



**Watershed**  
empowering citizens

## Report

# Gender and Social Inclusion in Bhola II



**Gender and Water Alliance- Bangladesh**  
**9 - 12 September 2018**

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## Introduction

The overall task of GWA-B in the Watershed project in Bangladesh is the capacity building of the first level CSOs (Civil Society organizations) in the area of Gender and Social Inclusion. In this phase of the project the targeted CSO is Development Organisation of the Rural Poor (DORP), and to some extent also WaterAid. It is the task of DORP to build capacity of the CSOs at the grassroots level. In this phase these are the Water Management Citizen's Committee (WMCC) and the NGO Network in Bhola Sadar Upazila. For GWA to know how to strengthen the capacity of DORP for coaching and training the CSOs in Bhola, it is needed to have information about the people, the CSOs, the selected villages, the men and women villagers, their problems and their skills. While reviewing secondary data, water policies, and the observations made and information collected during the previous field visits, we felt the need to conduct another field visit to the Bhola Sadar Upazila to gather additional information and to see how the people connected with the Watershed project are doing their work in Bhola.

## Gender and Social Inclusion in Bhola II: At a glance

This third gender and social inclusion mission in Bhola was made from 8-13 September 2018 (this includes the travel). It included the coaching of two CSOs; meeting with Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), and Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB); meeting with chairpersons of Veduria and Dhaniala Union Parishad (UP) under Bhola Sadar Upazila; mixed Focal Group Discussions (FGD) in villages, transect walks and visits to the achievements of DORP. Through these activities, there was attempt to assess their level of understanding of gender relations and inclusion of minorities, marginalised and vulnerable groups; share some knowledge on gender and social inclusion; discuss about the gender and social inclusion aspects of WASH and IWRM in Bhola; gender and social inclusion aspects of SDGs; and also collect some data related to gender and social inclusion aspects of WASH and IWRM in Bhola. There was a debriefing session at the end of the visit to explain the activities, findings and initial analysis where DORP personnel and a good number of CSO members were present. Participants also gave some feedbacks.

Gender and Social Inclusion Mission-members:

1. Joke Muylwijk, Programme Coordinator of GWA-B
2. Khadiza Akter, Programme Officer Gender and WASH of GWA-B
3. Partha S.K. of DORP
4. Dr. Silvana Israt of DORP
5. Tarun Kanti Das of DORP
6. Md Abdul Mannan of DORP

***See Debriefing note in Annex 2. This is at the same time a summary of our findings.***

The coaching sessions were about 4 hours, but quite intensive. Even though a longer training workshop would be preferred, most of the participants are not able to make more time free. DORP tells us that they also deal with Inclusion in their coaching, but more as cross-cutting theme. During the first gender and social inclusion visit to Bhola by GWA-B (in August 2017), CSO members, who are educated and influential joined in one coaching session and who are less educated and influential joined in another coaching session. But this time the two CSOs (Water Management Citizen’s Committee and NGO Network) joined in the coaching session in two days as an individual CSO. Quite a long time was spent in meeting the officers of the service providing government agencies: BWDB, LGED and DPHE; and meeting the chairpersons of Veduria and Dhania union parishad under Bhola Sadar Upazila. Since these people are the real decision makers at Bhola level, their sensitivity regarding the gender and social inclusion issues of WASH and IWRM is very important. Otherwise, they may not care about these issues, even if the local CSOs are gender responsive and socially inclusive in their lobbying and advocacy. So, the GWA-B team discussed gender and inclusion issues of WASH and IWRM with them, in an attempt to make them remember excluded people. Additionally, it was necessary to hear from the general people of Veduria and Dhania union and visit some places to see the real WASH situation and some activities and achievements of the Watershed project in two unions of Bhola. Finally, the debriefing session with DORP personnel and CSO members was useful to share the findings of the GWA-B team and to receive feedback. To enable us to do all these activities, the staff of DORP was very helpful. They offered to help with selecting people and places, making arrangements and appointments beforehand which was appreciated. Some CSO members were also helpful in organizing coaching sessions, FGDs and meetings.

The next part of this report describes the activities of the four days’ visit to Bhola, including the field



The harbour where the Bede stay on their boats

visit findings and coaching sessions with the two CSO members. See Annex 1 for the Programme Schedule.

## Day 1 Sunday 9 September

### Coaching of CSO - Water Management Citizen's Committee (WMCC)

**Facilitator:** Joke Muylwijk

**Translator:** Khadiza Akter

**Participants:** total 30



The total number of participants in the first CSO coaching session was 30, of which 4 were from DORP (3 men, 1 woman), 24 from WMCC (11 women, 13 men), and 2 from GWA-B (2 women).

**Md Abdul Mannan** from DORP-Bhola opened the meeting welcoming everybody including the GWA-B team and the DORP staff members from Dhaka. He reminded everybody that last year also the GWA-B team conducted coaching sessions with WMCC on gender and social inclusion and informed about how to do gender responsive and socially inclusive lobby and advocacy for WASH and IWRM. The GWA-B team also visited different places and talked with many people to collect Information. So, this time there will be follow up. He concluded his opening speech thanking everybody and asking to introduce themselves. Then everybody introduced themselves.

After the introduction of everybody, Joke started the main coaching session and to break the ice she initiated discussion about the weather and rainfall of Bangladesh comparing it with the Netherlands. She informed that she heard about the low rainfall in Bangladesh too, in 2018 monsoon. She asked participants to share how the rain was in the past monsoon in Bhola. One of the participants responded that in Bhola, there was raining two months long but not like previous years. Previously it was cats and dogs 7 days continuously but this year it wasn't. This year there was only little rain in some days and some days heavy rain but only for a few hours. Another participant added that in North Bengal, there was very little rain compared to Bhola. Then they were asked to share do they think that this year was different from the previous years or not that it is really something which has been changed. All the participants together replied that they have observed the change in rainfall pattern and one of the participants added that with the change in rainfall, there was change in the livelihood economy of Bhola. Because a lot of people are involved with hilsha fishing in the river and due to less rainfall, there was not much hilsha in the river this year. Then some other participants added that they think this is the impact of climate change. Joke then shared the rainfall situation in

her country, the Netherlands, where also this year it was very dry. There was three months of abnormally hot summer, which has not happened before. So, this kind of change in the weather pattern is happening around the world as a result of Climate Change and we have to try and deal with it. Because, if the water and the weather change, it will have a lot of impact on water management as a whole, and different for different categories of people.

After the ice breaking discussion, the participants were asked to listen carefully, participate in the session actively and take part in the discussion, since the time for the coaching session is very short. They were also requested, that whatever will be discussed in the session, to use that information and tell it to the government duty bearers in time of lobbying and advocacy meetings.

### **Gender and Social Inclusion**

Joke started to discuss about gender and social inclusion and she reminded the participants of last year's session, and asked them if they can remember something they learnt. Among the participants of the present coaching session, 15 were present in the last year's coaching session as well. Subjects participants could recall were:

- Water and toilet facilities
- Marginalized people who are left behind
- Sanitation, cleanliness and the access to WASH for the people with disabilities
- Marginalized people, and how some people are getting a lot of water and some people are not getting enough water
- Toilet structures (high commode and low commode) and distance of the toilet which is very important for children, elderly and women
- There is no separate toilet with special facilities (direct water supply) for women in the rural areas
- Toilet facilities are not gender sensitive. No concern or not enough for the women
- Water and sanitation related problems in our country, especially in the rural areas, and women and girls are the worst sufferers of these problems. There are different institutions especially schools where there are no separate toilet facilities for women and girls. It creates various problems for them.
- Scarcity of safe drinking water is everywhere especially in the coastal areas. Reasons of these problems and how to solve those problems.
- The links between gender, water, and sanitation as well as use of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities by different groups of people.
- In Bhola, what is the percentage of people with access to pure water and safe sanitation; and what is the percentage of people without access of pure water and safe sanitation. What is the water, sanitation and hygiene situation of nomadic people and what kind of problems they are facing regarding WASH etc.
- Scarcity of safe water is increasing all over the world, also in Bangladesh and there could be a war for water. Weather and climate is changing and as a result of that, the number of natural disasters is increasing.

