have proved it in considerable areas.

4. VDC: The Community Institution

Shifting of development paradigm makes a way for changing or restructuring of programmatic actions as well as operational strategy of development intervention. The last decade was the flourishing period of participatory development initiatives in Bangladesh. The water and sanitation programme of NGO Forum is not an exception one. It initiated Community-managed WatSan Programme putting emphasis on bottom-up approach of development at the village level. The Community-managed WatSan Programme was implemented through Village Development Committee (VDC) expecting as, through it, community would be the key development mentor as well as mediator of all development at village level. It was expected that

VDCs would be capacitated through active participation and implementation process and would act as community institutions after phasing out of the programme.

With institutional building motives water and sanitation programme had been implemented through VDC. Throughout the process of assessment it was evident that process of VDC formation and inclusion of appropriate members in the VDC were determinant factors for sustainability of the community initiatives. The commitment of involved members seemed intensifying factors for continuity of structure and functions of VDC. Almost all the community people were actively participated in VDC formation to address the common needs i.e. water and sanitation coverage of the respective village. The VDC meetings were participated by a huge number of community people, where representatives of partner organizations of NGO Forum, local elites and community people discussed water and sanitation programme relating to health, hygiene and household expenditure, which created enthusiasm and interest among community people. This process influenced people to participate in overall implementation of the programme. In the Village Development Committee representation of different segments of people like various professionals, community leaders, elected representatives of Local Government, women representatives, irrespective of affiliation of political parties, were ensured. A combined effort brought a comprehensive change. It is evident that due to active involvement and participation of cross-section of people in VDC the implementation of WatSan programme became successful. While implementing the Community-managed WatSan Programme NGO Forum put emphasis on unserved and underserved villages. Considering the criteria of unserved and underserved area appropriate villages were selected for programme implementation. Community people with assistance of partner NGO staffs conducted various type of motivational activities.

The VDC formation followed steps and process like motivation of villagers on safe water and sanitation, sound health and the benefits of maintaining hygienic life. The general structure of Village Development Committee (VDC) is 15-member. Of them, inclusion of female member is an essential pre-condition. The people of different professions were included in the VDC by common consensus of participated members in the community meeting at village level. The committee members took part in conduction of motivational activities to let people know about the negative impacts, traditional beliefs and practices regarding the water and sanitation issues. As consequences, community people stated that at the beginning it was difficult task for them to motivate fellow villagers to install and use sanitary latrine at their households, but in buying water technology challenges were comparatively lesser, due to hassle in collecting water from distant location. During project inception, people were reluctant to give attention in installing latrine due to their traditional habit. The VDC members had to struggle hard to motivate people and to make them interested to install latrine. However, community people including VDC members unanimously expressed their satisfaction because people remember and appreciate their positive activities.

After community meetings, followed by VDC formation, the Committee in assistance with the responsible partner organization conducted the participatory rural appraisal to identify the existing situation of resources and problems. Water and sanitation was identified as the most hazardous and acute problem in the respective areas. The community people in assistance with partner NGO staffs prepared an action plan to encounter WatSan problems for ensuring better health and environment. The action included various issues e.g. resource mapping, identification

of constraints, capacity enhancement of community people, identification of potential sources of resources for hundred percent sanitation coverage of the respective village. To implement the action plans VDC members were given separate responsibilities and target to enhance WatSan coverage and change hygiene practices through motivation of the community people. VDCs reviewed the constraints frequently for achieving the target according to the action plan and identified possible ways to overcome the challenges. The community people had extended cooperation to VDC because they accepted and recognized VDC as community level organization. So the community people supported VDC for effective programme implementation. It followed a process of forming sub-committee to oversee progress of activities to accelerate the WatSan coverage. These sub-committees reviewed the progress of respective clusters of village and gave assignment to committee members, which was found more effective. The process of programme implementation by VDC created enthusiasm among community people in achieving the goal of the programme.

Creative role of VDC generated immense change in overall implementation scenario and achievements. Some creative ideas and process had been introduced, followed by VDCs included involvement of youths in VDC, follow-up and monitoring by youth and students, segmentation of the village in different cluster, etc. These ideas emerged from participatory exercises and community meetings. Due to inclusion of different group of people of the society in the process created an immense impact in making success of the Community-managed WatSan Programme. From the VDC formation to programme implementation, it followed inclusive process of accumulating knowledge and ideas to enable the process of generating comprehensive results of the programme.

For rapid coverage of sanitation, the VDC members took initiatives to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged households from their own contribution in many areas. To establish model village, the community people of various sections became more interested and committed towards the programme. However, throughout the process of WatSan programme implementation the VDCs got an institutional shape as well as functional with a customized form and structure in almost all the villages.

5. Sustainability of Achievement

The sustainability of the achievement is one of the major thrust areas under the Community-managed WatSan Programme. The following criteria indicates the issues vividly on way to measuring the sustainability of the Community-managed WatSan Programme's achievement.

5.1 Measuring Criteria for Sustainability

The main objective of a sanitation system is to protect and promote human health by providing a clean environment and breaking the cycle of disease. In order to be sustainable a sanitation system has to be not only economically viable, socially acceptable and technically and institutionally appropriate, but it should also protect the environment and the natural resources. Under the Community-managed WatSan Programme, the sustainability issue has been met addressing the following aspects:

(1) Health: includes the risk of exposure to hazardous substances that could affect public health at all points of the sanitation system. The indiscriminate defecation and unsafe latrine use is the means of spreading water-borne diseases. The sustainability covers aspects of hygiene, and improvement of livelihood achieved by the application of a certain sanitation system, as well as downstream effects. The achievement in health status are measurable indicators for the sustainability.

(3) Technology and operation: incorporates the functionality and the ease with which the WatSan system can be constructed, operated and monitored using the available human resources (e.g. the local community, technical team of the local utility, etc.). It also concerns the suitability to achieve an efficient use and management from a technical point of view. Furthermore, it considered the robustness of the system, its vulnerability towards disasters, and the flexibility and adaptability of its technical elements to the existing infrastructure, to demographic and socio-economic developments.

(4) Financial and economic issues: relate to the capacity of households and communities to pay for sanitation, including the construction, maintenance and depreciation of the system. Besides, operation and maintenance costs, the topic also takes into account the economic benefits that can be obtained in “productive” sanitation systems, including benefits from the production, employment creation, increased productivity through improved health and the reduction of environmental and public health costs. This issues considered as the key elements in the process of documentation of successful initiatives.

