

822 BD97



ACROSS THE VILLAGES

A Collection of Experiences on
Water & Sanitation

Edited by
Qazi Mahbul Hasan

822-BD97-14810

11/11/11

Library
IRC International Water
and Sanitation Centre
Tel.: +31 70 30 689 80
Fax: +31 70 35 899 64

ACROSS THE VILLAGES

**A Collection of Experiences on
Water & Sanitation**

**Edited by
Qazi Mahbubul Hasan**

NGO FORUM
For Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation
LIBRARY IRC
PO Box 93190, 2509 AD THE HAGUE
Tel.: +31 70 30 689 80
Fax: +31 70 35 899 64
BARCODE: 14810
LO: 872 B10 97

First published December 1997

© NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or translated in any form or by any means without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 984 - 590 - 000 - 3

Editorial Assistance: Joseph Halder, Cover Design: Saha Dipak Kumar, Abul Kalam; Printing Supervision: Waresul Haque; Computer Compose: Mazedul Hoque Prodhan, Sudhir Chandra Sheel.

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

Printed by Bangladesh Progressive Enterprise Press Ltd.,
46/1. Purana Paltan (1st Floor) Dhaka-1000

To
The grassroot people
who are our prime partner in development

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	6
<i>Preface</i>	8
Breaking Bigotry Matters Most	13
Training Women is the Key	17
Importance of Imams in Changing Habits	19
Training Helps Many in More than One Way	23
The Member Made It Successful	27
Integrated Move Works Best	31
Partners Promotes Private Entrepreneurship	37
A Death Secrets Them alive in Saat Tikery	39
Skeptics Get the Sanitation Habit	43
Fringe Shows Centre the Hygienic Way	47
Hazera's Life: Safe Water and Sanitation	51
VSC the Means to Reach the Doorsteps	57
Trans-Sectoral Approach for WatSan Promotion	61
Sakhina Struggles for Her Existence	65

Habits Grow with Consistent Care	69
When Three Turns Infinity	73
Coordination Yields	75
A Committed Teacher : His Involvement in the	
Social Mobilization for Sanitation	79
Teens Too Turn Teachers	83
Views from Villages: Consciousness about Safe	
Water & Sanitation Growing	87
Technology for the Poor	93
A Torch in the Dark Tunnel	97

FOREWORD

NGO Forum has been Promoting the integrated approach as an alternative way to motivate the rural people towards sustainable safe water and hygienic sanitation practice. To converge the people's needs and the basic support to promote a hygienic water and sanitation (WatSan) habit the Forum has broaden a community network of about 560 partner NGOs and CBOs. Through the partner organizations the Forum has been facilitating its hardware and software support in the rural areas all-over Bangladesh.

And at the end of 15 years of its work the Forum is consolidating the achievements that came during this span of time. In this process NGO Forum took an initiative to collecting the scattered experience of its network partners and development actors at the grassroot.

This is a tremendous document of the experiences of the Forum itself as well as its partners. The document contains the process and working strategy of the Forum through partnership approach, its hopes and aspiration, the promise and conviction of the people and finally the achievement contributed to the sector.

Every word of this document echoes the voice of the rural people who are the inseparable part of the Forum's journey, and the Forum believes that the success reflected in this document is obviously theirs. NGO Forum is immensely grateful to them and acknowledges their valuable contribution.

Special thanks go to the persons who collected data through intensive discussion with the people in different walks of life. I also thank our

partner organizations who supported enormously in various ways from time to time in documenting the experience. I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks to all our friends and colleagues both at home and abroad whose continuous encouragement and support was essential in carrying out our activities for the rural communities, specially for the poor and underprivileged.

I hope this document will give some insights to the readers in the Forum's integrated WatSan programme implementation and its positive contribution to the sector.

S. M. A. Rashid
Director
NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation

PREFACE

This Book is a collection of experiences on water and sanitation (WatSan) activities in rural Bangladesh. We have tried to bring together the experiences of NGOs and CBOs who are implementing water and sanitation programme at the grassroot. The views of the community people have also been documented with great interest.

NGO Forum being the opex networking and service delivery organization for the NGOs and CBOs always in concerned with the sustainability of the achievements.

The partner organization work closely with the community and utilize the support services provided by NGO Forum in the forms of hardware and software. The dissemination of information and facilitation of promotional and training activities have contributed considerably to the WATSAN sector development. Community participation and social mobilization promoted at the grassroot level through various means is vital to increase overall quality of work and contributing to long-term sustainability.

The Integrated Approach has been found very effective in bringing more coverage in sanitation. Where there is demand for tubewell integrated approach increased latrine installation. The policy of selling latrines without subsidy contributes to sustainability.

The Book contains 23 different stories flashing over the experiences of the implements and the benefited villagers with the integrated WatSan programme. Capacity building of the partner organizations is the key concern as well as facilitating effective collaboration with different

sectoral and trans-sectoral groups and organizations are equally important to facilitate the WatSan programme dynamically. The Forum's partner organizations are not always well equipped with trained personnel. NGO Forum has been rendering those the necessary training on water and sanitation programme. These trained personnel are contributing much by imparting knowledge to the community groups on WatSan issues as well as on other development activities of their organizations.

In NGO Forum we have experienced that we must work to effect change not by social mobilization alone, not by lobbying alone, not by network alone, not by information alone and not anything else alone. All these methods are brought together and integrated in a planned way. NGO Forum's collaborative activities are playing important role in making the catalyst agents like the mass media, legislature, local government, other govt. departments and national policy-making bodies work for the issue of WatSan.

The software support services comprising of all the activities which are ultimately leading to mass awareness for the proper hygiene behaviour as well as capacity building of local allies and NGOs and CBOs. Only hardware facilities can bring little change in public health. It is much important to ensure proper use and maintenance of those. Experiences in these areas have been very clearly stated in some features how the Forum through its partner organizations is facilitating skill development and awareness building activities in the community. This is not easy at all to change the traditional beliefs and practices by the people as most of them are illiterate; sometimes poverty is a striking hurdle in enhancing people's consciousness. The stories have narrated how the workers through continuous effort were able to change people's attitude and behaviour in terms of hygiene practice. The community women groups, school teachers and students, the Imams, UP members and others are motivating and mobilizing the fellow villagers towards developing safe water and sanitation habit. But how? In which way? Some stories

answer these very vividly.

Hardware is the physical materials and infrastructure support for rural water supply and sanitation facilities. The hardware support has been facilitated by NGO Forum giving highest emphasis on sanitation. Village Sanitation Centre (VSC) is the key component of the sanitation programme where low-cost hygienic latrine is produced and distributed to the rural people of the unserved areas. Technological options on hygienic latrine are also provided to the community people considering affordability of the poor people. The examples relating to village sanitation are explicit on the strategy and functioning of VSCs, village coverage, and other activities.

For water supply the strategy is to facilitate appropriate technology in different areas of the country considering hydrogeological condition. The Shallow pump, Tara pump, Pond Sand Filter, Iron Removal Plant, Rain Water Harvesting Plant, etc. have been installed for safe water supply at the grassroot level. This varied types of technology are giving the Forum and its partners opportunity of building capacity in dealing with new technologies and get updated with time and space. NGO Forum gathered some experiences in making acceptable water technologies available in the shallow water table area, low-water table area, hilly and stony area and coastal belt. We feel responsible for sharing these experiences with the potential readers of this book.

Social mobilization is a complex operation where all the potential allies are brought together to orchestrate a joint attack against the alarming situation on a particular issue. NGO Forum, as the apex coordinating and networking agency of NGOs in water and sanitation sector facilitates the social mobilization for WatSan. Different types of promotional activities are facilitated among and together with the community people. The community people participate very spontaneously and become the active part in the total process of change. Their experiences are alive to share here in this Book.

Though the NGO Forum network is all over the country, but this was our time limitation to conduct and collect the experiences from all parts of our working areas. However, this is our belief that this Book somehow echoes the voices and experiences of our working areas country-wide.

I am thankful to all those who helped in bringing together the experiences from the remote corners of the country. Last but not the least I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my colleagues without whose all out cooperation the publication of this Book was impossible.

Our efforts will be of worth if this book proves to be interesting to the readers.

Qazi Mahbubul Hasan
December 1997, Dhaka



Breaking Bigotry Matters Most

Otherwise a serene typical village, Shibnagar - one specialty has turned it to be unique for which the villagers can take pride in. Hundred per cent households in Shibnagar under Chowgachha thana of Jessore have attached with them one sanitary latrine each.

Nasima Begum, Director, Shishu Niloy, says even before her organization became a partner to NGO Forum (NGOF) in 1989, it used to link up motivation on water and sanitation with its other programmes like - children education, health, group formation, etc.

Other than Shibnagar, Shishu Niloy, a Jessore based NGO, scores cent per cent success in sanitation coverage at some other villages as well. These are - Mohammadpur, Phulsara, and Sholua under Chowgachha thana and Khitibdia under Sadar thana in Jessore.

We visited Shibnagar, a hard-to-reach remote village of Chowgachha where people belonging to Hindu and Muslim communities live in peace for time immemorial.

Shishu Niloy started its activities in Shibnagar back in 1988. However, its water and sanitation programme got into motion with sinking of a tubewell in that village in 1990. Yet, not before three more years passed by, that Shishu Niloy ventured sanitary latrine drive in Shibnagar.

“There were hardly five to seven tubewells in Shibnagar and again not in very good condition at the time when we started sinking tubewells in 1990”, recalls Nasima. Only five per cent households in Shibnagar had sanitary latrine in 1993 and the rest were not even aware of health

hazards they exposed themselves by discharging excreta on open in the wilderness, says Nasima.

Shishu Niloy had chosen Shibnagar for setting a target of cent per cent coverage with an aim to create example that neighbouring villages would feel inspired. Besides, there was enough elan and sincerity among villagers - it was like a candle to be lit, Shishu Niloy lit it, and the light spreads, spreads and spreads - describes an activist. Initially, things did not move as fast and uninterrupted as it is now. There were people not at all enlightened and used to argue about necessity of hygienic sanitation. They even sometimes took it as an unwanted intrusion into their private life that wants to command their drinking, bathing and washing habits.

One fine morning, a flock of village women sit on a mat under the shadow of trees at the courtyard of Mostafa Mia's hut in Shibnagar. Shivani Mitra, a dark complexion woman in her early thirties with full of enthusiasm and flushing eyes, is their leader.

They open the box of stories that show how a quiet revolution has taken place in Shibnagar. A couple of years back womenfolk of Shibnagar got themselves organized under the banners of five associations. 'Palash Mohila Samity', 'Shanti Mohila Samity', 'Shapla Mohila Samity', 'Golap Mohila Samity', and 'Joba Mohila Samity' - these are the names of their associations formed in five zones of the village incorporating members from areas fall in advantageous proximity.

In the initial stage of group formation, narrates Phoolmoti Begum, a group member, husbands used to forbid their wives and in extreme cases there were incidents of physical assaults also. "But, we successfully came across that crossroads of backwardness and credulous".

Ambia, wife of host Mostafa Mia, smiles, stares at her husband and says,

“Yes, now my husband does give enough attention to causes of women, he values my opinion in any family decision”. Shivani, the leader, nods her head in agreement.

Nurjahan, sitting far behind Shivani, tells her story then. Her family members used to use backyard bush of their house as lavatory. But, that ‘gifted’ lavatory on natural settings brought much danger when Nurjahan’s husband narrowly survived a diarrhoeal death. It has been three years now her house has a sanitary latrine.

Shivani recalls in 1993 Shishu Niloy used to incorporate Tk. 110 for a set of sanitary latrine in a loan of Tk. 1,000 it provided to group members for different other activities like income generation, etc. Later, says Shivani, “In our regular group discussions we told members that they should have sanitary latrine at each of their houses as a pre-qualification for getting loan”.

In 1995, continues Shivani, government through Shishu Niloy sanctioned 13 sets of sanitary latrines for the village Shibnagar. Those who had procured these and installed in their houses within 15 days time later, got back Tk. 200 each from the government as subsidy. This stimulated the already built up awareness among the villagers, opines Shivani.

Shivani, who also engaged herself in Shishu Niloy’s education programme, says that in her class lectures she usually gives lessons highlighting benefits of leading hygienic life and using sanitary latrine.

Anju Rani, a young mother, with a toddler on her lap sucking its mother’s breast, says it has been over two years now that Shishu Niloy no more providing tubewells to the village. Shafia Ara Begum agrees. They say, earlier through NGO Forum Shishu Niloy had sunk five tubewells in Shibnagar with 30% contribution from the users but, now Niloy only gives loan for sinking tubewells, no subsidy is given now.

Oliar Rahman, a supervisor of Shishu Niloy, fully endorses village women's observation and explains, "as policy, we had provided tubewells with subsidy in a locality where coverage was relatively low. Now, Shibnagar has as many as 20 tubewells which means there is one for every five households. "So according to our policy we don't give tubewells on subsidized price any more".

Shafia recently sunk a tubewell at her house. Anju took loan of Tk. 3,000 for the same reason. She says it will take her one year to repay the money and cost her Tk. 144 per thousand as interest. "Still, I want a tubewell for my family exclusively. It is not very pleasant to fetch water from a neighbour's tubewell, particularly during days of quarrels when we do not remain in talking terms".

Training Women is the Key

Over 200 trained female members of the partner organizations of NGO Forum have been engaged in production and sale of hygienic latrines (ring-slab) and work zealously among the villagers to motivate them to use hygienic latrine and safe water from tubewells installed in the backward areas of Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat.