- The situation of water and sanitation facilities of the nomadic people: what is their problem and how can it be solved.
- Access to safe water and the problems in accessing it, and what kind of challenges are faced by not only the women but also the other vulnerable groups like people with disabilities, children and elderly people.

Mannan remembers:

In 80% of the cases, women are involved in water collection and preservation work, but women's participation in policy and decision-making regarding water is very rare. Government bodies, where policies are made, are highly male dominated. In case of sanitation, special facilities for the people with special need like pregnant women, children, elderly, and people with disabilities are missing in many places. If women and marginalized people's voice would be heard and taken care of in time of policy making, they would be able to get better access to water. Also, of the total fresh water in Bangladesh, 96% is used for agriculture and only 2-3% is used by the people for drinking and household work.

**Core issues of water management:**

Main sectors of water use are: Water supply, Sanitation, Irrigation, Environment and Industries. In Bangladesh, 96% of usable/fresh water in the country is used for agriculture, 2% for drinking and domestic purposes, and other 2% for industries. Because of this scarcity of fresh water, everybody suffers but some people suffer more. These include the very poor, minority groups (religious, ethnic), people with disabilities, children, elderly and women, who cannot move freely or talk to decision makers. Therefore, while rainfall is becoming less in monsoon, ground water level is going down. If we have many years like this, then tube-wells will be empty, dug-wells will be dry, ponds will be dry, and there will be huge problem for the users of that 4% water. Therefore, being member of the citizens committee, you can make sure that the scarce water of Bhola is used in the best way for the people, for all the people. So WMCC is very important and special, because there is no such committee in all the villages.

Then participants were asked what they think about this committee, why is it important and for whom they are working? And whom are they representing? Their responses were as follows:

**Representing:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women</li> <li>- Pregnant and lactating mothers</li> <li>- Small entrepreneurs (yoghurt makers)</li> <li>- Fisher women and men</li> <li>- People with disabilities</li> <li>- Minorities</li> <li>- Journalists</li> <li>- Marginalized people</li> <li>- Students and teachers, especially girl students and women teachers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All the people who suffer from corruption</li> <li>- Midwives/traditional birth attendants</li> <li>- Nomadic/Bede people</li> <li>- Doctors</li> <li>- Disabled children</li> <li>- Imams and Muslim men</li> <li>- Local government</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



**WMCC members are working:**

- To ensure human rights of all the people and especially women
- To convince people to send children to the school
- To convince the UP chairpersons to give the elderly allowance to the elderly people
- To ensure women’s access in fishing and in the market
- To look after the health of people and talk about good health
- To talk and write about the problems and difficulties of marginalized people
- To increase the allocation in the Union’s WASH budget so that the need of the poor and marginalized people are met
- To raise the awareness about sanitation and hygiene including Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)
- To reduce corruption and establish the human rights of the people
- To ensure the rights of nomadic people especially nomadic women

Therefore, WMCC members are representing all groups of people and working for everybody to ensure human and social rights.

Water and sanitation facilities are needed for everybody and the need is same for all. Poor-rich, women-men, able-disable, all groups of people have the same need of water and sanitation. However, the different people have different access. Everybody doesn’t have the same access to water and sanitation. Some people have access to safe water and sanitation but some other people don’t have. So, the need is the same but the access is different. Because the decisions are made mostly by the men at high level. But the need is mostly at the lower level. Because women need water at the household level and marginalized people are out of sanitation services. So, their voice should be heard regarding WASH related decision making and that is what WMCC is doing. This WMCC is giving voice to poor and marginalized people and WMCC will tell the higher-level decision makers about the needs of the poor and marginalized people. Subsequently, poor and marginalized

people's problems and needs may be addressed by the government. And this is what the objective of Watershed project and this CSO is.

**Achievements of CSOs and changes noticed by the CSO members:**

When WMCC members were asked whether or not they find any changes resulting from their efforts in Bhola, all of them responded that they have some achievement or they were able to bring some changes. These were:

- Some people, who belong to the marginalized categories, did get a tube-well.
- Some schools, with limited facilities of water, sanitation and hygiene, received better service from the government department and for some the process of improvement is ongoing.
- Different government departments took initiatives to construct toilets for the people who do not have and reconstructed the damaged toilets in different places especially in the schools. Also, in the schools they have arranged separate toilet for girls and boys.
- 500 deep tube-wells have been sanctioned from the government and now Upazila chairman, Union Parishad (UP) chairman and other government duty bearers are visiting different places with the CSO members to see where tube-wells are necessary and who the neediest people are. And they have committed that they will provide tube-wells accordingly.
- The Upazila Chairman, Union Parishad Chairman and other government duty bearers' mind-sets have changed. Now they are more aware about the problems and needs of the poor and marginalized people.
- The representative from the marginalized nomadic people went to the Upazilla Chairman's office and urged for a deep tube-well for the nomadic people living in Dhanial Union.
- A tube-well has been sanctioned by the Union Parishad Chairman for some families who are very poor and living close to each other.
- The general people are becoming aware about the use of water, and improve their sanitation and hygiene behaviour.
- Trying to inform the Upazila Chairman, Union Parishad Chairman and other government duty bearers about what gender and inclusion is especially in WASH.
- BWDB took the initiative to extend the area of embankment alongside the riverbank, to protect more people who live in the disaster-prone area under Dhanial Union.
- Bhola Sadar Upazila Parishad allocated 216,000 BDT for distributing sanitary napkins to 6,500 girl students in 49 secondary schools and madrassas from their WASH budget (fin. year 2018-19).

**Participation in the lobby and advocacy meetings:**

When the participants were asked to raise their hand to inform how many of them are participating in different lobby and advocacy meetings with different government departments, all of them raised their hand. So now not only the educated, influential and socially well-known people are doing lobby and advocacy work but also the people who belong to vulnerable groups. And, they told especially about the WASH related problems and needs (having tube-well and toilet) of marginalized people (i. e. poor women and men, people with disabilities, children, elderly, nomads, etc.) to the Upazila Chairman, Union Parishad Chairman and other government duty bearers. But previously it was the

custom that only rich and influential as well as the relative and well-known persons of the UP chairperson will get a tube-well, even if they already have one. However, the authorities are now working in a more gender sensitive and socially inclusive way, according to the CSO members.

**Groupwork:**

The participants were divided in 3 groups randomly and were asked to discuss the following questions mentioning some numbers and some details:

1. Did the situation of WATSAN in Bhola Sadar improve?
2. Do you expect it to improve this year and in 2019?
3. What did you contribute to make it improve?
4. In the afternoon the GWA team will meet with the DPHE officer. What shall we ask him/her?

All three groups responded all the three questions through group work and presented their report in the plenary.

**Group 1:**

Shawkat Hossain,  
Hosne-Ara-Begum,  
Hasina Begum,  
Shahana Begum,  
Fouzia Khanom,  
Md. Jashim Uddin,  
Shohrab Hossain, and  
**Md. Zakirul Haque,**  
**(presenter)**



**1. Development:**

- Budget allocation of Union Parishad (UP) participatory
- Allocation of resources (WATSAN)