(5) Socio-cultural and institutional aspects: the criteria in this category considered the socio-cultural acceptance and appropriateness of the system, convenience, system perceptions, gender issues and impacts on human dignity, the contribution to economies and food security, and legal and institutional aspects. Whether the sanitation system is culturally accepted, and supportive to the organizations/institutions involved in the process of implementation was measurable criteria. Without cultural acceptance and favourable to institutional aspects that would not be sustained. These issues also taken into consideration in the process of assessment.

(6) Follow-up and monitoring aspects: the criteria was considered as measurable indicators in assessing sustainability. The continuation of monitoring either formally or informally by the implementing agencies or community people were the unit of measurement.

Most of the sanitation systems have been designed considering the above mentioned aspects, but in reality many of them are not seen. Because some of the criteria are not met. In fact, there is probably no system which is absolutely sustainable. The concept of sustainability is more of a journey rather than a stage of show. Nevertheless, it is crucial, that sanitation systems are evaluated carefully with regard to all dimensions of sustainability. Since there is no one-for-all sanitation solution which fulfils the sustainability criteria under different circumstances to the same extent, this system assessment depends on the local framework and have to consider existing environmental, technical, socio-cultural and economic conditions.

Taking into consideration the entire range of sustainability criteria, it is important to observe some basic principles when planning and installing a sanitation system. The search for sustainability implies that a match is needed between four dimensions, the community, the

environment, the technology and the legal and institutional context. The community dimension includes its capacity to manage, operate and maintain a system; the availability of skills; its capacity and willingness to pay, its cultural and social structure, its health awareness and hygiene behaviour; and its gender balance. The environmental dimension includes the availability of fresh water resources (in quantity and quality), and its proper management. The technology dimension includes, the available technology, the capacity to respond to present and future demands and using patterns; its capital and maintenance costs; its impact on environment; its complexity, availability, and repairing cost.

5.2 Sustainability of WatSan Achievements

The word “sustainable” is used in several combinations, such as “sustainable development”, “sustainable economy”, “sustainable society”, and “sustainable use”. To adopt the ethics for sustainable development, values must be promoted in the society. And discourage those, incompatible with a sustainable way of life. For ensuring sustainability, the people are considered as the key element to ensure the use of the resources as per their priority. The people can perform if they are given the necessary power to make full use of their own idea and experiences. The process by which the community organize themselves, strengthen their capabilities for taking care of social development issues and apply them in the way that satisfy social, economic and cultural needs that can be termed as sustainable society. The water and sanitation issues are not exceptional to that. The community-managed water and sanitation programme was aimed at ensuring the sustainable use of the WatSan facilities after phase-out of the programme. The programme intervention strategy followed the approach inclusively to cover wide range of issues relevant to respective society as well as the programme itself to reach the goal of hundred percent sanitation coverage.

The Programme considered the sustainability of achievements in respect to hardware provided at the community level, knowledge base development through Software Services and capacity building efforts made to capacitate partner NGO staffs and community people. NGO Forum facilitated the implementation of WatSan programme to ensure sound health and environment of the people, empower community people especially women for increasing participation in community level activities, and building community-based organization and institutions and its capacity. It was expected that the Village Development Committees would be determining factors of future development action in line with local needs and available community resources. Considering the issues of sustainability, the VDC members as well as the community people including community allies, religious leaders were trained under this programme. The synergistic outcome of those activities was hundred percent sanitation coverage and sustainable use of the facilities.

Here sustainability issues have been considered in relation to (a) attitude and behavioural perspectives of sustainability, (b) technological perspective of sustainability (c) institutional perspective of sustainability and (d) overall sustainability of the society in general. The attitude and behavioural perspectives meant the use of WatSan materials in relation to socio-economic and cultural dimensions. The programme intervention considered attitude and behaviour as determining factors as without changing attitude and behaviour whatever support is provided that would not sustain. The term ‘sustainable use’ refers to inbuilt operation and maintenance mechanism that indicates the process kept functional of facilities as well as changed attitude

and behaviour in this regard. The sustainability from technological perspective is measured in the light of present status of those facilities in terms of quality and availability of WatSan technology. From institutional perspective the sustainability issue is measured in terms of structure and functions of village level organization, community interaction with local and regional level institutions, village level development initiatives, and capacity of performing development activities. However, the overall sustainability of the society is considered with reference to continuation of community level activities to ensure better health and hygienic status of the people, and sound environment at the village. The effectiveness and efficiency of community level users and project implementing agencies of WatSan programme facilities are considered as the dimensions of sustainability. In addition, scaling up process and status, commitment of community people and attitude towards the facilities are also substantially taken under consideration in the assessment.

Participation of community people and level of participation have been looked into. The mass people's participation is considered as the key to transparent democratic system. Without mass people's active participation and commitment community-based initiatives will not sustain. Level of participation in increasing WatSan coverage and sustainability are also the thrust areas of the assessment. The water and sanitation programme of NGO Forum was designed to implement in a community-managed approach through ensuring active participation of community people irrespective of class and gender. Initially the software programme was conducted in the selected areas to create demand in the society for the WatSan services. Then the appropriate and feasible low-cost WatSan technologies were provided to meet the community demand. Ensuring participation through software programme was key to the programme activities and got utmost priority after phase out.

Becoming a Community Leader

Dynamic leadership, capacity of taking new initiatives, commitment and dedication towards building a self-reliant community, acceptance of the community and consequences of capacity building efforts turned some of the villagers as community leaders. Wazed Ali of Panchbaka Borshi village of Keshobpur upazila under Jessore district is an example of it. Wazed Ali, a 48-year old man is an Imam of the village mosque. For his dedication and commitment he was elected as a member of Union Parishad and the Chairman of VDC in 2004, comprises of 15 members including Chairman. The concerned partner NGO of NGO Forum assisted the villagers in formation of the Village Development Committee aiming at implementation of water and sanitation programme in the village. At the end of 2005, the time period of the set programme was over. But Wazed Ali through the committee has been continuing the functions of VDC at a revised form at the village. Now, Ali as the leader of the Village Development Committee is well known to all for his dedication. Alongside the Village Development Committee is also known for its new initiatives for overall development of the village beside WatSan coverage.