The group members of the partner organizations have acquired a high standard of training and the knowledge on the making ring-slab and tubewell installation from the NGO Forum. They are, in fact, the key players in raising awareness of the womenfolk and children about the hygienic latrine and telling them the importance of using tubewell water, holding group meeting in the courtyard of homesteads. They also take care (repairing and maintenance) of the tubewells installed with the assistance of NGO Forum.

Mosammat Rokeya Khatun is one who received intensive training from NGO Forum and has been working with “Shushilan” to promote WatSan programme in Krishnanagar village under Kaliganj thana in Satkhira district for last three years. Mother of three daughters and a son, Rokeya said, “I have been trying my best to translate the knowledge on WatSan programme into reality. I did not meet any hurdles in propagating my knowledge. About 90 per cent of the village people now use hygienic latrines and drink tubewell water, she said, adding I hope the entire population of the village would be using hygienic latrines and safe drinking water by the end of this year”.

She also said all the families bought ring-slab from “Shushilan”. NGO Forum sank 30 tubewells in Krishnanagar and each of them was being taken care of by a female caretaker of Shushilan. Haruna Begum of

Benadona village said that safe drinking water in the village would perhaps remain illusive without NGO Forum's tubewells.

“SHETU” (Shirashuni Humanitarian Enhance Territorial Unity) is another partner organization of NGO Forum working to promote WatSan programme in Tetulia union under Tala thana in Satkhira district. About twelve of its female beneficiaries having training from NGO Forum are engaged in transpiring WatSan programme among the fellow women and children of their area. They also make ring-slab and on their own initiative sell the product to the middle and lower earning groups. Leader of the trained women Rekha Das said, “We make the female members of the community conscious of the consequence of diarrhoea, dysentery and other intestinal diseases first, tell them the preventive ways and then advise them to use hygienic latrines and use tubewell water for most of the household purposes”. She said about 95 per cent population in each of 17 villages in Tetulia union now use hygienic latrines and tubewell water. This is the result of last four years' work. “This has been possible because of technical and financial assistance of NGO Forum”, said Keya Rani Majumdar and Anjalee Ranee Dey, two devoted workers of “SHETU”. Local social leaders said women workers are more effective than male ones in promoting WatSan programme in the area.

Importance of Imams in Changing Habits

Dwellers of Hasadanga, a remote village in Keshabpur thana of Jessore district, proudly say that most of the houses in their village have hygienic latrines and all people of the village use safe water.

When asked how it was possible, villagers said, the Imams (religious leader, who leads prayer) of the mosques pioneered the message of maintaining good health by using hygienic latrines and safe water to them in cooperation with the Janakollyan Songstha (JAKOS), Jessore. JAKOS is a partner organization of NGO Forum.

Hafez Mobarak Hossain, an Imam, lives in Hasadanga south (Dakshin para) along with 148 other families. Before beginning WatSan programme activities in the village by JAKOS, there were four tubewells in the locality (para) and one pucca latrine (hygienic) which was in the homestead of the Imam. At present 78 houses in the locality have hygienic latrines and 17 houses with tubewells. For this development in a short period of about 20 months, everybody in the locality pointed finger to the Imam with praises for JAKOS and NGO Forum for rendering support.

Imam Hafez Mobarak Hossain, said “I took it as my motto to make people conscious about health and hygiene, inspire them to use hygienic latrine and safe water and maintain cleanliness in daily life. Every Friday before “Khutba”(religious teaching), I advised the congregation on these and I am happy that my advice worked”, he said.

Hafez Mobarak said “I had a misconception of NGOs and their activities

being anti-sharia (anti-Islam). But this was dispelled following the attendance at an orientation course on safe water and hygienic latrine programme organized and conducted by JAKOS and NGO Forum in 1995”.

Mobarak was one of the 30 Imams who attended the course on “Role of Imams in the Use of Safe Water and Hygienic Latrine”. On completion of the course, 14 of them started motivating people in their respective areas on the use of safe water and hygienic latrine for maintaining good health and a healthy environment.

Good Work Pay Off

“I had to face some problems when I started motivation work. Now I am happy. My work paid off and I am hopeful that all the houses will have hygienic latrine and easy access to safe water by the end of the year 1997”, he said with confidence. Same optimism was expressed by the Imam of Hasadanga north mosque, Fazlur Rahman, who is doing motivational work in his locality after attending the orientation course. Both the Imams said that they emphasized their motivational work in all sorts of religious functions “cleanliness is a part of the faith”.

Monsur Ali, supervisor of JAKOS, said that they thought Imams could play an effective role in motivating people about WatSan programme. “The activities of 14 Imams are regularly monitored”, he said, adding “We are contemplating a refresher course for 16 other Imams who did not work for WatSan programme after attending the orientation course”.

Monsur Ali said that his organization was interested in conducting more orientation course on WatSan for the Imams with the assistance of NGO Forum.

The Islamic Foundation regularly organizes “Imam Training Programme” in the divisional towns. In every Programme, NGO Forum

gives presentation on WatSan programme highlighting the necessity of using safe water and hygienic latrine with the call to Imams to imbibe people with the knowledge of getting used to these. This presentation relates WatSan issue with religious teachings. "Video films on WatSan programme produced by NGO Forum have been found very useful to educate the Imams and the common people", said Hafez Mobarak, Fazlur Rahman and Monsur Ali.



Training Helps Many in More than One Way

Being trained up not necessarily benefits one who got the training. The benefit can be shared with many more once the trained person disseminates his or her acquired knowledge among fellow colleagues or among the community people. Probably, Niva feels this more strongly than many others

Niva and her organization, SEDA (Socio-Economic Development Agency) largely indebted to training services provided by Bijon Kumar Sarkar. SEDA Director Niva Sarkar states it with great pride that how Bijon, a coordinator of her organization, benefited the organization in more than one way after graduating himself a 12-day intensive 'Training of Trainers' (TOT) programme organized and conducted by NGO Forum back in 1996.

SEDA, an NGO, founded in 1985 at village Phukuria under Gheor thana in Manikganj, became a partner organization of NGO Forum in 1990. The Director of the organization Niva Sarkar explained that along with the credit, education and women development programmes, SEDA now gives special importance on water and sanitation programme.

In his own words, Bijon says, "Now I can train others in my organization. We can design and conduct our own training courses ourselves"

Niva agrees to Bijon as she describes that the NGO Forum's TOT comes as a blessing when SEDA field workers find their jobs done more in an easier way than ever before. No matter, be it giving motivation to people about using safe water or sanitary latrine, be it educating the illiterate rural poor - the training they got from their in-house trainer, who is one

of them, help them a lot in making their work more worthy drawing enough positive feedback.

Mariam Akhter, a SEDA staff, thinks multiplication of Bijon's learning from the training received makes her field level activities easier. "I find a qualitative change in my approach now when I talk to people about our credit programme or about water and sanitation programme". Her colleague Kavita Rani fully endorses Mariam's views.

After taking part in TOT programme, Bijon himself trained 82 tubewell caretakers in four batches over the last one year. All the trainees, not necessarily, belong to SEDA rather, the batches include trainees from other organizations like BRAC and Jana Kallyan Sangstha. The pump caretakers, all women, can now handle more efficiently if and when any tubewell goes out of order.

Lalburu Begum, Shamela, Laily, Jyotsna, Renu Khatun - they live in remote villages of Gheor thana. They all have same feeling of gratitude while narrating in unison that how better services are rendered to them now after the caretakers underwent the training programme. "The tubewell sunk in our neighbourhood does not remain inoperative for a single day. Trained caretaker takes much care of it. She handles things very well, fixes up minor technical disorders without giving the neighbours any scope to lodge a complain", said Shamela with a note of appreciation.

TOT provides to be a full success when beneficiaries at village Rupsha in the neighbouring thana Shibaloy explicit an identical view. Swapan Kumar Chandra, a Programme Officer of SPUS (Samaj kallyan O Pally Unnayan Sangstha), underwent TOT programme back in 1992. "Now, I can chart out training programmes for staff in my organization. We have already completed a number of in-house training as well", says Chandra.

Ruban Basu, a colleague of Chandra, also got trained under NGO Forum's TOT programme. "We shared our experience among 35 other colleagues. We have developed the expertise and can design training programmes and play ourselves the role of facilitator now", says a proud Basu.

Founded in 1980, SPUS took up water and sanitation programme first in 1983. Two of its staff Chandra and Basu, who were among first batch trainees of the TOT, did also participate a refreshers' follow-up course at NGO Forum after two years of the basic course Basu says that the refreshers' course benefit them in many ways as the problems at field level they had come across could be discussed in that course. She says, not that TOT benefits them in designing training programmes on water and sanitation programme only rather, its experience also helps designing training courses on other programmes as well.

Anna Begum lives in village Koirra. She is a tubewell caretaker. She takes care of a tubewell that was sunk in her village few years back. Her skill in regard to maintenance of tubewell developed tremendously after Anna underwent a training course two years back under the facilitation of Chandra and Basu.

She claims that the training benefits her a lot. "Now, I have the technical know-how for fixing up any minor disorders to the tubewell. Community people those depend on this tubewell for drinking water also extend their helping hand to me and I do share my knowledge with them", describes Anna.

Narayan Chandra Bhowmik, Associate Training Officer of NGO Forum explains that through the TOT programme they are being able to disseminate information regarding water and sanitation programme among the trainers and water & sanitation programme managers of the NGOs and community based organizations (CBOs). From each batch the

Forum selects few best trainees and forms a core-trainers' group. The idea is these core-group trainers will not only train their fellow staff and their beneficiaries but also will train staff and beneficiaries of other organizations. Thus NGO Forum builds the capacity of NGOs and CBOs to implement social development activities more efficiently, he adds.

Core group trainers feel that the TOT programme came to them as a blessing but, it would be more helpful if NGO Forum provides the trainees with more study materials.

The Member Made It Successful

“I, always, do respect my voters who have been offering me the opportunity to serve them for the last 14 years”, Lutfar Rahman Akhand, disclosed very proudly as a Union Parishad Member of Padrishibpur Union of Bakerganj Thana, Barisal. But this is not easy at all to attain the people’s respect for him. Lutfar Rahman has realized it in many ways, as he said, “I fell really in trouble while I was marching with the ‘Social Mobilization for Sanitation’ (SocMob) project workers for motivating the community people towards hygienic latrine installation”. The Member disclosed, “In my union I just pushed some young men to move with the SocMob workers and demolish open latrine at every household” and this made the people very angry upon him. Then the Member decided to convince the people of his union by upholding the importance of hygienic latrines as well as the disadvantages of open/hanging latrine use. “I just accompanied the SocMob workers in preaching those secrets”, said the Member, while the people learning the importance of hygienic latrine responded very massively for installing hygienic latrines by themselves as well as inspiring their neighbours to follow that.

This is in brief the Member disclosed his involvement with the SocMob project activities. But he described the ins and outs of the project implementation. Lutfar Rahman opined that the SocMob project workers were very much intimate with the community people. “They were very cordial and hardworking” he expressed, and this made the workers more intimate and acceptable to the community people. He said, “I saw 4 workers including a female person working in my union, and they maintained every communication with me”. The Member also cooperated them in every possible way to make their responsibility easier. But “They were very poor in number for covering a whole union within a

short period they were allocated”, the Member commented. He opined that only 4 persons were not enough at all for a vast area of a union for convincing the people towards safe WatSan and hygiene practice. And this is the most tough task to turn the people into another habit from their traditional ones which they are habituated on heredity basis.

Referring to his involvement with the project implementation Lutfar Rahman disclosed that it was a very positive and effective initiative to form different committees who ultimately helped the proper implementation in many ways. “I, myself, was a member of the Union Sanitation Development Committee (USDC) and performed some activities being an active part of the project”, said the Member. But the Member mentioned that he mainly was associated with the project activities being a part of the society and the project workers’ cordial and active performance inspired him very much. As a member of the USDC the Member took part in different meetings held at the Union Parishad and he emphasized boldly to make the Chowkidar (watchman), Dafadar (village police) and all others involved in the project activities. He himself used to visit the villagers with the project workers and tried to motivate them. But at the first stage “The villagers were completely reluctant to listen to and follow our advice” the Member pointed. “Suddenly I ordered some young men to demolish the open/hanging latrines” added Lutfar Rahman and this made the villagers excited upon him and threatened him not to vote for him at the next election. But the Member did not get upset and he started visiting and convincing the houses massively. The villagers then being convinced with the importance of safe WatSan practice gradually started installing & using the hygienic latrine and tubewell water.

The convinced families were not stopped by installing hygienic latrine of their own only; they tried to motivate their neighbours also. “As the project workers were organizing miking, rally, discussion forums, courtyard meetings, etc the villagers took part so eagerly to those events and it was created like a festival in my union”, the Member disclosed

very proudly. Lutfar Rahman mentioned that all these made the villagers very demanding to hygienic latrine and tubewells. “It was so nice to see that almost every family was looking for and installing the latrine” he added. But there was not enough latrine production facilities at the union. So the people were not getting latrine set as per their need. On the otherhand maximum of the families were not in a well-to-do status to buy the latrine set at the cost price. So many of them were rushing to the local CARITAS office which usually sells every latrine set at 30% subsidized price. But only CARITAS production was not enough to fulfill the rising demand. Then “I alongwith my other colleagues advised the villagers to go to the Thana Parishad to buy the DPHE production and convinced the DPHE personnels to increase the total production of their centres”, the Member mentioned. The village sanitation centre of Palli Gono Unnayan Kendra (PGUK), a partner organization of NGO Forum, also started the production of latrine sets in increased number. All these helped the community people collecting and installing latrine at their houses.