# Site selection for installing tube-well is as per the need

# Toilets are sanctioned to the poor and marginalized people

# Hygiene facilities in the school toilets for adolescent girls

**In 2019, we hope to see success of our lobby and advocacy through overall improved WATSAN.**

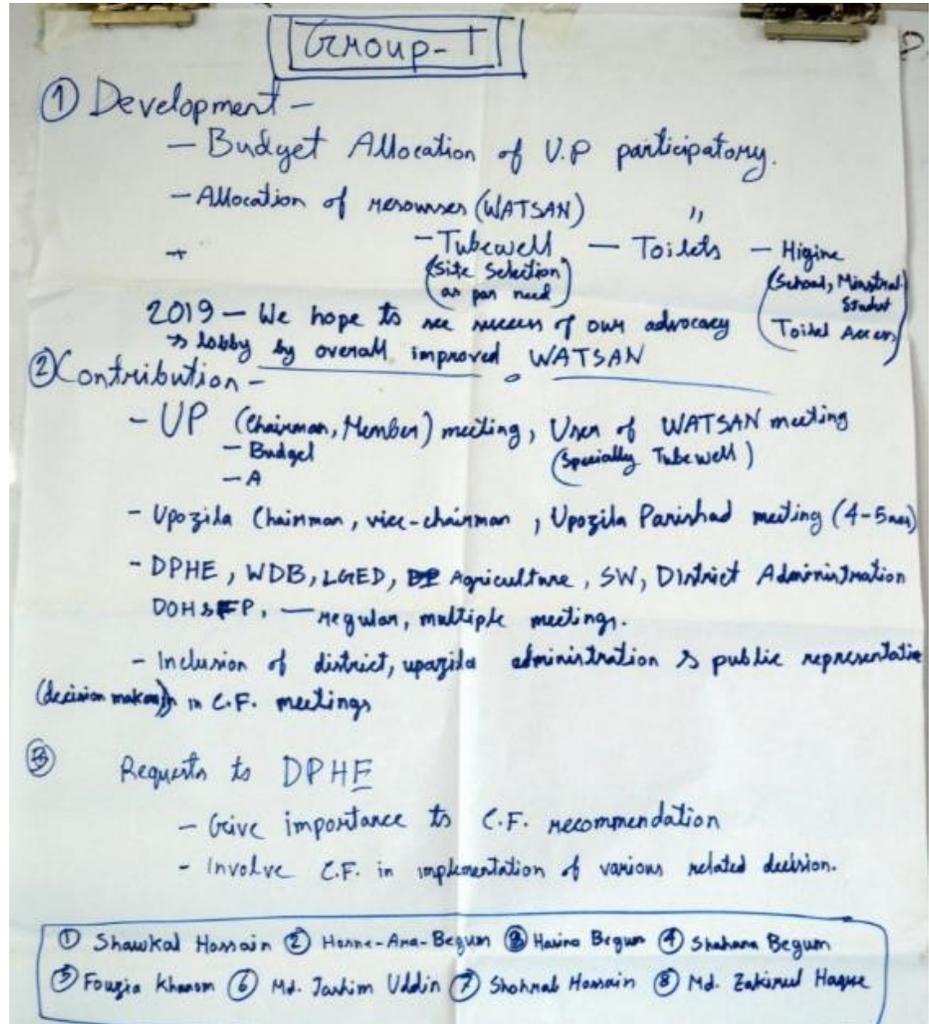
**2. Contribution:**

- Meeting with UP chairperson and member about WASH budget allocation
- Meeting with Union Parishad WATSAN committee for sanctioning tube-well
- 4-5 meetings with Upazila chairman and vice-chairman of Upazila Parishad

- Regular monthly meeting with DPHE, BWDB, LGED, DAE, SW, District Administration, and DOHSFP
- Inclusion of district, upazila administration and public representatives (decision makers) in CF meetings.

**3. Request to DPHE**

- **Give importance to C.F. recommendation**
- Involve C.F. in implication of various related decision.



**Group 2:**  
**Presented by:**  
**Md Ruhul Amin Jahangir**

**Answer to Question 1:**

- To fulfil the need of safe drinking water, 670 deep tube-wells have been



sanctioned for all the unions of Bhola Sadar Upazila in 2018-19 fiscal year. The installation work is in progress.

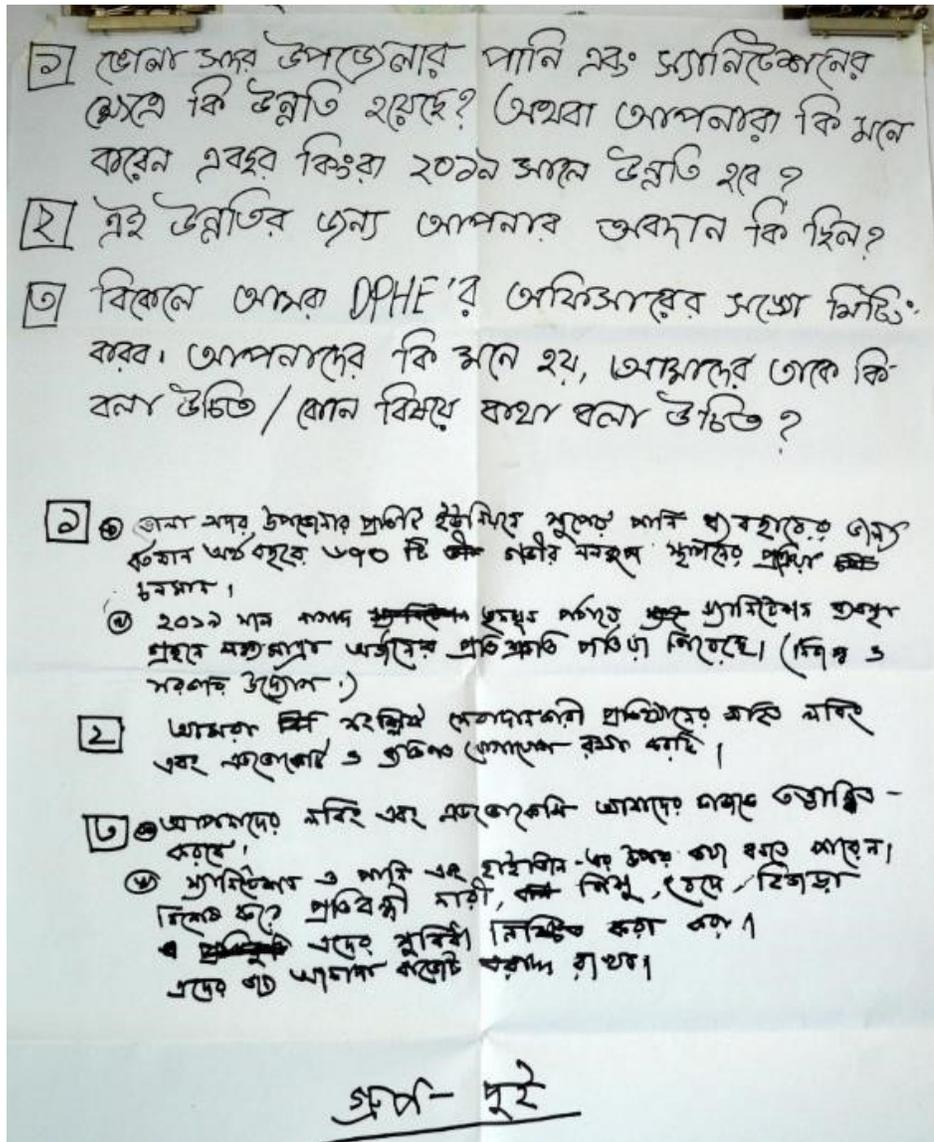
- Commitment from the government has been received that within 2019, sanitation coverage will reach its target at the grass roots' level.

**Answer to Question 2:**

- CSO members are communicating regularly and doing lobby and advocacy with different government departments related with WASH and IWRM.

**Answer to Question 3:**

- GWA-B's coaching and lobby and advocacy will accelerate the efforts of CSOs.
- There can be discussion on WASH services for women, children, nomadic people, people with disabilities, third gender, and others to ensure their WASH facilities. Also, about having a separate budget line for them.