Wazed Ali says, "Charity mentality, responsiveness to social responsibilities, commitment to people's needs in the context of social system has made me well known to the community people. As Imam and UP Member, everybody respects me but the role of those positions confined within delivering religious messages to people during prayer and listening people's problems and giving messages about supports from UP". However, after participating in several orientation courses and training programmes he became able to integrate the messages with social needs and making people aware. He has been contributing to the Community-managed WatSan Programme since its inception.

Ali says, "As Imam, I delivered messages to people at mosque related to social and economic problems and invited them to take united effort to address those problems alongside the religious discussions. Earlier, I used to deliver only religious messages, but now I do integrate religious verse with social issues and deliver among the congregation by making correlation between religious statement and social issues. The tradition and mode of message delivery has been changed due to increase of my knowledge. The community people also extend their cooperation to solve the problems."

Being a UP Member, he had an opportunity to coordinate Community-managed WatSan Programme with Union Parishad. It helped him to bring hundred percent sanitation coverage of the respective village within the stipulated time. He used to place sanitation issues to monthly coordination meeting of UP and the list of poorest of the poor families of the village for providing latrine with subsidized cost. Ali was also a member of the School Managing Committee located at his village. He motivated the school teachers to deliver WatSan messages to the students. He shared the action plan for sanitation coverage with teachers and requested them to make the students involved as agent of message dissemination in relation to use of safe water, sanitation and environmental sanitation to their parents and community people. The teachers used the students in monitoring the community people to assess the practice level and the programme achievement. The respective teachers clarified to the students the importance of practicing safe WatSan in personal life.

About 97% Tubewells were affected by arsenic. Safe drinking water crisis was acute in the village. Ali placed the problem to the Union Parishad. As a result three Deep Tubewells were installed at the suitable places where maximum people of the village had access to safe water source.

He mentions, initially people hesitated to accept the leadership of VDC due to lack of appropriate knowledge. The transparent functions and procedures, effective communication with the community people they accepted VDC positively. His leadership is now recognized by community people and everyone encourages him to take new initiatives to address social problems.

Ali including other VDC members are representing in different local level committees like Ward WatSan Committee and Nari-o-Shishu Nirjaton Protirodh Committee at union level, Village Law and Order Committee, etc. The VDC has good relation with UP and local administration. Gram Police are supposed to serve Union Parishad but they willingly serve the notice of VDC meetings to its members from their self-responsibility. The VDCs act as development agent of villages while Ali guides that committee.

He finally concludes, "This project has broken the silence by giving knowledge, enhancing capacity, power to unite, ability and confidence to take initiatives. This has made me a community leader. Now everybody calls me for advice if they face any problem."

5.2.1 Structure and Function of VDC

Both structure and functions of VDCs are key factors for sustainability of the outcome of the programmes. The maintaining structure and functions of any established organization is one of the indicators of sustainability. One of the objectives of this investigation was to understand whether the structure of Village Development Committees remained the same or revised to cope up with the changing situation of community in course of time. The programme was implemented following model village approach where VDC was the key actors and mentors of the programme. The village development committees were formed comprising 15 members. It

had variations in some cases.

The structure of VDC has not been changed over the period of time because people did not feel the necessity of changing it. The VDC members of Panchbanka Borshi stated, "We, the VDC members, have been implementing various community level activities under the banner of Village Development Committee. On different occasions, we provide assistance in organizing marriage of disadvantaged families, making clear of drainage congestion through removing water-logging to transform land into arable condition, construction of earthen roads, helping in disadvantaged people. The Village Development Committee was formed in 1999 in the village named Nishchintapur, which consisted of two parts such as Nishchintapur and Adarshagram. Out of 15 members of VDC, 6 members participated in assessment session held during documentation process. Of them, four were male and the rest two were female. However, the village was phased-out about six years back, while the VDC has been still functioning to some extent due to their involvement with other project named as Social Forestry project supported by government of Bangladesh. The VDCs have been functioning informally. The structure of the VDC remained the same as phase out time. During the assessment structure of VDC was found neither changed nor initiated to change over the period of time. Although few members had already been passed away but those positions have neither coped up nor dissolved from the structure. However, from the structural perspective all the VDC remained the same, while the functions of it have been changed in course of time.

The implementing organization, IDEAL has integrated the activities of water and sanitation programme. However, the integration process seemed to undermine the essence of philosophy and ultimate objective of Village Development Committee. In the context of thematic role of VDC, it has been scaled-up to a certain level that indicates the sustainability of the programme activities. Almost all VDCs are functional in an informal manner.

VDC members are beneficiaries of Nishchintapur village of Satkhira who performed activities through other activities. VDC is functional at community level conflict resolution, community development such as road construction, etc in Satani village. VDC of Panchbanka Borsi has been transformed into community level institution. They have regained almost 60 percent of water-logged land owned by the villagers. Under the close supervision and management of VDC, the villagers constructed about 2-km road for the villagers. The VDC members have been performing the role of village leaders who on and often resolve conflict, help disadvantaged people from humanitarian ground, etc.

The VDC of Barinagar seems active in performance but not seen in structural shape. A few members of the VDC could have been replaced. The VDC Chairman is a businessman and one of the members is a local government representative who is still active. It indicates that the members have been scaled-up in extra activities with other organizations. Although the programme has been phased out before 3-8 years, the community interaction and integration between the outputs has been continuing.

The Community-managed WatSan Programme had phased-out within the range of four to eight years back. The partner organization made follow up visits. However, last five years, it had no activity in relation to water and sanitation. It found that there were no formal activities, but they perform activities like follow-up and monitoring at community level through individual-

to-individual interaction. Despite phase-out of formal activities, output-oriented activities have been sustaining.

5.2.2 Operation and Maintenance of WatSan Facilities

Operation and maintenance has been assessed by status of skill in operation and maintenance, challenges of operation and maintenance, process of overcoming the challenges, level of participation of community people, and functional status of those facilities, etc. There are several water points, including Tubewell, Arsenic-iron Removal Plant (AIRP) were installed under this programme. The community people including women were trained on operation and maintenance of those facilities. Functional status of WatSan facilities is the key indicator of proper operation and maintenance. Almost all type of water points installed under this programme are still fully functional.