The Member said that almost all the people under this union were motivated but the elite persons. “I, myself, alongwith the project workers, visited them many times but failed to motivate them towards hygienic latrine installation”, the Member expressed his grief.

Lutfar Rahman Akhand mentioned some shortcomings of the project that it was a very short-term project and the workers were very poor in number, which caused not to reach the coverage upto hundred percent. But “The achievement was higher than our expectation. I never thought of 90% sanitation coverage in my union which is a very remote one”, said the Member. “The cordial and hardworking initiative of the project workers made it finally”, he added.

The Member considering the reality of his people and nature of the project recommended that the project should be implemented long-term

basis appointing enough staff members. “The latrine set should be distributed at reduced price and on installment basis specially among the poor people”, pointed the Member. He mentioned about some communication materials which were used in the motivational activities that those were not that much appropriate for the illiterate people and the number of those was limited in his area. “Teaching the people by following the Flip-chart was an excellent method for motivating the people” the Member opined while he mentioned that miking, poster, school programme, courtyard meeting, etc. should be facilitated more in number. Different committees comprising of the GO, NGO and the community people should be formed and responsibilities should be distributed very specifically among those. The Member suggested for formulating some effective national policies on safe WatSan promotion which would guide everyone very spontaneously.

“I’m still trying to motivate my people. But it is very tough to guide the people without a concerted effort”, said the Member very frankly. “Everyone knows that open defecation pollutes environment still they are not using the hygienic latrine, and gradually they are going back to the habit of open defecation”, he continued, and suggested “Continuous follow-up can motivate the people in hygienic WatSan habit”.

Integrated Move Works Best

Each dwelling house in Deodanga village in Salikha thana has a hygienic latrine. Tubewells at most of the houses is a common scenario.

Deodanga is difficult to reach from thana headquarters even by motor-bike because of extreme condition of the long track. Even then, dedicated workers of ROVA (Rural Organization for Voluntary Activities), a partner organization of NGO Forum, has made this remote village an example of a success story. The key to this success story lay in the integrated approach towards carrying out WatSan programme, said Arpana Rani Kundu, coordinator of ROVA. “We felt WatSan programme implementation was possible in a short time in correct perspective if a common strategy based on the needs of safe water, hygienic latrine, cleanliness and health consciousness could be planned and launched. Accordingly, we integrated four approaches into one and we have been successful”, Arpana said.

Quoting an NGO Forum survey, ROVA director Kazi Kamruzzaman said 80 per cent of diseases and 25 per cent of child mortality are caused by bacteria formed and reared in water (not safe water). Open latrines at least cause more than 50 diseases. About 300,000 babies die of diarrhoea each year. So there is no alternative to use of safe water and hygienic latrine. But on the sideline of safe water and hygienic latrine, two things are essentially required - cleanliness in daily life and health consciousness. These are so interwoven that one cannot be separated from the other, kamruzzaman said.

ROVA’s field worker, Reena Saha said we explained in the group meetings that no one is safe from health hazard without the combined protective cover of safe water, hygienic latrine, cleanliness and health

consciousness. Cost involved in the treatment of diarrhoea, jaundice or any intestinal disease is more than the price of a hygienic latrine or a tubewell. Moreover, these diseases kill vitality of people and they face difficulty in recovering in a short span of time.

Approach is Simple and Direct

But a little awareness can protect a person from these hazards. “We speak in a simple language sometimes in their dialects. So our words are well received by the participants. The result of our communication with the villagers is visible in not very long time”, Reena said.

When someone approaches us for a latrine, we persuade him/her to have a tubewell or if for tubewell, we ask motivate them to get a latrine too. We also arrange credit for those who cannot buy a latrine and a tubewell at a time on 12 percent service charge, said Kazi Mofizul Islam of ROVA.

Reena said, “ People living in the areas under the WatSan programme coverage are now conscious about general health and cleanliness”. “Many, who are not members of our “Samity”, bought latrines from us which we produced with the help of both hardware and software support from NGO Forum”, she said, adding “We are happy with our achievement”.

Majeda (40), a housewife in Deodanga, is a member of ROVA. She said “I have a tubewell and a sanitary latrine at my home”. Pointing at her four-year old son, Majeda said “He uses latrine with slippers on and washes his hand with ash or soap after defecation. He knows barefoot is exposed to warm attack”, she said.

Another housewife of the same village, Ashia Begum (40) said “I have a hygienic latrine and tubewell in my house. I always keep my house clean. There was no incidence of diarrhoea in my house for last few years”.

ROVA's group member Nurjahan said, "My daughter had diarrhoea five years ago. Now every member of the family uses tubewell and hygienic latrine and we have no incidence of diarrhoea now".

Fatema Khatun (26) is a new member of ROVA. She has no hygienic latrine at home. "But I shall have one as soon as I have money," she said.

Three devices of NGO Forum

The partner organizations of NGO Forum have chosen courtyard meetings, local discussion forum and group discourses as three devices designed to prepare the rural community for responding to the fundamental approaches of the WatSan programme.

They have not discounted either the need for holding school programme, youth and non-school going girl orientation programmes and systematic campaign to mobilize opinion in favour of safe water and sanitary latrines.

In fact, the success achieved in implementation of WatSan programme is the result of motivational and mobilization work of the dedicated workers of 60 partner organizations in greater Jessore district under the proper guidance of NGO Forum.

"Our primary work is motivation and mobilization of people towards safe water and sanitary latrine". said Monir Hasan, Programme Coordinator of Ad-Din Welfare Centre. Through motivation, we made people understand not to use water from ponds in which everything, starting from washing of cattlehead to scouring of cooking utensils is done. And by mobilizing people we started implementing the WatSan programme providing safe water and sanitary latrine, Hasan said. "Even many poor families in remote villages in Monirampur and Jhikargacha have hygienic latrines and easy access to the tubewells", he said.

Giving a resume of their motivational activity, Monir Hasan said courtyard meetings are held in the open space inside house selected for the purpose. These meetings are for the women. About 20 women including old and newly weds are brought into the meeting from the neighbouring houses. Female field workers organize and conduct these meetings. Anarkali, Ad-Din's field worker, said "We explain to them the dangerous consequence of open latrines and unsafe water from ponds. The participants on return home, tell the family members about what they learnt in the courtyard meetings", she said.

Local Discussion Forums (LDFs) are organized in spacious places in schools or its premises. Local leaders, school teachers, religious leaders, educated youths and school students attend these forums. Regional staff of NGO Forum and partner organizations also attend LDFs which are generally chaired by Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO).

Assistant Regional Officer of Jessore region, NGO Forum, Lutfur Rahim, said LDFs proved very effective because they created impact on the rural community as a whole. Presence of the local high government officials make LDFs more acceptable to the people, he said. Each LDF is followed by a video-film session projecting live the pernicious side of using unhygienic latrines and unsafe water and also the healthy side of using safe water and sanitary latrines, Lutfur disclosed.

Group meetings are held in the organised groups in every village once a week. A member of the group needs to have a latrine first. Then the member (he or she) encourages others (who are not members) to have the same. Group members also receive mother and child health care services, family planning service, credit facility from the organization they are member of.

The partner organizations arrange rallies of school students in the remote village to build opinion in favour of safe water and sanitary

latrines. The participants carry placards and festoons inscribed with the slogans “We won’t die of diarrhoea, We won’t keep open latrines”; “The safest way to live is safe water,” etc. Workers of partner organizations lead these rallies. Ad-Din’s Management Information Officer Aminur Rahman said these rallies have encouraging effects on the women and housewives in rural area. Aminur said, “We have been utilizing the potentials of educated youths in the implementation of WatSan programme. We have trained 26 selected youths, all college students, under the “Youth Orientation Programme”, who are providing vital services in the rural areas”.

Like Ad-Din, ROVA has also built up a social movement for safe water and hygienic latrine in Salikha thana in Magura and Bagharpara thana in Jessore districts.

ROVA’s field worker Reena Saha said because of the social movement, people in general in rural areas have become conscious of safe water and sanitary latrines. “We regularly hold review meetings on our activities with the field workers and programme coordinator. In the meetings, we review the situation and resolve the problems, if any, in implementation of WatSan programme”, Reena said.

The activities with regard to supply of safe water and sanitary latrines to the rural people in greater Jessore and Khulna districts are hugely supported by the NGO Forum providing various services to partner organizations numbering 560 all-over the country.

NGO Forum has supplied about 30,000 handpumps and 600,000 latrines through its partner organizations all over the country.

The comment of the partner organizations on the NGO Forum is brief but highly laudatory: had there been no support from NGO Forum, the social movement for safe water and hygienic latrine in rural areas would not have reached the present stage.



Partner Promotes Private Entrepreneurship

Wahab and Shahinoor 2 unemployed young men had nothing to do. Both of them were almost depended on their poor parents. Very occasionally they used to help their father. Once they became group members of Disha - a social development organization. Disha has been working in multi-dimensional programme approach including water and sanitation. Initially Disha started to make the people aware about water and sanitation and were able to create demand for sanitary latrine. To meet the demand up of the people Disha decided to establish a village sanitation centre in their office premises located in the Pantapara village in the Bandabila union of Bagharpara thana under Jessore district.

During establishment of village sanitation centre Disha management was trying to find out two people who would be able to work as mason. They selected Wahab Ali and Shahinoor Rahman, and sent them for mason training. After receiving necessary training Wahab and Shahinoor started working early in 1995. Shahinoor told that they had produced 1500 sets of latrine within a year and about 1300 latrines had been sold and installed at the neighbouring families. Now Shahinoor is happy. “We earned about 3000 Taka per month which was absolutely impossible before few month”, Shahinoor expressed himself very frankly.

Shahinoor starts working early in the morning and continued upto evening to meet up the demand of the community people for sanitary latrines. He had realized that if he could produce more he would earn more. Programme personnel of Disha create demand for sanitary latrine in the community, Shahinoor and Wahab continue to produce. He expressed, day by day lot of people were getting motivated. He also

informed that Disha had a plan to facilitate mobile village sanitation centre so that people get redemption from transportation hazards.

Shahinoor got married three years back and he was really in problem with his wife and a boy child. He told, "I am grateful to Disha as I have got the way of earning". He is now very much confident that the village sanitation centre will be permanent source of employment and on the other hand the persons like him will be able to work for the community. He told that before the establishment of the village sanitation centre in the community sanitary latrine was never been within the reach of the poor people. But now people are very much interested to install sanitary latrine.

Being a mason of the VS centre Shahinoor, presently, is in a favourable position to up-ward with his family solvency. He, meanwhile, has repaired his house, as he has saved a satisfactory amount of money. In the village the sanitation situation also is becoming better day by day at the same time some people are getting employment opportunity through village sanitation centre by carrying latrines, working in the VS centre as helper, etc.

A Death Secrets Them Alive in Saat Tikery

It was mid-day in the month of Kartik about 4 years back. The cheering children of Saat Tikery in Nepaltali union under Gabtali thana, Bogra became silent suddenly with the crying sound. The crying was waving from the residence of Bazlu Mia, a farmer of the village. The children started immediately rushing towards Bazlu Mia's house leaving their cheering behind. Bilatan Bibi, mother of Bazlu Mia, was then fighting with death. Some were rushing to call on a doctor; some were busy for watering on her head. But the fact was Bilatan then was above of all restrictions of the earth. It was just started crying all around Bilatan was almost old, and she had been suffering from diarrhoea for some days. Her family members were providing her oral saline continuously. But all initiatives were proved in vain. Bazlu Mia finally became an orphan.

The villagers were not that much shocked with the death of Bilatan Bibi as because death for diarrhoeal diseases was a very common happening in the Saat Tikery village. The villagers were much used to defecate in the open, accomplish household activities with pond water and other unhygienic practices regularly. And all these practices made the villagers suffering from different types of water-borne diseases. But the death of his mother pushed Bazlu Mia strongly to do something preventing diarrhoeal diseases in the village. He just planned a silent war against diarrhoea. Some young and energetic personnel of Gram Bikash Sangstha, working in Gabtali thana joined Bazlu Mia to fight against diarrhoeal diseases. Almost four years have been passed after that. A tremendous success has been achieved in the village. Tubewell has been installed many in number in the village and low-cost ring-slab latrine has been set up by almost all the villagers. Almost all the villagers now use tubewell water for maximum of the household activities.

Bazlu Mia once met Ehsan Ali of Gram Bikash Sangstha. Bazlu Mia told him the death case of his mother and expressed his earnest request to Ehsan Ali to do something for preventing diarrhoeal diseases in his village. Ehsan Ali discussed the matter with his other colleagues in the office and decided to work in the Saat Tikery village. And they immediately started working taking Saat Tikery as their 51st working village. But the starting of their activities in Saat Tikery was not at all happy. Many of the villagers stood against of their working. But Bazlu Mia was exceptional and he tried to convince and motivate the villagers by explaining the importance of their activities, specially the water and sanitation activities. The villagers gradually were convinced and started helping Gram Bikash Sangstha working in the village. The organization started by forming small groups comprising of the village men and women and these group members along with the Gram Bikash Sangstha staff members started motivational activities in the village. They tried to motivate the villagers with the importance of safe water and hygienic latrine use emphasizing on the disadvantages of unsafe water and unhygienic latrine use. And all these inspired the villagers install tubewell and ring-slab latrine. Within a very short period the villagers installed many tubewells with the support of Gram Bikash Sangstha, and the Gram Bikash personnel continued their motivation to the village people to use tubewell water for all domestic needs. They also emphasized on hygienic latrine practice in their motivation. At the begining the villagers did not pay heed that much to the motivation. But gradually the villagers started to realize the fact and this made them using hygienic latrine for defecation and using tubewell water for drinking as well as other household purposes.