**Group 3**

**Members:**

Amitav,  
Ifnur Begum,  
Salma Begum,  
Kohinur Begum,  
Abdus Sattar, and  
**Nurun Nahar**  
(presenter)



**Answer to Question 1:**

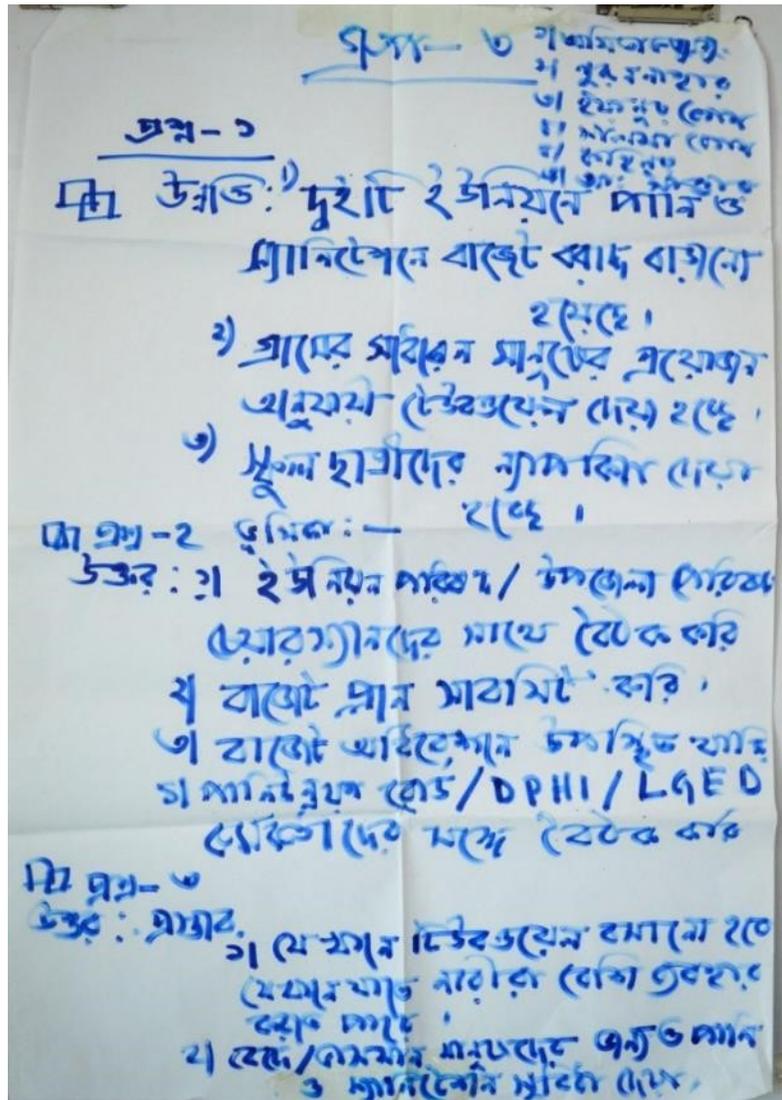
- Allocation for WASH has been increased in the Union Parishad Annual Wash Budget.
- Tube-wells are sanctioned considering the need of the general people of the village.
- Schools girls are getting sanitary napkins for free.

**Answer to Question 2:**

- Regular meeting with the Union Parishad and Upazila Parishad Chairperson
- Submit budget plan
- Present in the budget sessions
- Regular meeting with DPHE, BWDB and LGED department officers

**Answer to Question 3:**

- Ask DPHE to sanction tube-well in such a place from where women could easily fetch water
- Arrange water and sanitation facilities for nomadic people as well



**Closing:**

At the end of the coaching session with Water Management Citizens Committee at first the deputy chairperson of the committee expressed his gratitude to the GWA-B team and DORP for their facilitation and said that the coaching session was helpful for all the CSO members to build their capacity to do gender responsive and socially inclusive lobby and advocacy on WASH and IWRM. Then some other members also expressed their opinion which was appreciating GWA-B and DORP for their good work. The session was closed by providing a nice lunch to all the participants and inviting them to join the debriefing session.



## Meeting with DPHE (Department of Public Health and Engineering)

**Meeting with:** Akmol Hosen, Executive Engineer, DPHE, Bhola and one colleague

GWA-B team along with DORP team and some CSO members visited the DPHE office to discuss about gender and social inclusion issues related to DPHE's activities connected with water supply and sanitation in Bhola.

At first there was discussion about the objectives and activities of the Watershed project and how and why DPHE is a stakeholder of the project.

Mr. Akmol informed that DPHE is responsible for sanctioning tube-wells and toilets in the rural level. Compared to other rural parts of Bangladesh, the water and sanitation situation in Bhola is not bad and still improving. The water supply come from DTWs with the water at 275-300 meter deep, where it is very pure<sup>1</sup>. DPHE is not occupied with drainage.

Then GWA-B team, DORP team and CSO members discussed about the gender and social inclusion aspects of WASH to make the DPHE officials understand. For instance, firstly, the location of the tube-well and the quality of the water is an important factor for women and girls because mostly women and girls are responsible for fetching water, whilst men are mostly selecting the location for a new tube-well, and they prefer to install it in the market place or in front of the mosque where women have limited access. Therefore, the location of the tube-well is very important and DPHE



<sup>1</sup> In some villages we found people complaining about the peculiar taste of the water, but that was water of handpumps, which don't fetch water from so deep.

should ask women, elderly, poor and disabled where the tube-well should be installed. Secondly, the quality of the water is also important. If the water of the nearby tube-well is saline or toxic with arsenic, the women and girls have to walk a long way. Thirdly, sometimes the structure or position of the tube-well is also a factor. It is common that in coastal areas tube-wells are installed with high platform so that during flood or cyclone they are not damaged. But, to do so, the accessibility of the children, elderly and people with disability should also be considered. Because they also fetch water and if the tube-well platform is not accessible for them, they have no water.

Similarly, there should be easy access to sanitation and hygiene facilities for women, girls, children, elderly and people with disabilities. Men feel free to relieve themselves anywhere but women don't. They are more physically vulnerable and susceptible to germs, with internal genital organs, menstruation, pregnancy and giving birth. For them a sanitary toilet close-by is very important, even life-saving. For men such a toilet is only comfortable. When the number of toilets is low and facilities are lacking, women have to walk far even in the night and a lot of problems may arise. The design and technology of the toilet is also very important because children, elderly, pregnant women, people with disability, all need toilets with specific characteristics. For example, many elderly and pregnant women need a high commode, children a lower one. Other categories can do with a squatting toilet. Disabled men and women need different design toilets, depending on their disability. Disabled women have different needs from disabled men. Deaf and blind people again have different needs. Design also depends on the context, level of groundwater, water-logging, etc. Steps to a toilet can be dangerous for certain categories of people. Toilets also should have Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) facilities especially in the school. Because every year many girls are dropping out from school because there are no separate toilets for girls with MHM facilities. Also, the WASH facilities in the cluster villages and for the nomad people are quite insufficient. These people are suffering a lot. Toilets need to be constructed, for women and men separately in public places as well. There should be strict maintenance rules. Sometimes we see that women's toilets are used by men, or the toilets for men and women are next to each other, so women feel shy to use it. All this is closely related to health which is the main area of concern for DPHE.

After discussing all these gender and inclusion issues with the DPHE, they told us that they are already doing their work accordingly with the support of Watershed CSO members. They are providing low cost sanitary latrine materials to the poor people and constructing public toilets in the market places.

DPHE then orally committed to the CSO members that they will install new tube-wells in such locations from where women and the people who have limited access to drinking water could easily access. In cluster villages DPHE says to construct public toilets, which when ready, are handed over. Also, they will take the initiative to improve the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in the primary schools especially for girls. DPHE officers also told that they are not the decision-makers about sanctioning or installing the tube-wells or toilet. They implement the policy as it is made in Dhaka. And at local level they follow decisions about the location of the local government representatives. DPHE provides low cost products: rings and slabs for free, these are low costs

latrines for poor people, who provide the work. Further community and public toilets, according to civil law. On our question if DPHE can make sure the Bede will have a toilet on the embankment, the Executive Engineer answers that there is no free land available, so it is not possible.

At the end of the meeting, DPHE officers were requested to talk about the gender and social inclusion issues of WASH with their higher authorities because the work of the officers at the grass roots' level is very important to ensure gender responsive and socially inclusive WASH services. Bangladesh is working to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and there is a specific goal on equitable and sustainable WASH for all by 2030. To achieve 100% sanitation coverage, there should be change in the policy.