Water technologies have been maintained by the users. Operation and maintenance of AIRPs is hard for women because of its heavy-weight. Therefore, moving a slab from one place to another is difficult for one woman. Although one male and one female were trained on operation and maintenance but in peak seasons of agricultural works, male members were remained busy in the agricultural work. That's why male members could not manage time in operation and maintenance of the technologies. The female members as the primary user of water faced challenges in this regard. As a result, community people made an extra arrangement of paying taka two per month utilized for hiring a labourer in relation to operation and maintenance of the technologies. In some cases, the users jointly cleaned and maintained the technology by their own. The community people had been customized to operation and maintenance according to their necessity and feasibility. Overall operation and maintenance of the water supply facilities available at the community level were found positive and sustaining.

The operation and maintenance of latrines have been regulated within the family structure. People have become habituated to using it and keep latrines clean. Now community people think that keeping latrine clean is compulsory task for the users. Everyone has been accustomed to using it. Hence, it is an essential to keep it clean for following users. Aged family members motivated and instructed children on technical know-how to maintaining latrine clean. So all household members including children and elderly used sufficient water after defecation and adult members generally cleaned latrine as per the need. The VDC members informally visited households as a part of monitoring of practice level. It encouraged people to keep latrines clean.

However, operation and maintenance of WatSan facilities have been regulated and institutionalized at the family and community level. The trained caretakers were found active and they have been maintaining equipments with care provided for this purpose. If any other new challenges come up they sit together and initiate to overcome those challenges with common consensus.

5.2.3 Monitoring and Follow-up

Organizational Level Monitoring: NGO Forum implements its activities through partner organizations for ensuring a strong follow-up and monitoring mechanism as per implementation strategy. The accomplishment of progress, in terms of quality and quantity,

tracking was made through structured monitoring tools and techniques as per implementation guideline. The capacity building of partner organizations on programme monitoring enhanced skills and prompt accumulation of progress in a straight-forward manner. In many cases, the concerned staff have been acquainted with the implementation process shifted to other programmes in absence of NGO Forum supported on-going activities. As consequences, monitoring mechanism of partner organizations have made formal to informal approach in general and in somewhere integrated to other programme activities. For example, despite phase-out of WatSan programme in Panchbaka Borshi village in Keshobpur upazila, respective partner organization has integrated WatSan programme monitoring with Violence against Women Project. In monthly meetings of existing project, always the concerned project staff set an agenda on follow-up and monitoring issues. It helped invigorating issues of water and sanitation as development agenda. This process has been stimulating sustainability of achievement of WatSan coverage and hygienic behaviour of the community people achieved about four years back.

Community Level Monitoring: The Village Development Committee still has been maintaining informal monitoring mechanism. When a latrine is damaged for any reason the committee members themselves repair or replace it as soon as possible. When any of the villagers failed to do so, or expressed reluctant to do it, neighbours put pressure on him. If they fail to motivate people then they complain to the VDC members or local influential like UP members. Such things rarely happen, because most of the people expressed their satisfaction that community people have realized necessity of sanitary latrine and hygiene practice in personal life. As a result, community people themselves have developed monitoring system and mechanism for the sake of themselves. Monitoring mechanism turned into inbuilt system within the households of community people.

Besides, the educational institutions took part in social mobilization through organizing rally, classroom session, door to door visit and progress monitoring, etc. It has been conditioning but frequency of programmes decreased in course of time. The concerned school teachers, students, guardians shared in similar voices that now they need not to do it because people have already installed latrines in their brain and using those properly.

Monitoring – Means to Sustain the Achievement

“Water and sanitation programme had pioneering role in shaking silence for making the people sensitized and active. In the context of this area, people considered me although I never took any initiative for preventing open defecation. When Rishilpi staff and VDC members shared the issues in relation to safe WatSan it had shaken my mind and encouraged me to actively participate in sanitation promotion,” says Md. Nazmul Kabir, Head Master of B. K. Ideal Secondary Girls School in Satkhira. It was the beginning. From then I have been contributing to motivate students and community people as far as my capacity, he adds.

I have given strong foundation to my students to materialize the programme. During programme implementation VDC members and Rishilpi staff assisted in several initiatives of community mobilization, health and hygiene education, and monitoring of the progress, states Md. Nazmul Kabir. They established a coordination among stakeholders e.g. NGO staff, VDC members, school teachers, students and community people that helped increasing rapid sanitation coverage of the village. The

Rishilpi staff oriented teachers, conducted health and hygiene education session to students, organized rallies to make community people aware and debate competition among students. It has increased their awareness and knowledge on WatSan issues. The students were motivated to share health and hygiene messages to their parents and neighbours and to assess status of latrine at the community, etc. This process geared up the coverage and brought grand success in this regard. Kabir mentions, "Although the programme has been phased out from the village but with the initiatives of school teachers follow-up and monitoring is still going on as usual."

The school has been continuing dissemination of WatSan messages to the community through students and following up the sustenance of facilities and hygiene behaviour. The frequency has been decreased, but teachers still deliver health and hygiene messages in the classroom and advice to practice hygiene in their personal life as well as family level. Accordingly the students share the learning with their parents. The parents recognize of such learning process. According to Kabir, Satani was selected as model village but these messages are disseminated into the seven villages where the students come from. He also informed that few latrines had been damaged for various reasons but those were replaced or repaired by the owners themself.

The school formed a Disease Prevention Committee involving all girl students and introduced a savings fund named "Student Society Savings". The partner NGO supplemented in raising fund. The fund was used helping the extreme poor families for installation of sanitary latrine and providing financial support to poor student to appear in public examination. It is a continuous process. A cultural group was formed under the guidance of Head Master. The cultural group organized popular theatre-show and folk-song "Sonar Paribar" containing messages in relation to water, sanitation and social problems. The school also occasionally arranged debate in order to develop communication skill of the students.

Although the WatSan programme has been phased-out but still students organize rally to observe different national and international days to make the community people aware of the WatSan issues. Kabir adds, "Some of the VDC members are also member of School Managing Committee. They oversee and inquire the students and teachers informally about the WatSan achievement which help all of us to get more interested to it. The teachers are getting information on sanitation status from the students. When teachers receive any message, they share it with VDC members informally. The VDC members communicate with respective household to reinstall or repair the damaged latrine. Kabir suggests, "For long term sustainability of the achievement there is a need to organize quarterly or half-yearly follow-up and coordination meeting by any modalities for continuation of VDC initiatives. It would increase coordination and interaction within the stakeholders that would help sustaining the programme achievement."