The Gram Bikash Sangstha did not stop at that stage. They continued with the motivational activities as they tried to encourage all the villagers to install the low-cost hygienic latrine

This initiative was resulted into very prompt action. Almost all the

houses of the village had set-up different types of latrine within a very short period. The Gram Bikash Sangstha trained some women of the village with the knowledge how to produce hygienic latrine, and the community women mainly produced the ring-slab in the village sanitation centres (VSCs). On the other hand motivational and awareness building activities were being continued in the community. The community people were motivated to use hygienic latrine regularly as well as to wash their hands with soap or ash after every defecation. They were also motivated to wash hands before taking meal.

Lovelee is a group member of Gram Bikash Sangstha in Saat Tikery. Her husband is a rickshaw van puller. Lovelee expressed, "I did not have a latrine even 2 years before, and we were habituated to defecate in bush". But the Gram Bikash Sangstha made her family install a water-seal latrine with an amount of Tk. 200. Sajeda is another woman in the village who also has installed a hygienic ring-slab latrine by saving Tk. 5 to 10 every week from her regular expenditure. "I procured and installed the latrine by myself and Tk. 130 only has been costed for that", disclosed Sajeda. Almost all other women of the village like Tahmina, Rahela, Maleka, Sumi, Helena have installed latrine in their family by following Sajeda's way, and all of their family members are using those regularly. They are maintaining the personal hygiene practices including hand washing before taking meal and after defecation, etc. as the Gram Bikash Sangstha motivated them with the importance of those practices.

All these initiatives are now giving the villagers an healthy environment. According to the villagers Saat Tikery Village has been quite free of diarrhoeal diseases for the last 3 years. And this success has encouraged the organization, Gram Bikash Sangstha, much taking new projects of other development activities in the Saat Tikery village which also are helping the villagers upgrading their family status.

The Gram Bikash Sangstha has been receiving the training support from

the national apex organization for WatSan, NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation for implementing their water and sanitation programme. The Gram Bikash Sangstha has also been receiving the promotional materials and activity support from NGO Forum. Though the Gram Bikash Sangstha is yet to get support to set up village sanitation centre from NGO Forum but the organization has been facilitating a VSC of its own and the villagers of Saat Tikery and others are getting ring-slab from that latrine production centre. All these were started with the sad demise of Bilatan Bibi. Bazlu Mia was driven by his mother's death of diarrhoea to do something to save the villagers from diarrhoeal diseases, and the Gram Bikash Sangstha contributed much to succeed Bazlu of his dream. And finally the Saat Tikery village free of diarrhoeal diseases, and it was Bilatan's death that secrets behind this achievement.

Skeptics Get the Sanitation Habit

As a people, we are rather puritanical as far as accepting new ideas and practices are concerned. We always seem to take for granted beyond any reasonable doubts, whatever we or our forefathers had done were right. Due to this inherent attitudinal constipation, most of the times, we fail to appreciate and give saner propositions of life a chance.

Dharan is sleepy little village under Chhatak thana of Sunamganj district. Like most other people of our country, the simple folks of this village, where 119 households constitute the total population of the locality, lived happily with their stereotyped beliefs about life and living.

As there was no one around them to point at the evils which were eating at the root of things from within and, as no one wanted to play the role of a willing messiah to a people who are not too keen on hearing good advice, things went on in Dharan as they had been for many years.

What's wrong in defecating in the open or drinking water from the nearby pond or washing household utensils with the contaminated water from that pond, they thought. As these practices were on for ages, they didn't see any reason why it should be changed all of a sudden. At least, not until a bunch of people came along, introducing themselves as development workers, telling them that if they changed their habits, then the death toll from water-borne diseases like diarrhoea and hepatitis could be effectively stopped or, at least, could be brought down to a negligible level.

NGO Forum, a coalition of non-government organizations, committed to the cause of promoting the use of safe drinking water and healthy sanitation activities across the country, completed a Social Mobilization for Sanitation project with a job quite satisfactorily accomplished in Brahamanpara, Burichang and Debidwar thanas in Comilla, and Sulla, Derai and Chhatak thanas under Sunamganj district.

Out of a total of 13 unions in Chhatak, 11 came under the operational periphery of the Forum, consisting of a total of 29,804 households altogether. Due to limitation of manpower and inaccessibility (there is a relatively big river which is a branch of the Surma and has very strong cross-currents), Noari and Islampur unions have been left out. In the 11 unions which were under the cover of the Social Mobilization project, 27,950 plus households have now sanitary latrines.

In this particular village, the total sanitation coverage was below 14 per cent. Out of 119 households, only 17 had sanitary latrines. But after the one-year intervention of the SocMob project, almost cent per cent sanitation coverage has been achieved here. Most of the sanitary latrines installed in this area are pit-latrines. Only about 15 per cent of the total households have slab-latrines.

As Dharan is the meeting point of three unions, the status of drinking water is quite impressive here. There are about seven government tubewells and 15-20 private ones in the locality, the villagers expressed very frankly..

During the baseline survey conducted by the Forum, it was observed that only about 65 per cent drank safe water and approximately 20 per cent used tubewell water for everyday household purposes.

But at the present, more than 50 per cent of the villagers use safe water in their household activities and the use of tubewell water for drinking purposes is a solid hundred per cent.

As a result of the attitudinal changes that have, of late, ushered in among the villagers, thanks to the continual and relentless motivational activities, the mortality rate from water-borne diseases in the area have lessened drastically. Two years back approximately 20 people died of diarrhoeal diseases and eight more lives were claimed by the killer disease in the following year. But this year, not a single case of diarrhoeal death has been reported, said some villagers.

The village people also claimed that the people of the respective localities, where the mobilization project had been interventioned, have become greatly aware about matters of personal hygiene and environment. “You would hardly find any filth or dirt either in the homesteads or on the roads, which was a common sight only a year back”, the villagers seemed to throw an open challenge.

This claim was substantially authenticated, however, through some comments of a number of others in the locality. Haji Mayan Mia, a relatively well off inhabitant of the village, who was an NGO-skeptic only a couple of years ago, expressed his full satisfaction over the work carried out by the Forum workers. This old man in his late 60s said that he had installed sanitary latrine in his house and admitted that the occurrence of water-borne diseases were nil for the last one year.

Chamak Ali, a farm labourer also echoed the same sentiment. Ali, who earns a daily wage of Tk. 30 also claimed to have installed sanitary latrine at his home premises.

Shafiqunnesa, a housewife and mother of six children, during a rare verbal encounter (rare, because the local field level NGO workers said that they have never seen any women of the locality talk to a male stranger in this highly-conservative region) said that for the last two years she has had sanitary latrine at her home and assured that she will reinstall it again if it is washed away by the flash-floods, which is a

common phenomenon in Sunamganj and Sylhet. Why? Simply because the family has gotten used to it, she said.

Nirod Kanti Das and Selina Parveen, two field workers of the Forum also expressed total confidence that the achievements of the Social Mobilization project will not be short-lived, because they think that a vital metamorphosis has taken place in the psyche of the local people.

That is why, although almost 85 per cent of the total area of Sunamganj district is gripped by flash-flood each year and all the sanitary latrines may run the risk of being washed out in that flood, at least 60 per cent people will reinstall sanitary latrines, even in the absence of a motivational drive. And, if a follow-up programme can be devised then the sustainability would be even greater, they emphasized.

Fringe Shows Centre the Hygienic Way

When a substantially large number of households in the suburban areas of the metropolis are far from having hygienic or sanitary latrines, people living in the remote villages of far-away districts of Satkhira, Khulna and Bagerhat have set-up sanitary latrines in their homesteads and developed the habit of using them.

A consistent campaign of local non-government and community-based organizations with active support from NGO Forum and relentless motivational work round-the-year by their devoted workers have yielded an incredible result, inspiring the people to install and use sanitary latrines discarding the old practice of turning household surroundings into open toilets. Though less exposed to the media publicity, the ring-slab latrine makers, partly driven by the motivation and partly urged by profit incentive responded to meet the demand of the situation. Indeed, their role was not less than that of the community-based or non-government organization in popularizing hygienic latrines in these areas.

It would not be an exaggeration, if someone having a look at the making and selling of ring-slabs and peoples' interest to buy them, holds the impression that it is the makers or producers who played the pivotal role in popularizing this type of hygienic latrine. The users do not hold reservation in passing credit to the producers for supplying them latrine at a cost not unbearable for them.

Joint Venture Pays Off

“Joint Sanitation” is a medium outlet at Phultala Bazar in Khulna district which is doing fairly good business mainly of ring-slab.

Anwar Hossain and Ansar Ali Mollah started this venture six years ago under partnership and so they chose the name “Joint Sanitation” for their outlet. Starting from scratch they have been successful in expanding business and happy with the profit they earn. On an average, they sell 2000 sets of latrines a year for last three years.

Both of them used to break pebbles and bricks as day labourers. Sometime in 1991, they sensed prospect in making and selling latrines in the area. The situation was already ripe due to campaign for popularizing hygienic latrine among the villagers by some local NGOs and the Department of Public Health Engineering. The campaign created a market condition which was set to respond to the marketing of hygienic latrines. With a small capital of Tk. 8,000 (eight thousand) Anwar and Ansar began this business, depending on “technical knowledge” which they received from the pictures of latrines in the posters distributed for publicity as part of the campaign by the DPHE. In the first year they lost the capital as they could not promote their product properly. But they were not frustrated. They again arranged a capital of Tk. 25,000 from some local wealthy men and a community group, and started the marketing of their product with renewed energy. “Jagrata Juba Sangha”, a partner of NGO Forum in its campaign for promoting hygienic latrine among the people, encouraged them to produce and sell ring-slabs giving necessary advice from time to time. Later on, NGO Forum directly assisted them with technical know how and pecuniary support that boosted their business. Now, “Joint Sanitation” has earned a good name in the whole of Khulna district for its product.

They have employed six persons including a female and got them trained with NGO Forum’s know how for making hygienic, durable and technically improved latrines. “DPHE personnel, Proshika and ASA have also appreciated the quality of our product”, said Ansar Ali. “We are grateful to NGO Forum and *Jagrata Juba Sangha* for their help and assistance”, said Anwar Hossain and Ansar Ali. They said that this was the mainstay of their livelihood.

People's Favourite

Ansar Ali also said that cost involvement in making one slab was Tk. 130 (due to higher cost of materials) and they kept a profit margin of Tk. 30 on each slab. Though their product was costlier (compared with Tk. 130 of DPHE's), people living in the surrounding areas and in the far-flung areas in Satkhira and Jessore districts preferred to buy from them, because, he said "We provide technical advice for maintenance of the latrines, we do the repairing free of cost if damaged and also help the customer to install the latrine at the homestead". Some local people who bought ring and slab from "Joint Sanitation" substantiated Ansar Ali's claim.

One Suruj Ali from the adjacent village said "I bought latrine from "Joint Sanitation" as it is within my easy reach and risk involvement in carrying the ring and slab from the shop to home is little".

A trained mason of "Joint Sanitation", Mumtaz Begum said that they had not received any complaint from the users about their product. The latrines were water-seal and as such could effectively stop gas emission. People from all sections of the rural society were their customers, she said. Sale increases during the dry season, she added. Dwellers within a few kilometers of "Joint Sanitation" corroborated this. Anwar and Ansar have the desire for expanding the capacity of their production centre (about 200 sets a month) in the near future.

The achievement of "Joint Sanitation", is that it has been able to sell its product to more than 5,000 families in 30 villages in four unions under Dumuria thana during the last four years. Another thing that developed along with this success is the awareness among the people in the villages for hygienic latrines. The indicator of such finding is people came from a few kilometers away to buy latrines.

This upholds the need for more production of latrines to meet the growing demand.



Hazera's Life: Safe Water and Sanitation

Amid intermittent caws and cackles dawn here in Barachala village with Hazera Begum(47) clattering her “NGO Forum tubewell” for everyday wash. In the yet-to-be morning Hazera is seen pumping the tubewell behind her humble shanty where she dwells with her cart-puller husband and two under-five grand children. Around eighty kilometers north beyond the bright lights of metropolitan Dhaka, this is a rather common seen in 40% households of 22 target villages under Mymensingh district where HRD (Human Development Project), a local NGO, has been working for reaching safe tubewell water and water-seal sanitary latrines to rural sprawls with vital hardware - software-mix support from NGO Forum.

Hazera, along with 160 other families in the village of 350 households now has water-seal latrines and tubewells for everyday use. But the picture was horrifyingly different only a couple of years back. People had never hesitated to respond to nature's call anywhere under the sky provided some undergrowth or bushes protected their physical privacy.

As for drinking water every few bothered about tubewells. And if anybody ever happened to do so, they aptly had to drop the idea considering the tedious trouble in process of collecting those from a distant DPHE centre located at the thana Head Quarters.

In these circumstances in 1980s NGO Forum got into the scene blazing the trail in public health and sanitation front working at complimentary level with government's Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE). Since then onward, not only in Bhaluka or Fulpur in Mymen-

singh but almost all villages in 386 thanas have been reached by the Forum campaign for safe drinking water, hygienic latrines and hygiene behaviour.