Then DPHE officers told that in Bhola, sanitation coverage is 89% while the national coverage is 93%. Since DPHE holds the member secretary position of the Upazila WATSAN committee, and attends in the bi-monthly meeting, and also keeps regular contact with the Watershed CSO members, it should be possible to reach 100% sanitation coverage soon and achieve SDG 5<sup>2</sup>.

At the end of the meeting the Executive Engineer of DPHE invites the GWA-B and DORP teams to visit a school to see the activities of DPHE for school WASH which was welcomed and highly appreciated. A convenient time on the next day was agreed upon.

## Transect walk in the Dhania union

To see the situation of WASH facilities in Dhania union, the GWA-B team along with DORP team and some CSO members had a transect walk in Tulatuli village. Some families were visited randomly and questions were asked about their WASH facilities. The overall findings are, almost all the families are drinking water from deep tube-wells which is not saline and has no arsenic but some tube-wells have iron. However, access to DTWs is not the same for all. Some people have to walk far to fetch water and some people have tube-wells within their house compound. Most of the DTWs are provided by the government but there are also some by the people of their own.

However, the situation of sanitation and hygiene is quite different and very poor, even in well-off households. People seem to be rather careless about maintenance of toilets and about hygiene. Most of the toilets are not very close to the main house, without direct water supply, without having any soap or hand wash facilities, are smelly, and not properly maintained. Women and girls mostly use old cloth during their menstruation, which they wash with soap but do not dry in the sunlight. They try to keep them out of sight because they think that it is shameful, if men see their rags.

Dowry is a big problem in Bhola. Marriages, irrespective of educated or illiterate, rich or poor families, take place with a high amount of dowry. Poor people suffer a lot from this cultural curse.

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<sup>2</sup> Since the approval of the SDGs, the criteria for “improved toilets” are upgraded, and 93% has gone down to about 50%.

Not only at the marriage, even after years, men and men’s families create pressure to the family of the bride to give more dowry. Parents take loans with high interest rates from different agencies especially from NGOs to meet the demand of dowry and fall into the vicious cycle of poverty. Dowry



demands also often result in divorce.

We visited this family, unannounced. They told us about how they used to have a lot of land, and lost it all to the river. After that they have not been able to build up a profitable livelihood again. On the left, in black, is the midwife, member of the CSO.

Additionally, in Bhola women’s participation in the public workforce is not welcomed. Employment opportunities for women are rare, even if many women would like paid work. Therefore, women stay in the house which creates pressure on the household heads when they are poor.



Riverbank erosion is a big problem in Bhola. A lot of people have lost their land and livelihood options due to riverbank erosion. Since Bhola is a char island, people who are living in the bank of the river are the victim of tidal flood. In time of high tide, their houses become inundated which damages their houses, toilets, kitchen gardens and other property. Women suffer more because they own no land formally so are not eligible for compensation.

A good number of people in Bhola are occupied with river fishing and fish business. So, they suffer when fish stocks are low, for whatever reason. A good thing in Dhania Union is that girls’ participation in school is almost equal to that of boys, and it is increasing day by day. A lot of development interventions are ongoing which helping to develop the standard of living of the people.

## Day 2 Monday 10 September

### Visit to Ukilpara Primary and Secondary Schools

After crossing one of the two beautiful new bridges, which connect the school compound with the main road, we reach the Ukilpara Government Primary School, where 150 children, 80 boys and 70 girls study up to class 5. A bit further is the Ukilpara Secondary Girls' High School, which is recognised by the government, but is governed by a Board, for girls from class six to ten. The objective to visit the Ukilpara schools was to observe the WASH facilities in the school for the students. This school was selected by Mr Akmal Hosen, Executive Engineer, DPHE-Bhola. The GWA-B team along with the DPHE officers, the DORP team and some CSO members visited the school. A few teachers also joined the team.



The toilet block for boys of the Ukilpara Primary School, built in 2017 by DPHE

In the school, DPHE constructed two WASH blocks for girls and boys of the primary school in separate places. One building with three toilets and two urinals for primary school boys has been



Toilet block for girls of the Ukilpara Primary School, also used by 500 girls of the Ukilpara Girls High School, constructed in 2014 by DPHE

constructed in 2017 by DPHE, and it is found to be in very good condition, with good facilities and clean. Further away, one block was constructed in 2014, in which three toilets are meant for primary school girls. Two of the three are locked, so just one toilet is available. This block, contrary to that of the boys, in very poor condition and without facilities. There are also two more older toilets for the high school girls which are made by the school authority. While the number of boys using those 3 toilets and 2 urinals is about 170, the number of girls using the one toilet are around 670. Men and women teachers also use respective toilets for boys and girls.

Available Facility	Boys toilet 2017	Boys toilet 2017	Boys toilet 2017	Boys urinal 2017	Boys urinal 2017	Girls toilet 2014
Condition	good	good	good	good	good	Bad and dirty
users	170/5=34 Boys and male teachers	170 small girls and 500 big girls and female teachers				



Details of girls' toilets

In the girls' WASH block, of the three toilets, one is always locked. The two open toilets have lots of problems such as- lower part of the doors are broken, not clean at all, no MHM facilities, bad smell, not functioning water basin, etc. And the other two toilets are like from primitive period without any commode and direct water supply system as well as very dirty.



After the visit, there was a discussion meeting together with the school directors, DPHE officers, DORP team member, CSO member and GWA-B team. In the meeting, DPHE officers informed that DPHE is responsible only for Primary school WASH and high school WASH is the responsibility of the governing board and to some extent the education department of the government. And DPHE's responsibility is to construct the toilet for the primary school, and maintenance is the responsibility of the school authority. But DPHE will take care of including necessary facilities for girls in the toilet

in future. When the issue of MHM in the school has been raised, the head teacher of the school agreed with the GWA-B team and informed that most of the girl students are from nearby places but some students come from 1.5 kilometre away. Since the midday break is for 1 hour (school time is 10 am to 4 pm), within this time it is difficult for them to go to their house and come back. In that case, they don't come back to the school again. They acknowledged that women teachers are also facing difficulty to use these toilets but the school has no capacity to construct new toilets or renovate the existing toilets. So, he is looking for support from the government and the managing committee of the school. However, if they were really willing to do something, they even could collect some money perhaps 100 taka from each student and some more from the teachers and managing committee members to improve the WASH facilities for the girl students and women teachers.

## Meeting with BWDB

**Md. Abdul Mannan Khan, Subdivisional Engineer, and BWDB staff, about 20**

**Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB)** is a government agency which is responsible for surface water and groundwater management in Bangladesh. Since IWRM is one of the main components of the Watershed project, BWDB is considered as an important stakeholder. It is working in Bangladesh from before the birth of Bangladesh, by then called Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). In the meeting, there were around 30 people. Among them, around 20 people were from BWDB including high level officers, and others were from the GWA-B team, DORP team, and some CSO members.



In Bhola, currently BWDB is running two projects. One for hilsha protection and to increase the production, and the other one is protection from riverbank erosion. BWDB officers informed that the mighty Meghna is a serious concern for the people of Bhola. Around five lac (half a million) people of

Bhola are vulnerable to riverbank erosion. BWDB has constructed 250 km of embankments in Bhola. Presently it has a contract to construct embankment strengthening on 12.5 km riverbank in three upazilas of Bhola of which 11.5 km is already completed. In Dhania union, by the initiative of BWDB, geo textile bags have been dumped for around 1.5 km long stretch. Later there will be cement blocks to construct a more sustainable protective embankment. BWDB targets that all people will have embankment protection. The Local government institutions are also helping to reach the target.

Then the GWA-B team asked about the plans for the people who are still vulnerable to riverbank erosion and tidal floods. Officers informed that BWDB has constructed 125 embankments on the banks of Megha of which 16 in Bhola. Two divisions of BWDB are working in Bhola. One in Bhola Sadar Upazila and the other one is in Char Fasson Upazila, to the south. However, BWDB knows the risks of riverbank erosion in Bhola for its people, still, there is only a limited budget. Soil embankments to protect the people from tidal flood are not possible, by lack of enough suitable soil. BWDB has submitted a plan and design for 8 km more embankment to the higher authority of Bhola. Verbally the officers committed that whenever the design and budget will be approved, they will take initiative to extend the embankment area in the erosion prone area where most vulnerable people live. Bhola island is only 7 feet higher than the sea level.