5.2.4 Involvement in Trans-sectoral Programmes

The capacity building initiatives and process have created scope and opportunities of the Village Development Committee members in getting involved in many organizations and committees of relevant sectors as well as development initiatives initiated by other agencies. There are many development agencies who have been implementing community-based interventions through the community people. Since those people gained skill and efficiency by participating in training sessions so they are hired as mentor of activities by other organizations. As a result, it has created a great opportunity for them to get involved in development initiatives. Throughout the process of assessment for documentation, it has been found that the VDC members got involved in development programme that integrated the outcomes and

increasing interaction with output of on-going programmes.

The participation of the trained VDC members is active in all respect of water and sanitation. They provide support in repairing and maintenance work for ensuring sustainability of water supply facilities. With a view to ensuring the attendance of school students and to reduce the drop-out from primary school by motivating the parents on a regular basis and following up the students at schools, the VDC members have been sharing the issues with school teachers. In some villages the VDC members are following up teachers' attendance to ensure quality education. The VDC members maintain liaison with the teachers and interact with them regularly. They play important role in adult education and total literacy movement. This process has created awareness among people on education and development issues of the village to a great extent.

Some of the VDC members are involved in Ward Arsenic Mitigation Committee, Ward WatSan Task-force and even Union WatSan Committees of their respective areas. Considering the contribution of them in water and sanitation sector they are invited to participate in meetings on above issues and they deliver speeches to share their learnings and experiences in sessions organized for social motivation. Specially, the dedicated Imams and school teachers who performed effectively in WatSan coverage programme are invited by the UP chairmen to motivate people in other villages of the union. The experienced VDC members are involved in Ward WatSan Committee and Education Committee of the local area. The community people are getting maintenance support for latrine from Union ADP budget through coordination between the VDC and the local Union Parishad. Some experienced members of the VDC are playing active role in development plan of the Union Parishad and implementation of the water supply project.

The VDC members extended their cooperation in relief work during disasters like flood in respective areas. In some areas the VDC has been performing activities of Shalish (arbitration) for conflict resolution. In some villages all kinds of rural level arbitration are conducted by the VDC. Mr. Tayjuddin, the VDC president participated in most meetings and trainings conducted by the NGO Forum. Although the village was phased out in the year 2000, but he has been involved in the Upazila Arbitration Committee formed by BRAC. He participates in the arbitration as a member of judges panel. Another VDC member Ms. Nurjahan has been included in the union level committee of the same organization. In addition, VERC, a national NGO has been implementing WatSan programme in the same area where these VDC members are key actors. However, the capacity building support of NGO Forum has contributed in scaling up of those people in the society and organizations.

IDEAL as the implementing organization has integrated its development programme activities with the VDC for making it more effective and output oriented. The VDC members have been included as beneficiaries of roadside tree plantation programme. They also take part in establishing NFE schools, child and women trafficking prevention, etc. To ensure participation of the VDC, the partner organization invites them to participate in meetings and functions organized in operational areas. The VDC is considered as a community resource for implementing development programme by the organization.

However, the development intervention of NGO Forum has capacitated the community people as well as the VDC members that helped them to participate in development intervention of government and non-government organizations at their respective areas. These findings indicate that which is most important for sustainability of the programme intervention.

Teaching beyond the Classroom

“Institutionalization of water and sanitation in education process as a system in a primary school seems ambitious, but it has been possible as a consequence of dedication, commitment and self-confidence of all teachers of the school”, said Md. Sirajul Islam, an Assistant Teacher of Baniajuri Government Primary School at Ghior upazila under Manikganj district. Mr. Islam’s wholehearted efforts contributed to make the things happened. He had great contribution in institutionalizing this issue. Mr. Islam is familiar to the community people not only as a primary school teacher but also as a devoted social worker. So during the VDC formation, the community people proposed his name as a VDC member and he was unanimously selected. He said, “Initially, I was not clear about the programme but throughout the VDC activities, I got experienced and realized the necessity of this work. Gradually I started serving the wider community for sanitation coverage.”

“First of all, I tried to integrate it into the education system by involving students in these activities. I requested the Head Mistress to call a meeting of all teachers to share the issues. She called meetings and we shared the issues and prepared a plan of action and mode of operation. The Head Mistress of my school gave me wholehearted support in this regard. Accordingly, the NGO Forum and the local NGO SEDA facilitated to organize school sessions. Every Thursday we organized school session with all students where the teachers provided guidance to the students. They were oriented on WatSan issues such as unhygienic practices and its negative impact on health and households’ economy, essentials of cleanliness, etc. Then we formed several teams with students who were made responsible for door to door visit and present their findings on WatSan coverage of respective areas in the following day of the school session. It helped us to understand the coverage status and take the next course of action.”

“In performing these activities we involved the boys scouts and created provision of scout artifice. Based on the performance in extra curricular activities the scouts were provided with the artifice of higher level that made the students more interested in taking part in the activities. Not only the WatSan activities, the students were involved in relief distribution during natural calamities like flood. They raised fund for social activities like providing support to marriage ceremony of disadvantaged girls, educational assistance to the poor students, etc.”

“We also involved students in the Courtyard Meeting organized by the PNGO as part of social mobilization and to deliver hygiene messages to women. Through the participation the students collected information of dropout children from their mothers. The students shared those information with us and accordingly we took necessary action to make those students regular. In this case the scouts and student brigade members visited the parents of dropout children and inquired the reason of not sending them to school. Then the teachers visited the parents and requested them to send their children to school. By using this platform we have achieved a great success in dropout prevention.”

“The school organized ‘Ma Shomabesh (mothers gathering) frequently to inform them about the progress of their children. In addition, we discussed cleanliness and hygiene related issues with them. Those who did not have sanitary latrine we requested them to install it. We also informed them of the sources and

cost of installation of latrine. It helped in achieving latrine coverage. In these sessions we invited the NGO staff and other relevant stakeholders to encourage the participants."

Mr. Islam said, "During PTI training, I raised the WatSan issues in a class and shared the strategy of WatSan coverage we followed throughout the process. As a result, the instructor invited me to deliver a speech in full session. It increased my confidence and I felt proud to be there. It was a great achievement for me. From then onwards, WatSan issue is addressed in PTI training as part of the course."