Human Development Project (HDP), working in Bhaluka thana being supported by NGO Forum to salvage people from the assault of diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid, dysentery and other water-borne diseases by promoting WatSan awareness and by providing hardware support. HRD, so far, has reached tubewell and water-seal latrines to about 60% households of its 22 target villages in the region, said AKM Bulbul Islam, Project Coordinator of HRD.

Being asked why they have chosen a field where govt. organization DPHE is already working, the HDP officials said that the govt. centre is away from the locality from where the village people can collect the latrine sets easily. Besides, the DPHE production cannot fulfill the demand of the community people and above all the process of buying materials from DPHE centre is very complicated. In addition, people are often reluctant to undergo the procedural hazard like bank draft system needed for procuring DPHE products”, said Simon Gomes, Executive Director of HDP.

“The DPHE has so far allotted only 20 tubewells in the union which is ignorable considering the total population. They hardly ever come to people. Their latrine materials oftenly are not of good quality. So people buy HDP produced latrines even at a higher price and install NGO Forum provided tubewells ” said Union Parishad Member Abul Kashem, Barachalla village.

HDP started the village sanitation centre in May 1995 with the revolving fund support of Tk. 50,000 from NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation. They chose workers from their beneficiaries, got them trained from NGO Forum and set them to work as mason in the VS

centres and tubewell caretaker for repairing the inoperative tubewells. At present the VS centre at Seed Store, Bhaluka has 2 workers including 1 female. Jubed Ali a mason of the VS centre told that his daily production is 10 rings and 3 slabs on average. Per unit selling cost of a slab is Tk. 95 and ring is Tk. 58. The target of production, sale and distribution of latrine in a month is 50 sets, said Mr. Simon Gomes.

Hazera Khatun is the leader of “Padina Mohila Samity” facilitated by HDP. She got 10 days training on tubewell maintenance and installed an “NGO Forum” tubewell in her homestead along with other members of her Samity (organised group). She can maintain it by herself. She even helped 10 other households to bore tubewells and earned a good amount of money. Looking complacently at her two perky grand-children playing in the lawn she sounded rather ruminating. ‘Before three years when I had no tubewell and no ring-slab latrine the kids used to suffer from diarrhoea and fever. Now they get those diseases very rarely. I have taught them how to wash hands well after defecation and before taking meals’ Said Hazera.

Being Asked about the diarrhoeal situation in the community Mr. Bulbul said there was no case of diarrhoeal death during the last one year period.

Without awareness campaign no programme could be made a success HDP with assistance of NGO Forum has launched a three pronged community programme of safe drinking water and sanitation awareness in Bhaluka Seed Store area. Rounding up of women in the target areas under different groups such as “Kamalafuli Mohila Samity”, “Jagarata Mohila Samity” and so on is such a step. Ten or fifteen women in the groups sit at least once a week to talk their problems, about diseases, measures to prevent those, and about the need of safe drinking water and hygienic latrines in the households, etc.

Bilkis Akter (24), a housewife in Barachala village has newly been

registered in “Kamalafuli Mohila Samity”. Rather indifferent at the beginning she showed up in a weekly sitting of “Kamalafuli”, a few months back just being inspired by her next door neighbour. Mother of two kids Bilkis now repents her not being with the samity from its very outset. “Had I known about the law barring women getting married away before 20, that I came to know about from a samity discussion recently. I could have, at least, insisted on my finishing the SSC (Secondary level education) before being married away”, sighed Bilkis. Asked whether her husband, a police constable now posted in Sylhet ever opposed her entry in the samity, she flashed a smile. “I am rather lucky, you can say. He never interferes in my samity affairs. He even responded with positive interest when I first proposed the installing of a tubewell and ring-slab latrine in our household two months back”, Bilkis expressed herself.

Along with rounding up women group units HDP has made local committees comprising the community opinion leaders including men and women from different strata, such as Union Council Members Headmasters, VDP (Village Defence Party) members, Imams, and others. Besides routine sittings once a week to discuss health, sanitation situation they talk various problems in those committees. Such a committee in Barachala village has 15 members including 6 women. When asked what role he plays in awareness activities and how, Karri Md. Rustam Ali, the local Imam sounded quite sensibly, “We explain in meetings and ‘Khutbas’ that by using sanitary latrines we can uphold the ‘Hadith’ that says ‘Cleanliness is a part of Islamic faith’. We explain to people how by using hygienic latrines instead of defecating in the open fields and bushes we can better maintain ‘purdah’ the Islamic cult. And people listen to us and agree”, said the immaculate Imam.

Md. Abdul Awal is the Headmaster of his self founded institution, *Samala Taher Adarsha Uccha Biddalay*. The high School named after her mother and father. About 400 girl-students from around 4.5 kilome-

ters that come to the school for studies have been counterparts would have envied. The method is the regular video show in classroom on hygiene. The school has been carrying out health and sanitation awareness programme since the beginning of 1996 as compulsory to the regular studies. “Once local HDP people had come and asked our permission to arrange a video show on safe drinking water and sanitation in our school. We consented right way. And thus it got started”, said the Headmaster Mr. Awal.

“The school programme is a great success as an awareness build up and motivation to the school students on safe water and sanitation promotion. If you can make the students, specially girls, conscious about health and sanitation, at least 70% of your work will get done, you can be sure” were the words said by Mr. Rafiqul Islam of NGO Forum Mymensingh Region. Taslima, a shy looking student of class VII narrated how she had convinced her parents for installing ring-slab latrine and tubewell in her household.



VSC the Means to Reach the Doorsteps

Mobility of a village sanitation centre (VSC) helps taking sanitary latrines to the doorstep of otherwise hard-to-reach people in outreach villages.

AISEDUP (Association for Integrated Socio-Economic Development for Under-Privileged People), a Jhenidah based partner NGO of the NGO Forum (NGOF) set-up its lone VSC back in March, 1995 in village Viena under Harinakundu thana.

Big village Viena, an abode of 874 families at that time but, hardly any house had a sanitary latrine. Villagers used to discharge excreta under open sky in and around any homestead or roadside cluster of trees or in bushes.

“During its one and a half year stay precisely in Viena, over 350 sets of sanitary latrines were sold from our VSC”, says Mizanur Rahman, an Ashoka Fellow who established AISEDUP back in 1991.

“Then, we dismantled our makeshift structures and moved the VSC to an extended village market place - Bhavanipur Bazaar - some six kilometre off Viena”, adds Rahman, Executive Director of AISEDUP

Through its mobile VSC, AISEDUP sold over 150 sets of sanitary latrines during the 10 months it operated at Bhavanipur Bazaar.

“Again, we packed off to Satbridge Bazaar, some eight kilometres further down from Bhavanipur. It has been two months now that our

VSC shifted at Satbridge and our next target place will be Mandira Bazaar, five kilometres away from here”, says Rahman.

Why this mobility? What’s the benefit of this? Rahman has ready answers - the answers he got over the passage of time, working with rural people for years.

There are both economic and psychological reasons that why a VSC moves from one place to other. Again, both the consumers and the producers have their respective advantages in mobility of a VSC.

People find it easy to take home sanitary latrines from a VSC nearer to their houses because this involves less carriage costs. “People feel inspired when see a mason producing ring-slab at their local bazaar and others from the neighbourhood also buying those”, says Mizanur Rahman. Besides, there is no private producer of sanitary latrines in those areas while demands are created, adds he.

From the producer’s point of view, mobile VSC brings marketing prospects as new regions come under its command area. However, Rahman says, some small entrepreneurs in the countryside are now feeling encouraged to start business of producing ring-slab.

“Not to just promote sells, we reinforce awareness drives at every place beforehand to make people understand necessity of a hygienic latrines and the benefit it holds for them by guaranteeing a hygienic life”, explains Rahman.

At Satbridge Bazaar mason Nazir sits inside a make-shift structure endowed with cool breeze blow from an adjacent natural lake. Though absent for a few days at his work-place due to daughter’s illness, Nazir had already piled a stock of some 50 sets of sanitary latrines at the VSC.

AISEDUP’s mobile VSC currently settles at Satbridge Bazaar, a place hardly one kilometre away from Harishpur, home-village of great Bengali mystic and folk poet Lalon Shah.

Md. Shawkat Ali, a village doctor with his chamber set just besides the VSC, says Harishpur people used to drink dirty pond water even a couple of years back whereas, there are tubewells in 70 per cent houses now. "But, this village so far could not record well as far as use of sanitary latrine is concerned", says Ali who also hails from Harishpur.

"A new trend is set now for the last two months since this mobile VSC moved to Satbridge Bazaar. Not only people of Harishpur but, also those from other neighbouring villages - Gazipur, Ramnagar and Phoolbari - are procuring ring-slab everyday", adds Ali.

Though there is a VSC run by the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) few kilometers away, and those are sold on subsidized price, Ali says, "people chose to buy from our centre because AISEDUP cares more about product quality and villagers get the stuff from a place very close to their houses".

Ali, who also teaches a number of school-going children at his medical chamber, attributes far better motivational performance by NGOs than the government department, as another vital reason for people rushing for AISEDUP's products.

His tender aged students - Ulfat Ara and Shahabuddin - both read in class five in Gazipur Primary School, nod their heads in affirmation that they use sanitary latrines at their houses.

A politician-cum-businessman by profession, A.K.M. Rabiul Islam, also notices a spontaneity among community people about buying ring-slabs since the mobile VSC has been set in their locality. "Awareness about leading a hygienic life was built up among village people over the last few years. Now, with the mobile VSC coming to their doorsteps, they feel an urge from that consciousness that they should also go for a sanitary latrine", explains Islam.

Kitabuddin, a sexagenarian peasant of village Harishpur, realizes it well now that his family members require to defecate excreta in a hygienic way. “I need money badly, hope to procure a ring-slab after the coming harvesting season”, says he agreeing that now a VSC set near his village, collecting one set of sanitary latrine will not be a toilsome job.

Rezaul Karim, a fresh graduate, joins hands with Mizanur Rahman for help advance a recently undertaken education programme of AISEDUP. The youngman in his late 20s claims he can read the pulse of the village community that going under changes to a right direction. “Village people now more conscious than ever before about personal health hygiene. What needs is a bit of stimulation and we are infusing that through our mobile VSC”.

Mizanur Rahman recollects that over six years back when he had kicked off his NGO venture with a missionary zeal, picked up training for village doctors as his first job. “I used to ask those doctors, whom I trained later, that what medicines they had to prescribe more often - and the obvious answers were - medicines for dysentery and oral saline for diarrhoea”. Now, situation changes a lot, claims a proud Rahman.

Trans - Sectoral Approach for WatSan Promotion

Motivating rural people about using safe water and sanitary latrine is a continuous process. Before one goes for it, the benefit of leading a hygienic life needs to be crystal-clear in his vision.

NGOs working under water and sanitation (WatSan) programme know it for sure that repeated stimulation to a right direction can make people understand the importance of it and turn them eventually more sensitized to safe water and healthy environment.

So, reinforcement does matter much as far as success of WatSan programme is concerned. Partner NGOs of the NGO Forum (NGOF) have developed the skill to take trans-sectoral approach in extracting maximum possible benefit. To reach the message of WatSan to people in the countryside, there could be no better tools than reinforcement through multifarious activities interconnecting one programme with others, one's effort with others and so on.

Ad-Din Welfare Centre, a Jessore-based partner NGO of the NGO Forum, received award from the government for its good performance in WatSan programme in 1995. Its Programme Coordinator, Md. Monir Hossain, says that they are pursuing a 'package-approach' to get better results in WatSan programme.

“We receive fund for our credit programme from Palli Karmo Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) and provide that among village women for income generation. We also ask them to buy sanitary latrine for only Taka 180 per set. Then, again we provide them necessary education so that they can lead a hygienic life”, describes Hossain explaining how they

interlink credit, health and education under a 'package-approach'. Md. Rashid Ali Chakladar, Vice-Chairman of Ad-Din, nods head in agreement.

JAKOS (Janakollyan Sangstha), an NGO headquartered in Keshabpur thana of Jessore, does also interlink credit programme with that of WatSan programme. Besides, in their other programmes like group training, income generation and social afforestation, the JAKOS field workers do give motivation for WatSan as well.

Director of SIBAS (Shingher Khajura Bastuhara Samaj Kallyan Samity), a Monirampur thana (Jessore) based NGO, says his organization has made it mandatory for all to procure a latrine whenever one takes credit from it. "Not that we force the beneficiaries of our credit programme for buying latrines, rather they do buy those spontaneously", claims Jogobandhu Biswas, the Director.

He attributes repeated motivations through other programmes as well for such spontaneity among general masses in remote villages. "When we give training on health education, environment and ecology, use of tubewell and sanitary latrine are incorporated in the course content", adds Biswas.

There are NGOs having programmes on WatSan plus children education. For instance, Shivani Mitra, leader of a village women's group, does teach children under Shishu Niloy's (a partner organization of NGO Forum) sponsorship in a remote Jessore village. She gives lessons on use of sanitary latrine to tiny tots. Shivani, again, gives motivation to the parents of these children for sinking tubewells and installing up sanitary latrines. This is how reinforcement helps grow spontaneity.

Development Partner (DP), an NGO, does operate from Monirampur thana in Jessore. Its Programme Officer (Credit), Abdul Zabber says, whenever DP selects a site for sinking a tubewell it makes sure that

households would either have sanitary latrines already installed or at least, the people living in the close proximity are willing to set-up the latrines.