Regarding the participation of women in embankment construction work, officers told that Bhola is a conservative area where people don't like to see women work in public, especially work in roads or embankments. Women themselves are also not very willing to work publicly. They prefer to stay in the house and do household work, whilst men will earn and run the family. Then GWA-B team shared that talking with the villagers they found that women, especially poor women are willing to do income earning work but there are few opportunities. That time BWDB officers agreed. The situation in Bhola is compared with Noakhali and the CDSP projects, where poor women were organised in Landless Contracting Societies (LCSs), which are very successful in doing good work. If an NGO would take the initiative to create this opportunity for women in Bhola, that would be good for them and also for the quality of the work. The GWA-B team then noted that not only NGOs, BWDB also can involve women in their work. It is true that women would not be able to carry the heavy sand-bags but they can be involved with the work like soil cutting or planting trees on the embankment. So, the authorities need to change their mind-set and involve women who are looking for work. The Watershed Project Partner DORP and CSO Water Management Citizens' Committee and NGO Network also can support BWDB to do that.

## Visit to Cluster Village Kanainagar and FGD

In Dhaniya and Vedhuria Union, there are three and four cluster villages respectively. Locally they are called *Gucchagram*. In these cluster villages, dwellers are the people who have lost their land to the river. The owner of these cluster villages is the government. Government made some small houses for these people and they own those houses giving some money to the local union parishad chairperson. The place was allotted for houses for ten families but twenty houses were built. So, ten families are without registration papers. All the *Gucchagram* dwellers had their own household and agricultural land earlier, some were even well-to-do, but now they somehow only manage to survive.



During the field visit to Bhola in 2017, GWA-B heard about the vulnerable WASH situation in cluster villages from the CSO members and FGD participants. Also, during this visit, in the coaching session with WMCC, CSO members shared again about the vulnerable WASH situation in cluster villages.

GWA-B team, along with DORP team and some CSO members visited the Kanainagar *Gucchagram* under Dhania Union to see the real situation. That *Gucchagram* has been established in 2009. There are total 28 families living in 20 houses over there. To get those houses, each family gave 10,000 taka to the Dhania Union Parishad Chairperson. For these 28 families, there are two deep tube-wells and eight toilets. It seems very nice and enough to hear but the reality is different. The houses are very low in height with two small compartments, only one door and without any window. The floor of the house is lower even than the yard. Inside the house, it is very dark and suffocating. Though they have electricity connection, electricity is not available all the time. In summer season, the houses remain very hot. Since the roof top is very low, the dwellers remain scared of using electric fans. And during the rainy season, rain water enters into the house easily, because there is the lowest point. The house floor and the yard both remain damp. Though there is a deep tube-well standing, it is damaged and the water is saline and with arsenic. People collect water from another nearby tube-well to drink. Toilets are all damaged: the tanks are full and overflowing. During rainy season, when water logs, toilets become inundated and the dirt comes out with the water. That time it becomes very difficult to live there. Men, women, children, elderly, all suffer very much. Sometimes the water

clogs at knee level and people have no toilet facility at all. When the toilets are inundated, women have to walk far in the night to other toilets.

There is no ration card or allowance system or safety net scheme for the people who are living in cluster villages, though they wish to have it. Almost all the families are indebted to some amount. Men are mostly involved with fishing and work as day labourers. Women are willing to work to earn



some money but there is no opportunity for them. One of them is a tailor. Men are also not very keen to allow women to work outside. Women think that if there is an opportunity, it is possible to convince men. But the work should be within Bhola, better within the same union where their residence is. The nearby school is half a kilometre away from the Kanainagar cluster village. They prefer to send boys to high school, instead of girls, because boys will take the responsibility of parents in their old age, not girls. They have not heard of free education for girls. A lot of money is required for dowry to marry their daughters off. Cluster villages are not represented in the CSOs. So, their issues are rarely mentioned in the CSO meetings or coaching sessions or in advocacy meetings.



## Meeting with the Dhania Union Parishad Chairperson and Members

Since the Union Parishad (UP) Chairperson is the supreme decision maker of the union, it is important to involve him in any development effort. Dhania UP Chairperson is involved with the Watershed project from the beginning. So, like the previous times, this time also the GWA-B team, along with the DORP team and some CSO members met with him and some of the Members, to discuss about the project's activities in Dhania, what are the gender and social inclusion issues of those activities, and how can they accelerate the activities in a gender responsive and inclusive way.

In the meeting there was discussion about gender responsive and socially inclusive WASH budget, gender and social inclusion aspects of WASH and IWRM, WASH facilities in the schools especially for girls, and who actually are the excluded and vulnerable people in Dhania Union. Also, the unhealthy WASH situation in Kanainagar cluster village is discussed, and all agree it is disgusting.



The Dhania UP chairperson tells that many toilets are sanctioned, and that locations are decided by him with the Upazilla, by visiting all the places together. He agreed that he will consider the gender and inclusion issues of WASH and IWRM. Then he especially committed that in the next WASH budget (2019-20) he will keep a separate allocation for improving the WASH facilities in the Kanainagar Cluster village and other cluster villages. Also, to improve the sanitation facilities of the nomadic community will be the first priority in the next WASH budget. He will take the initiative to list the number of families who have no toilet, or use open toilets, or whose toilets water seal is broken. Then he will talk with the Upazila Parishad about the WASH related issues of the people living in the cluster villages and on riverbanks. He also acknowledged the limited budget. There are a lot of demands from people's side for WASH, roads, drainage, culverts, sewerage, schools, etc. Not all demands can be fulfilled.

In the same building of the Union Parishad, a training was ongoing by **Plan International**, where we were invited to give a short talk to the participants. The facilitator was Md.Zaheduzzaman, Upazila WASH Coordinator, South Asia WASH Results Project 11, Bhola.

## Mixed Group FGD in Korarhat

In Korarhat village of Dhania union, a men and women mixed group Focus Group Discussion (FGD) has been organized to discuss about the gender and social inclusion issues of WASH and IWRM in Dhania Union. Altogether there were nearly 30 participants in the FGD: half of them men and half of them women. The GWA-B team, DORP team and some CSO member were present there.

All the women participants spoke of themselves as housewives but almost all of them do kitchen gardening, livestock raising, tree plantation, and home-based agricultural and fish processing work. Men are fishermen, farmers, day labourers, and businessmen. To learn more about the gender division of work, at first the men participants were asked to share what tasks the women do<sup>3</sup>.

### Men list what women do:

- collect water,
- cook food,
- take care of the children and
- take care of other household members.

### What men forgot to mention about women's work:

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| – cut grass for cattle       | – embroider tops (caps for men)             |
| – look after poultry         | – plant trees                               |
| – take care of their husband | – clean toilets                             |
| – do homestead gardening     | – carry food to children in school          |
| – clean everything           | – care for elderly                          |
| – wash the clothes           | – supervise homework of children for school |
| – sew and repair clothes     | – collect fuel (reeds from river bank)      |
| – stitch kantas (blankets)   |   |

### Farmers' wives, in paddy cultivation:

- weeding in the field
- all post harvesting work in paddy (cleaning rice, washing it, parboiling, drying, bring to mill)

### Fisher women:

- Prepares everything the husband fisher has to take (gamcha (cloth), torch, clothes, bucket, nets, his food)
- Call her husband early in the morning and encourage him to go
- When he comes back she cleans the fish, brings a lot of clean water to clean the fish, the tools and the yard.
- Repair nets. (the husband sells the fish in the market).