Mr. Islam said, "I am the Assistant Trainer of Bangladesh Scouts. As a trainer I always address water and sanitation issues in the training sessions. Now it has become a part and parcel of the training course. Alongside, the nearby union has been implementing Union-based Total Sanitation Programme, where the Chairman invited me as a resource person to share the learning of our school and VDC in WatSan coverage. It also makes me proud and encouraged to take part in social activities."

"Wherever I got the opportunity I always pushed WatSan issues with great emphasis. Without institutionalization of this process it would not be sustained. The motivation on hygiene practices and information and access to facilities through institutions makes a difference. So institutionalization is a must. I have always tried to institutionalize it."

"Alongside, the teachers need to be alert and aware about it. Almost all people listen to and follow the suggestions of the teachers, so they can be involved and utilized more in such activities. Their participation would bring effective outcome and lead towards sustainability of achievement. However, besides the social change and progress, population is growing rapidly. To address the next generation, by incorporating teachers, students, scouts, UP members and other stakeholders at least a follow-up mechanism need to be developed for long-term sustainability of the achievement", said Mr. Islam.

5.2.5 Participation as Means of Sustainability

Ignition is one of the preconditions of participation of the community people. The true participation can be ensured when someone would be ignited through a process of motivation. However, participation is the combination of a wide range of quality and acts of people. According to Ali and Hossain (2000:18), "participation is defined as a socially vibrant grassroots process whereby people identify the process as their own, with occasional help from the 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 the passive objects".

The study assessed the participation at different levels based on some indicators like vibrancy of the subjects, ownership of the process followed, facilitation by people of their own, level of inherently educative nature of the process leading to higher level of consciousness, level of experience of facing reality and activeness of people. Although the process was led by the VDC but the process did not remain within the limit and functions of the VDC. The issues of participation looked into both institutional and non-institutional means.

In terms of vibrancy of the VDC members as well as the community people, it was found in almost all cases that they are vibrantly taking part in development initiatives. Even after six to seven years of phase-out of the programme, the VDC members, community people and other stakeholders participated in assessment process intensely. The attitude of the community

people evidently articulated their commitment and sincerity towards the development activities. The women participant's spontaneous participation and sharing of knowledge and practices on hygiene behaviour issues also testify their level of participation and vibrancy.

Both male and female participants unanimously reported that they did not have knowledge on the relation between use of safe water and sanitary latrine and health hazards. After participating in sessions conducted by concerned NGOs with assistance of the VDC, they had been able to learn the negative impact of unsafe water and unhygienic latrine use on human health hazards. The process of project implementation was educative in nature to the illiterate villagers. This process has increased the level of consciousness of the community people regarding WatSan. As a result, almost all people have been practicing the learnt knowledge in real life. However, despite various challenges and business people become used to participate in any such discussion and programme related activities.

The programme aimed to enhance the capacity of the community people so that it would ensure participation of the users in operation and maintenance of the WatSan facilities. The community people were motivated through hygiene messages. At the same time, people were trained on operation and maintenance of water technologies. In most cases by using their technical knowledge they have kept the water and sanitation facilities functional. In some cases, they have made an alternative arrangement for operation and maintenance such as cost sharing by depositing a very small amount of money in each month for using it for maintenance purpose. All the people have been actively participating in this process.

The community participation in maintenance of WatSan hardware was found considerably effective in almost all areas. However, duplication of programme by different organization has deteriorated this situation. After phasing out by one organization, another organization has been implementing similar programme in the same areas. Installation of water technologies under this new programme are making people reluctant in maintenance of the older ones. As a consequence the earlier technologies have become out of order for lack of proper operation and maintenance. Even the costly technology, Deep Tubewell, remained out of order after installation of a new one in one place. Implementation of programme needs special attention by implementing organizations and concerned authorities to avoid duplication. However, participation of people should be spontaneous, not for the sake of getting extra benefit allowing the scope of wastage of national resources.

5.2.6 Ownership through Cost-sharing

For establishment of ownership of the community people on WatSan facilities and on overall system, the Community-managed WatSan Programme had a provision of cost-sharing on WatSan facilities. The provision of cost-sharing on technologies varied from technology to technology. During installation of WatSan facilities, especially the water technologies the community people, i.e. the user group shared a portion of cost. The cost-sharing strategy in most cases was customized in case of different user groups considering the economic status of the respective households. The provision has yet been continuing for the operation and maintenance in some spots. Although operation and maintenance was mainly the responsibility of caretakers who got the training but for their convenience in some cases they created a provision of depositing a very negligible amount per month which is used for operation and

maintenance. With the changing situation, the community people innovated this approach for effective operation and maintenance that ensured the sustainability of WatSan facilities.

5.2.7 Sustainability of WatSan Facilities

As mentioned in the *National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation 1998*, the Government's goal is to ensure that all people have access to safe water and sanitation services at an affordable cost. The policy emphasizes elements of behavioural changes and sustainability through user participation in planning, implementation, management, and cost-sharing. Ensuring the installation of one sanitary latrine in each household in the rural areas and improving Public Health standard through inculcating the habit of proper use of sanitary latrines is mentioned as one of the objectives. However, some of these things are dependant on sustainability of technologies and facilities. Only functional status of those technologies and facilities can determine whether the behavioural change will be sustained or not, whether the achieved status of health status will be retained at the achieved standard or not, and operation and maintenance and follow-up and monitoring will be functional or not. However, in all the villages sanitation facilities and water technologies are yet functional and those are maintained with proper care by the user groups. If any latrine is damaged, the owner himself repaired or reinstalled as early as possible. The water technologies were provided to common use by a specific group of people of a cluster of households. Those have also remained functional even after phase out of the programme. However, in almost all cases, alongside the user, the VDC members have great contribution in keeping those functional. The VDC member of Santani village was found maintaining AIRP by its own cost. The participation of the community people seems adequate at present in almost all cases, and the participation was more vibrant in implementation process.