“Because, you see, idea of leading a healthy life is a concept in totality. It bears no sense if one only drinks water from tubewell but, defecates in unhygienic way”, says Pradip Biswas, a colleague of Zabber.

Besides, WatSan programme is also supplemented by DP’s other programmes. “For instance, we succeed in making our loanees understand that they would suffer from diarrhoea if they do not use sanitary latrines and, once they fall sick, their income generation activities would face setback, thereby pushing them to be loan defaulters”, explains Zabber.

Mizanur Rahman, Executive Director of Jhenidah-based NGO, AISE-DUP (Association for Integrated Socio-Economic Development for Underprivileged People) describes how his organization has successfully interlaced one programme with the other, thereby benefiting the rural people from picking up the habit of drinking tubewell water and using sanitary latrines in quick successions.

Back in 1991 when Rahman had set-up AISEDUP, he started with a unique programme to train village doctors. Once they got training, those doctors employed themselves in moving door to door knocking at the conscience of village people for leading hygienic life. Later on, Rahman picked up fish culture programme and he made it a point that those could not be enrolled as member of his income generating venture of fish cultivation who have no sanitary latrines at their houses. Besides, teachers of AISEDUP’s non-formal education (NFE) programme are using their position in disseminating health knowledge both among their tender-aged students and their parents.

Not that this sort of approach is unique to NGOs. Theoretically,

concerned department of the government, DPHE, does endorse such approach as well but, not much in practice. Md. Abdus Sattar, Executive Engineer of DPHE, Jessore, says there are provisions for installing at least 10 sanitary latrines where a tubewell is sunk. “But, this is not always followed strictly due to lack of motivational drives”, adds he, lauding works done by NGOs in this field.

Sakhina Struggles for Her Existence

Jatpur is a village under Tala thana in Satkhira district. Sakhina Begum lives in the village Jatpur with her son and her husband. Sakhina Begum never had economic solvency. She had a small hut without any furniture, and it was not well protected against rain; but she had to live in this hut knowing no way for better.

Sakhina's husband was a day labourer but very often he had to remain unemployed. The family used to starve for days together. Even they could not arrange any food for their child very oftenly. They had no good clothing. Thus, the family was passing the days in an inhuman manner.

Once Sakhina's husband left home without leaving any message. Sakhina did not know where he had gone. She became helpless. She found no way but weeping and waiting for her husband. Sakhina started to look for him asking all of her neighbours and others around. But she did not get any information about him. She found the rice-pot quite empty, and she was without a single paisa (smallest unit of coin) for buying any food for her only child. Even she found nothing in her hut which she could sell to get money for buying food for her baby. So she had to beg to the neighbours to feed her son. But her sense of self-dignity held her back to begging. After passing few weeks in this way she decided herself and started to work in one of her neighbours' house as a maid servant. But as salary she used to get only food which was not sufficient for herself and the baby. She even did not know how she could manage clothings and other necessary things. She had to work hard but earned a poor remuneration in return. In this circumstances she was looking for a better employment. Once she decided to work in the corn field as agriculture labourer. But since she did not find any other way to look after her child during her absence she had to change her mind.

Suddenly Sakhina heard that her husband had got married again and would never be back. Then she became really frustrated. In this situation, one of her female neighbours, who was a group member of Uttaran, a partner NGO of NGO Forum, working for the distressed people, suggested Sakhina to go to Uttaran to seek for an opportunity of survival. Sakhina met Mr. Golzar Hossain, a Health Worker of Uttaran who was also looking after the village sanitation centre (VSC). This VS centre was established at the end of 1990 with financial and technical support of NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, and the production started in the early 1991. The specific objective of the village sanitation centre of NGO Forum was to produce low-cost hygienic latrine for the rural people, and to provide support to get the people motivated to install and use the sanitary latrine. Golzar listened to her tragedy, and asked her to be a member of the Landless Group, organized by Uttaran in Sakhina's village. As Sakhina did not know how she would be a group member, one of her neighbours helped her by arranging everything. The woman explained to Sakhina about the weekly group meetings, its advantages, and offered her a loan-money. But Sakhina did not know how to pay back the loan. The woman told her that it needed only a small amount of savings, and Sakhina would be able to pay back the loan on installment basis.

With the positive suggestion and cooperation Sakhina became a member of the group and participated regularly on the weekly savings alongside her duty as the maid servant. Finally Sakhina got the chance to work in Uttaran's VS centre as one person failed to continue his duty as a mason, and the other one namely Minhazuddin alone was not enough for producing latrines in the VSC. Golzar Hossain, the Supervisor of the village sanitation centre proposed Sakhina to work with Minhaz initially as a helper and then Minhaz would train-up Sakhina as a mason. Sakhina went back home and told her employer that she would not work as a maid any more but she would work as a mason in the village sanitation centre of Uttaran. The man told Sakhina "A woman

can't work outside the house". If she would do so they would banish her from the village. She fell again in trouble, and to tackle the situation Sakhina met the Director of Uttaran Mr. Shahidul Islam, and told him the whole status. Then Shahidul Islam assured her that he would convince her employer about her working at the VSC.

Sakhina started working in the VSC at the end of 1995. She had no experience to work outside as mason. But Minhazuddin helped her and after few weeks Sakhina was able to work. Now one can see Sakhina working as a mason with full confidence in the village sanitation centre in the office premises of Uttaran. Now she earns Tk. sixty per day. She is planning to send her son to school soon. She is determined to continue her work and she believes that by doing the present job she is not only earning her livelihood, but also contributing to build up an environmentally healthy village.



Habits Grow with Consistent Care

A large section of students enrolled in the primary and secondary schools in Satkhira, Khulna and Bagerhat districts have cultivated the habit of drinking safe tubewell water, of using hygienic latrine and washing hands properly after defecation.

The habit that they have grown mainly under the “School Sanitation Programme”, has greatly influenced and inspired their family members to develop the same habit. Through the school sanitation programme, the WatSan programme penetrated deep into individual families, commented a good number of primary and secondary school teachers in the area.

The NGO Forum and its partner organizations with active cooperation of teachers of 90 primary and secondary schools have imparted students (boys and girls) the knowledge on maintaining good general health and necessity of drinking safe water, using sanitary latrines and washing hands with soap or ash after defecation. They also encouraged the students to convey to their parents and other family members the messages they learnt on water, sanitation and hygiene. Simultaneously, the NGO Forum, through its partner organizations, extended assistance to install hygienic latrines and sink tubewells at the schools and also at the houses of the student. A large section of students and their family members turning to use sanitary latrines and safe water is the result of coordinated programme that included imparting knowledge and services in terms of hardware launched by the partner organizations and NGO Forum.

Success Rate High

The Programme Officer of “Jagrata Juba Sangha”, Mizanur Rahman Lovelu, disclosed that all the students in 30 high schools in Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira now have hygienic latrines at their house. Another Programme Officer of the same organization Tashimuddin said that 80 % students of another 60 primary schools in the three districts have got hygienic latrine at their house.

Assistant Headmaster of Kishan Majdoor United High School in Kaliganj thana (Satkhira district) Taslim Biswas said, NGO Forum’s staff along with the teachers of his school, nearby Raghunathpur Mohammad Ali High School, Krishnanagar Primary School and Benadana Primary School have carried out the school programme on sanitation and safe water in this thana. Taslima Akhter, Mahfuz Alam, Humayun Kabir, Feroz Alam, Selina Akhter and other students of Kishan Majdoor United High School have made their family members conscious of using safe water and hygienic latrines. NGO Forum officers built capacity of the staff of its partner organizations to act as motivator.

Bandana Rani, Programme Officer of “Shushilan”, another partner organization of NGO Forum working in Krishnanagar village (Kaliganj thana) said they launched programme on water and sanitation at the school level in 1992. The primary purpose of the programme is to create awareness among the students primarily and through them their parents and neighbours against the diseases and of the menace caused by unsafe water and open defecation. The programme has been continuing, she said, adding that “Now we have been able to motivate over 95 per cent of the population of the area to use safe water and sanitary latrines”. The school programme has been very successful in this area, she informed.

The Regional Officer of NGO Forum in Khulna, Ashrafuddin said that they annually hold 15 school sanitation programmes which are implemented in cooperation with 15 partner NGOs. Through this programme

students are imparted knowledge to use safe drinking water, hygienic latrine, wash hands properly after defecation and maintain hygiene-friendly environment at the homesteads and the localities. The communication and promotional materials e.g. video films, leaflets, etc. are used in school programme. These have been found very effective in carrying the message of the programme. He said about 45 per cent schools in Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira have been brought under the school sanitation programme.



When Three Turns Infinity

The water and sanitation programme has greatly helped the partner organizations in expanding their capacities to undertake other development programmes in other areas for the benefit of the people.

"Jagrata Juba Sangha" in Rupsa under Khulna district, "SHETU" in Tala and "Shushilan" in Kaliganj under Satkhira district are the partner organizations of NGO Forum which received all-out assistance in building their capacities.

Jagrata Juba Sangha with the acronym JJS launched its development programme in some areas in Rupsa thana in 1986 with a small number of programmes and personnel. Its programmes now include small scale credit for the poor, formation of trained groups for social development, non-formal education, afforestation and AIDS prevention.

Director of JJS, Zakir Hossain said that since 1988, NGO Forum has been assisting them technically and materially to carry out the WatSan programme. "Under this programme we produce and sell hygienic latrine and sink tubewells to provide safe water. While carrying out WatSan programme, we carry forward other development programmes successfully and conveniently".

Assistant Director of JJS, Sazzadur Rahman said "With small manpower we started development programmes in a very limited scale in 1986. Gradually we have expanded our activities in new areas. Over the last one decade our manpower has been increased. NGO Forum contributed lot in developing skills and enhancing knowledge of these staff". He said "We received 25 tubewells every year since 1986 and sank those in a number of villages in Rupsa thana. At the beginning we were only

3 staff in our organization, now we have a strength of over 200 trained staff are implementing activities in eight thanas in Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira districts", he added.

Expanding Network

Like JJS, SHETU has also developed its office establishment, increased the number of trained manpower and enlarged the area of activities taking advantage of the support from the NGO Forum. It has set-up 3 branch offices in Tala thana and developed a trained staff strength of 57 personnel including ten females.

Director of "SHETU", Abul Hossain said that they had been able to build the capacity with assistance from NGO Forum and gradually expanded it further. "Our capacity to expand social development programmes and WatSan programme activity will grow more in the future", he said.

The Programme Officer of "Shushilan", Bandana Rani said "With a tin-shed office in a remote village in Kaliganj thana, we launched our programme for rural development. Later on, using NGO Forum's support for WatSan programme we built-up our capacity to serve more people more effectively".

Bandana Rani said "The WatSan programme opened a new door to go to the people and educate them on safe water and hygienic latrines which were not known to them in the past".

She was proud of her skilled staff who always are ready to respond to people's needs. "Demand for 'Shushilan's service in the area is on the increase", she said.

Coordination Yields

It is destined to yield a better result when actors of a common cause work together. Importance of better coordination among organizations, no matter GO or NGO, is a must for faster result as far as development in Water and Sanitation (WatSan) sector is concerned. And, it appears that NGOs under the banner of NGO Forum (NGOF) have developed well the skill of how to take advantage out of a better networking system, thanks to the experience time has bestowed upon them.

NGOs working with WatSan programme weave a network of coordination among themselves as well as with other organizations working for the same cause over the period of time as they all slowly move through the path of adherence.

Executive Engineer of DPHE (Department of Public Health Engineering), Jessore, Md. Abdus Sattar, says, "As our Department and the partner NGOs of the NGOF work in the same field, a better coordination is essential. We can share our experience and flourish". G.K M. Lutfur Rahim, Assistant Regional Officer of NGOF's Jessore Regional Office, nods head in agreement.

Sattar feels DPHE has expertise to provide various technical assistance to the NGOs. "Our experts can provide supports in technical affairs like examining water layer, arsenic contents and other vital things", cites he as an example.

The engineer does mention with a note of appreciation that compared to DPHE field workers, NGO people do better motivational work in bringing hard-to-reach rural community under the WatSan coverage.

“We feel encouraged”, he says.

Ad-Din Welfare Centre, an NGO with its headquarters in Jessore town, is a partner organization of the NGOF. Its Programme Coordinator, Md. Monir Hossain, and Management Information System Officer, Aminur Rahman, do appreciate that DPHE always invites them whenever it organizes a WatSan programme.

“Besides, we attend monthly coordination meeting with the Deputy Commissioner. District Civil Surgeon also makes time to have an exchange of views with us”, says Monir, adding that, “These meetings produce immense benefits for us in understanding government policy, regarding WatSan vis-a-vis our performance”.

JAKOS (Jessore Janakallyan Sangstha) is another partner organization of the NGOF. It works in four unions of the district’s Keshabpur thana. Mohammed Mansur Ali, Supervisor of JAKOS, says they have good working relations with DPHE.

Other NGOs - Manab Seba Sangstha, Sheba Samajkallyan Sangstha, Adarsha Dishari Sangha and Agragami - also operate in the same thana area. “Yes, they too work in Keshabpur. But, you see, working together help a lot because still now there remains many rural people not leading a hygienic life and it is not possible for a single and small NGO like us to cover them all”, explains Ali.