Then women were asked to share what men do, and they told about the different jobs of the men. It was found that women missed nothing because actually men do only a limited number of tasks. It is

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<sup>3</sup> Because all this is discussed in the large mixed group, the information is quite valid, since nobody opposed it.

also true that some work is done by both men and women. But the most important difference is that **women work on average 15-16 hours while men work 8-10 hours.**



In terms of access to water and sanitation, all the FGD participants are in a vulnerable situation. They have access to safe drinking water from a DTW, but for other uses, they depend on ponds, rivers or canals. Not everybody has a tube-well nearby. The surface water is not safe. Some ponds are used for fish culture, in which toxic chemicals are used. River and canal water are also sometimes highly polluted. Water for irrigation of paddy may be available, but it is brought with the help of pumping, and is expensive. Apart from rice, other crops are tomatoes, pumpkins and reddish. Women irrigate home gardens by bucket.

Water for the drinking and household work is mostly collected by the women and girls but sometimes boys also collect water from the tube-well.

Among the participants, only three have an own toilet only for their own family. Others use shared toilets, mostly with two to three families. They do not clean toilets regularly, not even every week. Most of the toilets are far from the house without any direct water supply and hand wash facilities. Having MHM facilities in the toilets is a day dream for women, and not even considered by men.

Korarhat village is located on the bank of the river, and the villagers are very scared of river erosion, the biggest problem of Bhola. They regularly face tidal floods during spring tide. Additionally, when the fish stock is low in the river, their income is also low and they have to borrow money from different sources. Women are very interested in paid work in the outside even soil cutting work, but there is lack of opportunity for them to do work.

We discuss what the problems are in the village. Women were more vocal in mentioning issues as well as solutions.

**Major issues women raise in the FGD:**

Women	
positive	negative
Good electricity	Riverbank erosion resulting in many homeless people
Good roads	Lack of fish in the river
Tube wells with good drinking water	All are indebted
Lots of culverts to solve water logging	Women would like employment, for example in digging soil, but there is no demand for their labour
Many schools	No employment for young adults
Many mosks	No fuel (to be collected from reeds in the river)
	No clinic
	It takes 100 taka to reach the hospital

**Suggestions of women, to improve the situation:**

A garment industry close-by
Sewing machines
More livestock and poultry
Low cost education
Employment for women and adolescents, for example in earth work



## Day 3 Tuesday 11 September

### Meeting with LGED (Local Government Engineering Department)

The GWA-B team, along with DORP and some CSO members met with the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) Mr Abdus Salam. Since LGED is working with the small-scale water resource management, it is an important stakeholder of the Watershed project. The objective of the meeting with LGED officer was to discuss the gender and social inclusion issues of LGED's activities related with the Watershed project.

With that view, the GWA-B team talked about the importance of gender and inclusion in the Watershed project relating to WASH and IWRM, and the aim to leave no-one behind.

The LGED officer informed us about the responsibilities of LGED, and mentioned:

- Small water reservoirs, of maximum 1000 hectares (larger are the responsibility of BWDB)
- 4800 km of rural roads
- Sector water management for roads and educational buildings
- Dredging of khals
- Embankments of areas smaller than 1000 hectares, these are small chars with very poor people, for whom the embankments are truly life-saving
- Sluiceways, many are needed
- Maintenance of roads, which is done by women labourers, 1000 women in Bhola do this work
- Construction of bazar roads, by women
- Construction of small buildings, fish-sheds, for the rural markets, also by women
- Construction of toilet blocks, separate for men and for women, at bazars.



When there was discussion about constructing educational institutions, they were asked to construct separate toilets for girls and boys and girls toilets would be with MHM facilities. Buildings should be constructed in a way that children with disabilities can nevertheless access to the buildings. Then the LGED officer was asked about the participation of women in LGED's activities. The officer informed us that NGOs are forming the Cooperatives (Labour Contracting Societies), who LGED then involve in canal digging, embankment construction, sluice gate construction, road maintenance, bazar construction<sup>4</sup> and some other activities such as tree-plantation. The women earn Tk 200 per day. When small chars have to be selected to get embankments, the officer tells us, that they choose those places, where there are lots of poor people.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Abdus Salam originates from Bhola. He tells us about a Women's Bazar Ramnabad Bazar in Monpura.

## Meeting with: Veduria UP Chairperson and members

### Veduria UP Chairperson, Md Tazul Islam

Since Union Parishad (UP) chairperson is the supreme decision maker of the union, it is important to involve him with any development effort. Veduria UP Chairperson, Md Tazul Islam is involved with the Watershed project from the beginning of its activities over there. Like the previous times, the GWA-B team met with the Veduria UP Chairperson and Members, to discuss about the Watershed project's activities, what are the gender and social inclusion issues of those activities, and how the activities can be improved in a gender responsive and socially inclusive way.

In the meeting there was discussion about women members' participation in Union level decision making, gender responsive and socially inclusive WASH budget, gender and social inclusion aspects of WASH and IWRM, vulnerable WASH situation in Kanainagar cluster village, WASH facilities in the school especially for girls, and who are mainly the excluded people in Veduria Union.

Veduria UP chairperson and members informed that women members of the UP participate in all the meetings of the UP and can express their opinion regarding any matter to make decisions. The chairperson and the members of the UP always consider the need of the women, poor people, children, elderly, and other vulnerable groups with especial attention in time of implementing any activity. This is not an easy task for them but they are trying their best.

The chairperson agreed with the GWA-B team that in Vedhuria union, WASH and IWRM related problems include water logging, lack of sanitation, lack of hygiene in the schools, no opportunity for women to be involved with income generating activities, insecure public sphere for the adolescent girls, lack of WASH facilities in the cluster villages, riverbank erosion etc.

In Veduria union, there are 4 cluster villages, GWA-B team did not visit them but shared the experience of visiting the Kanainagar cluster village in Dhaniala Union. Then the Veduria UP Chairperson and Members agreed that the situation of WASH facilities is similar in all the cluster villages because all of them were constructed in a rush and after that there was no maintenance. At the same time, a lot of people are living in a small area. So, it is not possible that everything is fine. He also agreed with the GWA-B team that women and children are suffering a lot when there is water logging and toilets are inundated especially in the night. Then GWA-B team asked the Chairperson to take care of the WASH facilities of the people who are living in the cluster villages of Veduria union. In response to that the chairperson orally committed that he will consider the issue in future and will ask DPHE to select cluster villages to sanction tube-wells and toilets.

The Chairperson also added that riverbank erosion in Veduria union is severe. The number of people losing their land is increasing every day. This year alone 40 families (100 persons) lost their land. The Union Parishad, on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh, gives the new landless people food and money and looks for *khas* land for them. But the area of government *khas* land, remaining in Veduria

union is small, which makes it difficult to increase the number of cluster villages and improve facilities. Since 10 years 500 people received *khas* land to build their own house on it. Of the current 40 families 5% have their own money and don't need help. Two families are women headed households, who get priority. Consequently, a lot of people are migrating to Dhaka and other closer-by places getting no place to live and earn an income in Bhola. Often only the men migrate and women, children and elderly people stay behind and suffer most.



In the cluster villages, the number of women who get possession of the house by their name is also very few<sup>5</sup>. Women get Vulnerable Group Development Cards<sup>6</sup>. Some elderly people and widows, who are living in cluster villages, are getting elderly and widow allowance from the government.

The Chairman, Md. Tazul Islam, is an old man with a snow-white beard. He tells us that he is the head teacher (retired), and that he also lost all his land into the Meghna, in 1970, at the time of the worst ever recorded cyclone, when 500,000 people in Bangladesh lost their lives.

Veduria UP Chairperson and Members are very happy with the activities of CSO members, DORP and GWA-B, that all are working for sustainable and inclusive WASH and IWRM, for the poor people in his Union, but the limited budget is their main problem. If there would be enough money, they could do a lot of work for everybody. Nevertheless, the Chairperson and the Members are very committed to support the CSOs to ensure that Watershed project will be successful in Bhola Sadar Upazila.

<sup>5</sup> As can be read on page 22, most people have no title deed of the house in the cluster village Kanainagar, even whilst they paid for it. So, also most men have no title deeds.

<sup>6</sup> In Kanainagar, the people told us that nobody had any card, when we asked.