The Imam becomes a Social Catalyst

"As the Imam of the mosque, I had delivered religious messages to the Muslims during prayer, especially on the Jumma day. Besides playing the role of Imam, I am also the superintendent of Borol Islamia Dakhil Madrasha of Comilla district" – said Mr. Abdur Rashid, the Imam. "People respect me for many reasons i.e. as an Imam, superintendent of Madrasha, founder of the primary school, etc. As an elderly person most people listen to me and follow my suggestions. I have received WatSan messages from the motivation session arranged by Polly Unnayan Parishad (PUP). Then I started to deliver sanitation and hygiene messages to motivate community people for adopting hygiene behaviour. My reputation helped me to mobilize the community people at mosques, academic institutions, social and religious functions, etc. During Khutba, the speech of the Imam, I generally talked about cleanliness and its relationship with prayer citing verse from the holy Quran. After participation in the orientation sessions I included the issues of hygiene practice, safe water use and its impact on health and household economy. The people accepted these messages with due importance and they started practicing in personal life, which I understood from the increased number of sanitary latrine installation in the village", said the Imam.

He again said, "As an Imam as well as a teacher, I always say whenever I get the opportunity to address people that Allah likes cleanliness, so Allah will not accept one's prayer if one is not clean. I deliver WatSan message in the light of the Quran and Hadith regarding cleanliness during the Khutba of Jumma prayer". He added, "my realization has been changed on water and sanitation after getting messages in this regard through participation in a discussion session on WatSan programme. It opened my eyes to

correlate these messages to social issues. Though I am a teacher but I never correlated the causes of water-borne diseases and unhygienic practices. The staff of PUP made it clear in a session so it encouraged me to continue delivering messages to the people of my reach. From that realization I am still continuing delivering those messages for the sake of the community people”.

The Imam said, “It was a superstition among people that ‘diarrhoea’, ‘cholera’, etc, which are considered as ‘Bala mochibat’ are consequences of evil act of people. When the incidences of evil act increase God sends these diseases as signs of those among people. Accordingly, it is also the symbolic message to people for remembering God more frequently and to remain away from evil tasks. However, when such diseases broke out at the community, then people were used to collectively arrange prayer (Quaran Khatam, Doa Younus) to get rid of such diseases by satisfying God. The incidence of diarrhoea has been drastically reduced so people do not usually come to me to organize such prayer. Now I can realize that it was our misconception”. He also stated that some people called the Fokir (Spiritual leader) to prevent the village from Bala mochibat. The Fokir continued Jikir (Called name of Allah with loud voice) to save the villagers. Then the Fokir was given money for his work. “From my realization, I used to advice people to install a latrine at their household and maintain hygienic life to keep away all the Bala mochibat”, he said.

He said, “After receiving hygiene message, the community people became aware about the causes of diarrhoea and they have become used to hygiene practice. The incidence of diarrhoea has reduced substantially in the community because now people understand the causes of diseases. Despite increase of knowledge I am continuing to deliver messages for the sake of sustainability of the achievement. At present I am regularly monitoring the status of use and sustenance of achievement of sanitation coverage and safe drinking water supply”, he said. Alongside, he physically visits households and collects information on the status of maintenance of the WatSan facilities.

“I am still continuing follow up and monitoring through my students of the respective villages. I sometimes request the respective implementing agencies to take part in follow up activities. Several times I emphasized on establishing a mechanism that would ensure participation of the respective community people which will lead people to sustain the achievement. As an Imam I will continue to give messages to people till Allah continues me that opportunity’, said Md. Abdur Rashid.

5.2.8 Benefit of the Community

NGO Forum’s Community-managed WatSan Programme has created the scope and opportunities of the community people as well as the VDC members of the respective villages in many socio-economic, health and hygiene issues, WatSan facilities, capacity building and enhancement, community level organization development and on various other issues. The benefits consist of social awareness, increase of knowledge, availability of sanitation facilities at the door-step of all households, increased interaction among community people and stakeholders, increased participation in development process, improvement of health and hygiene behaviour, etc. The capacity building efforts enhanced people’s ability to assess the needs, prepare action plan, carryout activities and also overcome challenges that emerged within the implementation process.

Hygiene behavioural changes: The behavioural change refers to the change of hygiene behaviour of the community people irrespective of age, sex, and social position in family and households. Both the males and females including children and elderly people became used to use safe water in all purposes and also became habituated to use sanitary latrine. Although at the

initial stage, people hesitated to use latrine giving up the traditional practice but software services contributed in changing knowledge in this regard. Health and hygiene message dissemination in various means motivated people and enhanced their awareness on the importance of hygiene behaviour. However, now a days, people's hygiene behaviour has been changed which can be termed as a qualitative benefit of people.

Access to WatSan facilities increases: The WatSan facilities were almost absent in most of the villages because the selected villages were unserved and or underserved. Most of the households irrespective of economic condition did not have sanitary latrine in their houses. The motivational campaign influenced them in creating demand of those facilities. As a result, they installed latrines either by their own cost or got it from the Union Parishad or any other agencies with subsidized price. This programme perpetuated increased hygienic latrine facilities.

Knowledge on health and hygiene: The FGD with access to community male and female, and also the VDC members disclose that the knowledge base on health and hygiene education has been increased after participation in the programme activities. The increase of knowledge has contributed in decreasing health hazards especially water-borne diseases. It has also contributed in increasing knowledge on social analysis, interaction and confidence on disseminating health and hygiene message within the community. This has benefited people in terms of medical cost reduction, ways of maintaining sound health to remain active work-force, etc. To some extent, it has substantially contributed to poverty reduction at the household level.

Increase of social capital: The VDC members and other stakeholders including the Imams, school teachers became well known to the community people and development agencies. The VDC members expressed their satisfaction that due to this process they have achieved social status and position in the society. The development agencies invite them in various occasions to participate in their programme. Some of them are getting financial benefits from them. This programme has increased their relationship with a wide range of organizations and community people.

Cultural changes: During conflict with someone, people used to maledict others by saying that he or she would be attacked by *Ula Devi*, because people had a belief that if *Ula Devi* becomes angry with someone then s/he becomes attacked by diarrhoea or cholera that leads to death. However, after sanitation coverage and getting knowledge about causes of that disease, people generally do not maledict by using the term *Ula Devi*. Now it has disappeared from the culture of rural people. The programme has erased the misconception and prejudice from the wider section of people of the respective villages.

Fake medicine withers away: Diarrhoea was the cause of huge death in the rural areas before knowledge about its causes. When someone of the village got affected by diarrhoea or cholera then people used to read the religious book (Quran) to satisfy *Allah* with the belief that he would save people from such disease. All the villagers together organized religious functions to get rid of it. Sometimes people called *Fakir/Tantrik* (traditional healer) who read out spells to prevent the villagers from the aggression of *Ula Devi*. However, through participation in health education sessions people became aware about their misconception and the real causes of such diseases. As a result, people do not organize religious functions and even need not to call *Tantriks* for this purpose.