Jogobandhu Biswas, Director of SIBAS (Shingher Khajura Bastuhara Samaj Kallyan Samity), an NGO headquartered in Monirampur thana in Jessore, fully endorses Ali’s view that for a single NGO it is not always possible to cover full of a certain area. “If more than one NGO operate, and do share their success and failures, all can be gainer in the long run”, he believes.

Biswas points out that when field workers from more than one NGO

move around, give motivations to people repeatedly, the message is well received by rural people and the target group, and they feel encouraged in adopting the means of hygienic living.

Md. Motiur Rahman, Director of Development Partner (DP) at Monirampur, hopes that if all actors of WatSan put their efforts together, it would not take a long time to bring the whole country under universal coverage. In this regard, he names NGOF partners, DPHE and other organizations playing vital role in the WatSan programme.

Role of NGOF itself has a far-reaching effect on NGOs working in this field as far as coordination among themselves is concerned. They all mention it very strongly that NGOF as a pro-active catalyst does provide supports not only to the term of hardware and software support but, in terms of inter-agency and trans-sectoral collaboration also.

It provides training facilities, gives scope to its partners to share each other's experience by organizing different programmes, organizes exchange visit, promoting role of civil society for WatSan promotion, etc. All these activities help the partner NGOs collaborate at the local level and thus synergistic effect of the WatSan programme comes.



A Committed Teacher: His Involvement in the Social Mobilization for Sanitation

Mr. Muraduddoula, a teacher at Laxmipasha under Lohagora thana, bears a very simple but attractive personality. He is a teacher of Laxmipasha Adarsha School, and associated with different institutions in the capacity of President and General Secretary of Laxmipur Club and Lohagora Thana Teachers Association respectively. While asking to the people of Lohagora about those who had been directly involved in the Social Mobilization for Sanitation project, implemented during May 1993 to April 1994, most of the people uttered the name of their honourable teacher Mr. Muraduddoula. The people explained the teacher's involvement not only in the Social Mobilization but he was used to participate in various development activities in the area.

The reference of the community people urged me to meet the teacher for upholding his active role as an example to others.

The next day I met him in the school. I expressed my intention for meeting him. Being acquainted with my purpose Mr. Muraduddoula welcomed me very cordially and introduced me with the Headmaster and his other colleagues. Then he, so spontaneously, started to speak about Social Mobilization for Sanitation project. He said, "Three years passed but our achievement of the Social Mobilization for Sanitation project is still alive". He suddenly started to recollect the sanitation situation in the area until early 1993. "It was obviously very poor sanitation coverage and the environment was polluted with open excreta, while we had nothing to do but living with the continuous bad smell" the teacher disclosed. The teacher continued that the SocMob

project of NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation opened to them the opportunity to declare war against open and unhygienic defecation. “We conveyed the messages on hygienic pit latrine and water-seal latrine among all of our students, and they were found very active to disseminate those to their family members as well as among their neighbours”, the teacher unfolded their strategy.

As he is the President of the local club, this rendered him a very good opportunity to maintain good relation with all groups of people in the community. He first called all the club members in a meeting and discussed the issue, and all the members very positively agreed to disseminate the important messages to motivate the people towards safe sanitation and hygiene behaviour. Most of the club members gave their consent to work to help the project. As per the commitment the club members contacted the SocMob workers and expressed their intention to the workers to work with them. The joint effort of the SocMob workers and the club members achieved a very successful result. “First they tried to make the people educated about safe water and hygienic sanitation. After few days it was found that some people were constructing latrine”, disclosed the teacher. Observing this the club members became more encouraged and took the challenge to raise the sanitation coverage upto 100 percent. As a good number of people did not have ability to install water-seal latrine, and the objective of the Social Mobilization for Sanitation project was to install the latrine to protect open defecation, so the workers and the local youths conveyed the messages to the poor people for installing home-made pit latrine which was low-cost. The young people successfully convinced the people to construct home-made pit latrine. They also helped them physically for making the latrine.

Mr. Muraduddoula, along with his other colleagues, organized School WatSan Programme in his school. “I realized that school programme might be one of the effective activities under Social Mobilization for

Sanitation project. Because, the school students are the future potential citizen of the country. So, they need to be educated not only with class text but all branches of education” said the teacher. Before organizing the school programme he talked to the SocMob workers and collected the communication materials supplied by NGO Forum. During the School WatSan Programme he used different type of communication materials which included poster, leaflet, video-film, etc. “Among all the communication materials video-film attracted the students much because it was very interesting to them and was also helpful for motivating the children as well as the people of other groups”, mentioned the teacher.

In the school programme the teachers used to discuss about the WatSan situation of the community, disadvantages of open defecation, importance of hygienic sanitation, causes & effect of water borne diseases, etc. The teachers gained commitment from the students in the school programme that all of them would install latrine with the help of their parents in their house. “It was found that within few weeks after completion of the school programmes, 95% of the students built latrines. The students also tried to motivate their neighbours for installation of latrine in every household” the teacher pointed very strongly. Students and SocMob workers jointly organized meeting in the village and the students helped the poor people build their latrine with SocMob workers and the youths. About 80% of the participants of the village meeting installed latrine in their house after few days of the village meetings.

The teacher explained why he participated in the project. He disclosed, “As an educated person I felt obligation to the society. Most of the people of the country are illiterate and poor. They have to work hard for food, clothing and shelter. They do not have any scope to think for better life and hygienic sanitation. So I had to do something for the upliftment of the community”. This project gave them the opportunity to work for the development of the sanitation situation of the area.

Mr. Muraduddoula also said, “I feel that water and sanitation facilities should be extended to every household. But who will be responsible for this. May be government; and we know our government is not that resourceful. Then who will? considering all these I engaged myself with this project”. “For me it was an opportunity. I am thankful to the NGO Forum for taking the initiative for development of the sanitation situation of our area”, the teacher concluded.

Teens Too Turn Teachers

Braving scorching sun, a group of about 25 school boys and girls were parading through a village path in Shalikhathana with colourful placards in hand and chanting slogan of “safe water is the essential to lead a sound health”.

When this small procession of the teens was passing by the huts and through the open space in the centre of the clusters of huts, their inmates, mostly female, many with baby on shoulders, were cheering them up with claps. “We have seen procession shouting for votes. But this is something really new to us”, commented a housewife.

“This type of rally in rural area is effective in imbibing people with call for safe water and hygienic latrine”, said Aminur Rahman, the Management Information System Officer of Ad-Din Welfare Centre, a partner organization of NGO Forum which is implementing the WatSan programme in the remote villages in Magura district. This organization with support from NGO Forum has been implementing safe water and sanitation activities along with its own development programmes in 58 villages of ten unions under three thanas in greater Jessore district.

Effective Mode of Campaign

Various communication materials are used in the campaign, the materials include posters, leaflets, stickers, flip-charts with pictures of tubewells and latrines, indicative drawing on how to use latrine, safe water, etc. These materials are very attractive and proved to be useful to most of the general mass. Cartoons depicting the utility of using safe water are sought mostly by the female members of the community. But video films proved most effective, said Arpana Rani Kundu, Coordina-

tor of Rural Organization for Voluntary Activities, ROVA in short. She said video films, posters and flip-charts on WatSan programme produced by NGO Forum are self-explanatory. People take interest in watching video films and curiously see posters and flip-charts and easily understand the message, Arpana said.

Since 1990, ROVA is implementing the WatSan programme in 34 villages in Shalikhathana in Magura and Bagharpara in Jessore.

Shamsunnahar, a field level worker of Ad-Din, Jhikargacha unit, said they held “Courtyard Meeting” always attended by no less than 20 village women including newly weds of the nearby houses. In these meetings they are briefed on the utility of safe water and hygienic latrine. The dangers of diarrhoea, dysentery, jaundice, typhoid and worms are explained to them with the help of posters and flip-charts, Shamsunnahar said.

Another field worker Anarkali said, “This is a very effective way of motivating people”. After a courtyard meeting, the attendants were found mentally disposed to have hygienic latrine and safe water, she said, adding “Whenever needed, we hold courtyard meeting”. In every educational institution in Navaran and Belermath, where she works, various types of posters and stickers have been fixed. They read: “use tubewell water for all purposes”, “use hygienic latrine”, “develop habit and lead a sound health,” etc.

Helping Hands

“The partner organization arranges video film- shows where they use the films produced by NGO Forum on safe water sanitation and hygiene. The effect of the video film- shows was articulated by Majeda Khatun, a field worker in the village called Pairadanga, “I have been able to install a large number of tubewells and latrines in my working area”. Video films have made “Local Discussion Forum (LDF)” at the villages

very attractive. These discussions are held at a village school and attended by a cross-section of people including village leaders, local administrative officials and representatives of NGO Forum, informed Majeda Khatun and Aminur Rahman. Aminur Rahman said that video films were very realistic. He suggested production of more video films on water and sanitation programme keeping in conformity with rural culture and tradition. Ad-din achieved 80 per cent success in WatSan programme implementation in Pairadanga village because of these video films, he said.

Mukti, Rupali, Shahinoor and Lipi of this village belonging to the samities (group) of women “Puli” and “Mitali” of Ad-din have hygienic latrines and tubewells in their houses. Video films drove them to set up latrines and install tubewells, they said. Manuals and leaflets are two other components facilitating WatSan campaign and those are distributed to the educated members of the community, who in turn voluntarily explain the messages to the common people in their locality. For operation and maintenance of tubewells and latrines, the manuals and leaflets proved to be very helpful, said a number of users.



Views from Villages: Consciousness about Safe Water & Sanitation Growing

“We are now much more healthy and solvent than ever before” says Nasrin Akhtar of Barachala village under Bhaluka thana in Mymensingh district. Nasrin is earning quite well by selling fruits of the trees she has raised at her homestead and milk of a couple of cows and goats she rears. Above all the health situation of her family has changed for the better by virtue of adopting hygienic sanitation

But this is only a flicker of hope. Major part of this region is lagging behind this and other such small areas of the country in terms of education, communication, sanitation and socio-economic condition. Agriculture here is yet almost dependent on nature. Moreover, no cognisable mills or factories have been established except only a number of husking mills and saw mills to augment income.

On the other hand, population of this region, like many others, is increasing more because of existing illiteracy and superstitions added by economic insolvency. As a result, unemployment problem has taken a frightening proposition. Even, if some are working, here and there, they are very low paid. And the money lenders are there to exploit this desperate situation to suck the poor to their end. On the other hand diseases like diarrhoea and cholera are taking their toll of this helpless population. In the absence of any safe water and sanitation system, occurrence of water-borne diseases is rampant; children are suffering from malnutrition and falling easy prey to these scourges.

People usually become frustrated in their desperate bid to exist in such intolerable situation. Often they lose values and consciousness. As a

result, one finds, social indisciplines are on the increase, environment is getting polluted and becoming unsuitable to live in.

Yet all is not lost. Some government and non-government organizations are working in these remote regions to help people overcome this terrible situation.

“We have started this social development work in 1985 and this region (Mymensingh) is our biggest field of work”, mentioned Mr. Robert Salmon Gomes, Executive Director, “Human Development Programme” (HDP), one of the NGOs working in Bhaluka thana.

Bulbul Islam, Project Coordinator of HDP informed that, eight workers and 15 volunteers of the organization were working in the 22 villages of this thana and 40 per cent of the 1025 families had already received the benefit of hygienic sanitation.

“Two hundred out of 350 families and we are using tubewell water for all purpose” said Hazera Khatun of Barachala village. Hazera is also the president of local women’s committee. By profession Hazera is a ring-slab latrine maker in the VSC run by HDP.

The most notable effort of the organizations in this respect is the establishment of “Village Sanitation Centre” (VSC) in the villages which they received from NGO Forum. On one hand, as sanitary latrine components are produced in these centres, generating employment for a section of people, so, on the other, opportunity of building relation with the rural people is created and also option of self-employment for some.

One hundred thirty nine rings and 100 slabs have been produced till now in the VSC of Seed Store in Bhaluka thana which was established with a target of selling and installing 50 sets of ring-slab per month. Most of

these sets have already been sold to the villagers and demand for those is also increasing.

“This centre has provided us an opportunity of extra income wherefore we are seeing rather a better future”, said Zubayed Ali, a mason of the VSC.

But, only provision of water and sanitation system will not help an overall improvement of public health situation. For this several steps shall have to be taken to increase awareness and income of the people. Because, it will rather be a crying in the wilderness to encourage them in other matters before ensuring provision for their major needs like food and shelter.

“Our work is not confined within water and sanitation; we have also undertaken income generating projects for the organization like nursery, apiculture, rural credit programme, etc. And we are trying to reach the benefit to the landless also and poor farmers”, mentioned Mr. Abdul Khaliq, Executive Director of “Grameen Manobik Unnayan Sangstha” (GRAMAUS), working in Phulpur thana.

“I am earning an extra 7-8 thousand Taka a year by selling guavas of my trees”. said Moslema of Charpara village in Phulpur thana who had bought the plants at a very small price from the nearest nursery adjacent to the VSC.

Md. Tajuddin, Asst. Teacher, Samla Taher Model Girls' High School, mentioned that it is our children who are most affected by the water-borne diseases. So, mothers can play an effective role in this regard. If mothers become health and hygiene conscious then the future citizens reared by them can habitually overcome or may not have to face these problems. Besides, local leaders, Imams and teachers also have good scope, occupationally, to take part in this great job. Because, it is their duty and they are in the process of building up these future citizens. Mr.

Tajuddin also mentioned that voluntary organizations, of course, should come forward in this regard.

NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation is helping the two local organizations, HDP and GRAMAUS in the process of rural development. Regional Officer of the NGO Forum informed that, they have provided Tk. 50,000 each as revolving fund to 16 partner NGOs working in Mymensingh district. And they have also supplied instruments such as mould sets, spades and hoes, sheds, curing tanks, etc. to the partner organizations and trained their workers. But, as the Forum thinks that only money, instrument and training are not all to get the envisaged result so it has arranged for regular monitoring and follow-up of the development activities. As a result of all these activities 239 tubewells have already been installed and 3660 sanitary latrines constructed in this district.

In conversation with the local people it was revealed that, they were simply not conscious about health and hygiene even a few years back. There was no use of safe water or sanitary latrine in most of the families. They were even ignorant about the importance of personal hygiene like hand washing before meal and after defecation, regular nail cutting practice, keeping them clean, etc. Then gradually through different meetings and workshops, specially by the inspiration of the local leaders, the awareness of the benefit grew, they became interested in these matters. And because of this positive change of habits, perhaps none in these villages had died of diarrhoea or such water-borne disease in the past couple of years, they disclose.

But, it will not be fair either to say that these areas have been turned into overall healthy abodes. Because, although it could be possible to raise the tubewell installation rate upto 90 per cent but the rate of sanitary latrine construction is lagging much behind. As a result, the threat to health still looms there. However, the local organizations engaged in the programme are expecting a 100 per cent implementation within next

December. The villagers cannot construct new latrines now (August) because of the rainy season.

As four VS Centres have been set up in this district so the proximity has increased reducing carrying cost and time of the customers involved in procurement. As a result, their interest is also growing.

There are many prospective customer now than before. Those who have not installed sanitary latrine yet, feel to do it soon. Many of them have already expressed their determination.

There are also some government and private centres wherefrom one can buy the construction materials of sanitary latrines at a comparatively low price.

But for the distance it appears hard for the villagers to buy from there involving an additional carrying cost. Besides, there is fear of damaging the materials in the process of comparatively long distance carrying because of the un-metalled village roads. So the villagers feel it would have been easier for them to avail the advantage if some more VS Centres were set up in closer proximity of their villages.

But then only setting up of VS Centres will not do, there must be kept vigil on the process of progress so that the actual work are done and the villagers derived the real benefit.

However, this vast task is not quite possible on the part of these small number of organizations alone engaged in the process now. It needs government and non-government and above all private conscious efforts.

And it has to come, because as citizens we all, understandably, bear the responsibility of making this country a healthy and happy place to live in.



Technology for the Poor

Simple but effective technology followed by NGO Forum and its partners in ensuring safe drinking water and hygiene-friendly latrines received popular response in saline-soaked Satkhira, Khulna and Bagerhat districts.

The relentless efforts of NGO Forum's partner organizations have earned appreciation for introducing variety of technology related to safe water supply and hygienic latrines, building confidence among the users. Because of people's choice or confidence, the partners of NGO Forum have developed a vast network of technologies across the districts making these technologies available at the grassroots level.

San plat slab, water-seal ring-slab and offset latrines are the common choices of the rural people in these districts. Thirty three village sanitation centres (VSCs) run by 25 partner NGOs of NGO Forum have been the hubs of technical knowledge and information on hygienic latrines, beside being selling centres at the grassroots level. Trained personnel of the partner organizations have been working everyday giving technical advice on how to maintain the latrines and disseminating information to the people. "Because of this very personal service we preferred buying from NGO operated VSCs", said Ayub Ali of Paikgacha in Tala thana of Satkhira district.

Same extent of service on drinking water lifting equipment and information suggesting storing of rainwater in hygienic condition for drinking purpose are available from the partner NGOs and the technical resource persons working in almost every union brought under the coverage of WatSan programme.

“Shushilan”, a partner NGO of NGO Forum, has sunk 30 shallow tubewells in Krishnanagar, Raghunathpur, Benadona areas of Kaliganj in Satkhira district. About 500 families are direct beneficiaries of these tubewells.

Trained Personnel Turn Opinion Leaders

NGO Forum has not only provided support to “Shushilan”, but also trained 30 female workers of “Shushilan” for maintaining and repairing the tubewells. With technical knowledge and its application at the time of necessity of the people, these female workers have gained the status of local opinion leaders.

Rokeya Khatun, a trained technical hand, working in Krishnanagar in Kaliganj thana, said shallow (No. 6) tubewell was very suitable for the area. The suction filter of this tubewell was performing very well. Users said the trained caretaker regularly checks the functioning of tubewells and as such, these are always serviceable.

“Nakshi Kantha”, another partner of NGO Forum, introduced Pond Sand Filter technology in supplying drinking water in Shyamnagar thana in 1996. This is popularly known as “Filter Nakshi Kantha”. About 600 families of five villages have been collecting safe water from this technology.

Maya Rani, a caretaker hand responsible for maintaining the potable water source, said that she carried out her responsibilities with active and spontaneous cooperation of the users.

Indeed, the partner organizations of NGO Forum have introduced various technologies to supply safe water and a vast network of trained people, male and female, always ready to respond to the need of the people. Among the village people, trained personnel are called “Technology”. These “Technologies” have been able to win the confidence of

the people by virtue of their cordiality, sincerity and dedication.

NGO Forum has recently promoted Rain Water Harvesting Plant to supply drinking water to the people in the coastal areas of the country where salinity in the ground water is intense. The work on the project to be completed by the year 1997 is progressing fast to supply drinking water to over 125,000 people in 112 villages. This would be a major breakthrough in local technology for tapping drinking water from a new natural source.

What NGO Forum and its 25 partner organizations have done so far to meet essentially two basic needs in saline-soaked areas is not conceivable for a person living in the metropolis.

Along with the spread of hygienic latrines and availability of safe water, one thing, the most important one, happened quietly to the benefit of the people. The outbreak of diarrhoea and dysentery is now uncommon in the area under the coverage of WatSan programme of NGO Forum. Thana health officials, local doctors, teachers and social workers, all expressed identical view in this regard.



কেন্দ্রীয়
সংসদ
সভা

১৯৭৪



A Torch in the Dark Tunnel

The national target of 'Health for All' by the year 2000 has incited a new dynamism in the development matrix of the country. In this process water and sanitation have been included in the mainstream development agenda. Various initiatives have been taken up both by the Government of Bangladesh and the NGO working even at the remote areas of the county. Over the last 10 years, the country has achieved relatively many success in the area of safe water supply for drinking purpose while the sanitation situation did not improve in the same pace, rather the development in sanitation is much slow. Even today, 25000 metric tones of faecal matters are deposited in the open places every day which is the main reason for high prevalence of diarrhoeal diseases.

In Bangladesh each child gets 3.5 diarrhoeal episodes every year. Thus we are sacrificing 700 under 5 children every day at the altar of diarrhoeal diseases. About 61 million diarrhoeal incidence every year cause loss worth 31,000 crore taka, contribute to high growth rate in population, in high school absenteeism and in mental and physical vulnerability of children.

The Road Taken for Development

It is not new to mention that development is a continuous process. But the realization obviously is relatively new that the concept, approach, strategy and method of development change with time, place, space and socio-politico-cultural context. However, to combat the grim sanitation situation the social scientists invented the concept of social mobilization as a timely approach for enhancing the development trend.

Sometimes, social mobilization is mistakenly used in place of social marketing since there are some similarities between their conceptual

parameters. Social mobilization splits from the concept of social marketing at the point when it says about mustering national and local support for a general goal or programme through a much more open and uncontrolled process, giving ownership to community as a whole. The process is associated with mobilizing human and indigenous resources through various effective approaches. Community and beneficiary mobilizations are the fundamental bases of this approach.

The government with assistance from the UNICEF in 1992 launched a national programme called 'Social Mobilization for Sanitation'. The idea of the programme is to utilize the dynamism of social mobilization by involving people from various social strata in order to promoting sanitation coverage. The NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, the apex service delivery agency of the NGOs in the sector, was taken as the key partner for implementation of the programme in 20 remote and diarrhoea-prone thanas under five divisions during the period 1993 to 1996.

The Action on the Way

The NGO Forum in April 1993 started its activities in collaboration with its partner organization with the primary objectives of improving excreta disposal, personal hygiene practice and safe-water use in order to reduce diarrhoeal diseases and improve the quality of life. To achieve the objectives of the programme the Forum embarked upon variety of activities by adopting the concept of social mobilization.

As a development-seeker in the WatSan sector the Forum took social mobilization as a self-sustaining process. It took the opportunity for trying the multi-level development approach under the framework of social mobilization, Before starting the activities the organization conducted an in-depth study for a comprehensive understanding about the socio-cultural and economic context of the projected areas. And finally by selecting the pressure points, it used the appropriate compo-

nents of social mobilization for promotion of sanitation coverage and use, and maintenance of the same.

The activities include national workshop, village level discussions, thana level workshop/seminar, hygiene education programme, film-shows, development communication, courtyard meetings, Imam mobilizations, rallies, miking and many other campaign activities. The NGO Forum formed committees in villages, unions and thanas comprising of local leaders, school teachers, Imams, community people, government and NGO representatives, etc., to lead the activities from the root level. Regular and effective coordination, participation of the people, mobilization of local resources and recognition of people's creativity and productivity were the important features of the programme.

The programme was basically motivational. At the initial stage, it was quite difficult to build rapport with people at the community level and motivate them about sanitation and hygiene behaviour as they did not relate this with their priority issues, and the importance of good sanitation and their long practised behaviour. However, after continuous motivation and education they participated in the process.

Major Achievements of the Programme

Five messages of water and sanitation such as: increased use of safe water, use of hygienic latrines, washing hand properly after defecation, keeping the latrines, clean and usage of latrines by 100 per cent of the population of the target areas were focused under the programme. The programme was implemented in 3 phases. In each phase, seven thanas were brought under the programme.

By the end of the programme people constructed their own latrines. The average number of the latrines thus constructed stood at about 91.7 per cent which was only 20.6 before intervention.

About 91.8 per cent population of the total washed hands after defeca-

tion using soap, ash or soil while it was 69.9 per cent a year ago.

Regarding cleaning and maintenance of the latrines, it was observed that 51.8 per cent of the households who constructed own latrines cleaned and maintained their latrines properly and regularly. This figure was only 9.3 per cent a year before.

In case of usage of latrines by all members of the family it was noticed that latrines were used by all members of the family in 88.4 per cent households which was 63.7 per cent a year ago.

Regarding usage of tubewell water for drinking and other domestic purposes, it was found that a vast majority of the households (95.3 per cent) used tubewell water for drinking purpose, while 41.1 per cent of the households were using tubewell water for all domestic purposes. But before intervention the figures were 84.8 and 23.4 per cent respectively.

Main Observations

There has been marked increased demand for water-seal latrines in the SocMob intervention areas.

It was easier to motivate and educate people in the NGO intervention areas rather than in the NGO non-intervention areas.

There has been increased demand for tubewells in the non-intervention areas.

There has been marked improvement in hygienic latrines construction, usage of tubewell water for all domestic purposes and hand washing and other hygiene practices as well.

There has been substantial improvement in the general health awareness of people at community level.

Construction and use of hygienic latrine in each household are possible.

Regular follow-up and monitoring are needed to sustain the achievements.

Conclusion

So far, social mobilization has proven to be an effective concept although it has some problems at the conceptual level, but it is also true that any concept should or could be moulded as per the characteristic features of any area or community. The creativity and the knowledge of people at the grassroots taught the mobilizer a lot when they interacted with them. Thus the participation of the people enriched the process of social mobilization, and the dream came true. From the experience of 20 thanas it can be said that if the concept of social mobilization could be replicated in other areas sanitation situation will improve to a large extent. The present challenge is sustainability of the achievement.

However, the development planners are looking for scopes to sustain the achievements that are coming from these participatory efforts. Various activities are being thought about in this regard. The countrywide National Sanitation Week which are being observed for the last few years was the first step towards ensuring the promotion as it involved people from various walks of life ranging from the Prime Minister to the village women and men.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	:	Acquired Immune Defecency Syndrome
AISEDUP	:	Association for Integrated Socio-Economic Development for Underprivileged People
ASA	:	Association for Social Advancement
BRAC	:	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CBO	:	Community Based Organization
DP	:	Development Partners
DPHE	:	Department of Public Health Engineering
GRAMAUS	:	Grameen Manobik Unnayan Sangstha
HDP	:	Human Development Project
HRD	:	Human Resource Development
JAKOS	:	Jana Kollyan Sangstha
JJS	:	Jagrota Jubo Shangha
LDF	:	Local Discussion Forum
NFE	:	Non-Formal Education
NGO	:	Non-Government Organization
NGOF	:	NGO Forum
PGUK	:	Palli Gono Unnayan Kendra
PKSF	:	Palli Karmo Sahayak Foundation
ROVA	:	Rural Organization for Voluntary Activities
SEDA	:	Socio-Economic Development Agency
SHETU	:	Shirashuni Humanitarian Enhance Territorial Unity
SIBAS	:	Shingher Khajura Bastuhara Samaj Kallyan Samity

SOCMOB	:	Social Mobilization for Sanitation
SPUS	:	Samajkallyan O Pally Unnayan Sangstha
SSC	:	Secondary School Certificate
TNO	:	Thana Nirbahi Officer
USDC	:	Union Sanitation Development Committee
VDP	:	Village Defence Party
VS	:	Village Sanitation
VSC	:	Village Sanitation Centre
WATSAN	:	Water and Sanitation

1