New development initiatives: The enhancement of the ways of assessing community needs and the process of meeting the needs have been possible through capacity building initiatives. As a result, the VDCs of some areas have taken various development initiatives by their own capacity and resources. Some VDCs have constructed the roads of their villages with only community efforts. They have also taken joint initiatives by ensuring participation of the whole community to remove water logging problems and have made a tremendous success. As a result, the honour of the VDC members have increased substantially. It has contributed in reducing economic losses by transforming inundated land into arable land which has created income and employment opportunity of the whole community. Taking development initiatives and achieving success in reaching the objectives are great benefits of this programme.

New platform for decision-making: The programme has created or strengthened platforms for decision-making and resource negotiation to establish the dialogue between stakeholders and ensured a better management and distribution of resources and benefits. This has ensured access to information for all and strengthened the bargaining power of men and women in communities, to make them a better match in the discussion with the other stakeholders. It has been achieved in much respect with little exception.

Efficiency and accountability: The needs for efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of investments have been increased. Increasing resources do not guarantee efficiency and effectiveness and a lot of efforts such as institutional setup, human resources development are required for this. The Community-managed WatSan Programme facilitated the capacity building that has enhanced efficiency and accountability of stakeholders leading to sustainability of achievements in the WatSan sector.

6. Lessons Learnt

- Stakeholders including partner organization staff have gained diversified experiences in implementing community-managed water and sanitation programme. The capacity of the community people has increased, integration of water and sanitation issues with other programme like health education, non-formal education, capacity building of community people and even micro-credit facilities have increased keeping in touch with the VDC. If there was opportunity of interaction with the VDC at least on half-yearly basis the sustainability issues could be addressed.
- The VDCs have got an institutional shape. In some cases, it has been taking development initiatives by its own and implementing different programmes by using community resources through ensuring participation. Such initiatives have made immense positive impact on emerging community development movement. It has also created enthusiasm among people in this regard.
- Structurally the VDC has been performing infrastructural development and community level conflict resolution activities. It has emerged as an alternative platform in rural power structure to some extent. As a result the influential people count the opinions of the VDC members and in some cases the VDC members are considered as influential persons of the respective society.

- The VDC members are invited by various development organizations to assist them in introducing new intervention at the respective community. They have become the mentors or catalysts of development interventions. The capacity building efforts have contributed in increasing social stakes, position and condition of them, which enable them to be such actor.
- The implementing agencies, sometimes use the VDC members for recovery of micro-credit installment. As they are socially accepted and having good relationship with the community people so the implementing agencies are using this force to strengthen their programme at the community level.
- Participatory need assessment and planning have enriched the understanding on overall situation of the community which is helpful to initiate new intervention and/or strengthening or revising the process of the existing programmes of the partner organization.
- The Community-managed WatSan Programme intervention has contributed in increasing the capacity of the VDC members. It has also contributed to prove their potentials in social development intervention. As a result, a considerable number of them have included themselves in Law and Order Committee, Shalish Committee, Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Protirodh Committee, Ward WatSan Committee, Union WatSan Committee, etc. The capacity building efforts have contributed to break the silence of disadvantaged people to some extent.
- The potential and influential people who actively participated in the Community-managed WatSan Programme have gained experiences. The Union Parishad used them in their respective UP where the Union-based Total Sanitation programme has been implemented. This programme has substantially developed human resources in water and sanitation sector, who are contributing beyond their working areas which have increased their power and prestige within the community as well as to the local level administration.
- Participation of all stakeholders in development programme can bring enormous outcome which has been evident in almost all villages. The participation of the VDC members in community development activities is praiseworthy in all respect. It has created a congenial atmosphere to increase participation of people that lead to sustainability of village development committee and its function.
- The villagers have learnt the importance of unity in achieving any common objectives through the process. It has encouraged people to be united on common issues irrespective of their political affiliation, which is considered as democratization process of development.
- Community people have become enabled to calculate health services and health cost of households. So they have become aware about the health hazards and its negative impact on family and economy. As a consequence, the sustainability of WatSan achievement have got momentum and in all cases the people themselves, eager to maintain hygiene life.

- Appropriate information and knowledge have become enable people to rational thinking and capable of identifying their own needs and necessary initiatives in solving the problems. It has been realized by the organization and community people that dissemination of knowledge should be the prime objective of any development intervention.
- Institutionalization of programme should be the key areas for the sake of sustainability of achievements. The programme has enabled the community people to institutionalize the activities. However, for enhancement of such process organizations need to establish a mechanism through incorporation of various potential stakeholders in the process and should continue follow up activities more frequently.

7. Conclusion

Despite various challenges in programme implementation, the Community-managed WatSan Programme has substantial contribution in creating scope and opportunities for community people in many respects. Socio-economic status, health and hygiene behaviour, WatSan facilities, capacity building and enhancement of people, community level organization building and strengthening of those organizations were focused areas where it contributed a lot. This programme also contributed in social awareness, increase of knowledge and interaction among community people and concerned stakeholders, increasing participation in development process, improvement of health and hygiene behaviour, etc. In qualitative terms, it attributed to knowledge of people on their social responsibilities and it stimulated them to take part in action. The capacity building efforts enhanced people's ability to realize the needs, ways to make plan in line with the needs, perform activities to meet the needs and also overcome challenges that emerged within the implementation process. Through a single component (WatSan) of development initiatives, it capacitates and leads towards holistic development approach of the actors. Accordingly, after phase-out of programme activities, it has been running towards its vision with its own mechanism which is great lessons for the sector. The programme approach, process and strategies were rationally goal oriented and the facilitating agency was able to successfully transform it into its partners who actually facilitated to made the things happening. Its contribution was multifarious, that impacted on individual, community and organization in capacity building, increasing knowledge and transforming those into action. It is a strong and comprehensive model of democratization of development by putting last in first and reversed approach from traditional top down to bottom up approach. It would be very effective model for replication in development for two reasons i.e. less cost involvement and high people participation. Alongside, it is an effective approach of shifting the development responsibility to them who are beneficiaries of such action.

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