## Visit and See Some Achievements of the Watershed Project

The Watershed project's activities started about one and a half year ago in Bhola, therefore some achievements are in place and visible. The GWA-B team, together with DORP team and some CSO members visited some of those achievements. For instance:



The CSO members are facilitating and encouraging budget tracking in Dhania and Veduria Union to ensure transparency and accountability of Union Parishad budgeting, resulting from open budget sessions. In these unions the budget for WASH is now separate and visible, as well as increased. The budgets are painted on the outside walls, so everybody can read it. This inspired other Union Parishads and two of them are now following the same process. One of them is **Alinagar**, of which we visited the UP building (see pictures).



- Because of the efforts of CSO members, the DORP team and the GWA-B team, the river-nomad people have received a deep tube-well, which has been installed in the river bank and it provides them with safe drinking water. However, the GWA-B team also found that there one other deep tube-well at the same embankment nearby. When we asked about this, we were told that the Bede are not allowed to use that one. Now the people, living on boats, are happy with the DTW, so that they don't need to drink the river water. They are grateful to the Watershed project. Nevertheless, it goes to show that they are badly looked down upon, and a lot has to change in people's mindsets to achieve the SDGs which are all about equality.



The Bede people also need toilets, at least one block close to the new DTW. The CSOs have not yet managed to convince the service holders to construct this, even though verbally there may be a commitment. On our walk along the embankment, we also saw two well-maintained toilets close to the new DTW. Again, we heard that these are not to be used by the Bede.



Toilets on the embankment, that Bedes are not allowed to use

- A lot of people of Dhania union are in threat to lose their land because of riverbank erosion. That's why CSO members were advocating with BWDB to extend the protection of the embankment stretch over there. Because of limitation in budget, BWDB dumped geo-textile bags to protect the people and is considering to do more sustainable protection with concrete blocks later.

Besides, whilst walking for some miles over the embankment, the GWA-B team talked with the



The BWDB sand bags are just visible above the water level at high tide

people randomly to collect information about their WASH facilities, livelihood opportunities, way of living, and other social issues.

## Day 4 Wednesday 12 September

### Coaching of CSO - NGO Network and DORP-Bhola

**Facilitator: Joke Muylwijk**

**Translator: Khadiza Akter**

**Location: The office of DORP-Bhola**

The total number of participants in the first CSO coaching session was 20, of which 7 were from DORP (5 men, 2 woman), 11 from NGO Network (5 women, 6 men), and 2 from GWA-B (2 women).



Partha S. K. from DORP opened the meeting welcoming everybody including the GWA-B team. He informed that GWA-B is also an implementing partner of the Watershed project whose responsibility is to build the capacity of the CSOs to do gender responsive and socially inclusive lobby and advocacy for WASH and IWRM. Then he reminded everybody that last year also GWA-B team conducted a coaching session with the NGO Network members on gender and social inclusion and informed about how to include the WASH issues of poor women and men, children, elderly, people with disability, and other vulnerable groups in the lobby and advocacy messages for WASH and IWRM. GWA-B team also visited different places and talked with many people to collect Information. So, this time there will be follow up including some other issues. He concluded his opening speech thanking everybody and asking to introduce themselves. Then everybody introduced themselves.

After the introduction of everybody, Joke started the main coaching session and to break the ice she initiated the discussion about how are they feeling as the member of Watershed CSO-NGO Network and how are they doing. All of them replied that they feel very good being the member of the Watershed CSO-NGO Network and they are very satisfied with their work. They are watching some positive and desired changes because of their effort.

After the ice breaking session, they were asked what they can remember from the last years' coaching session discussion on gender and social inclusion conducted by Gender and Water Alliance – Bangladesh. They shared the following issues:

- Who are the marginalized people or vulnerable groups accessing WASH and IWRM services.

- How marginalized people or vulnerable groups are in disadvantaged position in terms of WASH and IWRM services.
- How much money is allocated for WASH in the annual budget of the Union Parishad; how much is for the poor and marginalized people; is the budget allocation in participatory way, or only the chairperson decides; how can there be gender budgeting and why it is important; etc.
- Water is scarce but we are wasting a lot of water. So one day there will be severe scarcity of safe water to drink. So, to keep the water available enough, we need to manage it properly.
- The discriminatory social responsibility of men and women in the society. Women are working a lot compared to men because of unequal power relations.
- Use of water in different sectors and the problem of sanitation among different groups of people like women, children, elderly, people with disabilities and others.
- How to preserve water and save the environment.
- How to include people who are not included and achieve the tagline “leave no one behind”.
- Gender issues of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

After receiving the responses of participants, Joke started the main session discussing about the water use in Bangladesh. She drew a picture and showed that among all the water in the world, only a little amount is fresh, and not saline. And in Bangladesh, of the available fresh water, 96% is used for Agriculture, 2% is used for industries and only 2% is for drinking and domestic purpose. Therefore, the availability of fresh water to fulfil the most important need is very limited. So, we need to preserve fresh water and use it in a sustainable way. Otherwise, there will be huge scarcity of fresh water for our next generations. Then there was discussion about the percentage of men and women water users in different sector. Participants responded:

Water use in Agriculture - 90% by men and 10% by women

Water use in industry - 90% by men and 10% by women

Water use in domestic use – 15% by men and 85% by women

Therefore, now if we see, women are responsible for collecting drinking water and using water for domestic purposes, which is most important for our survival. But if we see the decision-making level, 95% decision makers are men who makes decision about fresh water. So those decision makers need to listen to the women who are using a very small percentage of the water for very important purposes. They need to know what these women need and what they think about water management. Otherwise, there will be bad decisions made. How can they make a good decision, if they don't know what these women need? And, day by day, the fresh water is becoming scarcer and scarcer. So, this will be the women and girls who will suffer most.

Then there was a discussion about the objectives of Watershed project which is “Empowering Citizens”, and activities all the partners and CSOs doing to ensure “Leave no one behind”. So, the participants were asked to think about the issues of the people who are left behind from WASH and

IWRM services and raise those issues in time of doing lobby and advocacy so that the vulnerable will benefit and equality will be ensured.

Consequently, there was discussion about SDGs. The common goal of all the SDGs is “Equality for all” by 2030 which means, by 2030 all the people will be equal and will have equal access to everything. And it is not only in Bangladesh, but around the world. All the countries will be equal too. Then the participants were asked to say what they know about SDGs. What they say in brief:

- There are total 17 SDGs with 169 targets and a number of indicators.
- These 17 SDGs are the collaboration of all kind of issues to live well and equally.
- If we want to achieve these SDGs, we all need to work together to reach them.
- Since these SDGs talk about equality, we all would need to work for all groups of people especially people who are vulnerable like women, poor, nomadic, children, elderly, people with disability, and others.
- We need to find out what are the problems they face and how these problems can be overcome.
- We also need to think about our future generation’s need.
- And to do so, we need to work in sustainable way.

Then Joke said that equality is very demanding and very challenging. Governments have to work a lot and Civil Society and all the people need to help the governments to achieve it.

Further the gender issues of SDG 5, 6 and 13 were discussed because these three SDGs are closely connected with the Watershed project and very contextual with Bhola.

In brief the following was discussed:

#### **Goal 5: Gender Equality and empowerment of women and girls**

This one is the real gender-SDG but all other SDGs are also related to gender. In Bangladesh, the government is also developing indicators on this issue. Goal 5 speaks specifically to governments’ commitments to: end discrimination and gender-based violence; eliminate child marriage and female genital mutilation (probably it is not conducted in Bangladesh); ensure access to sexual and reproductive health care; protect women and girls’ reproductive rights; eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal number of girls and boys go to universities and girls also go to vocational training that will increase their capacity; expand women’s economic opportunities and recognize their rights to resources – access to land and other resources has to be equal; reduce the burdens of unpaid care work on women and girls. Unpaid care work is very important work. We have to care for this work and it is done by women. We have to share it with family, in the village. In MDGs, there was very little about gender, but now in SDGs there are lots of gender indicators. This equality is not only between men and women. It is amongst women, amongst men and amongst the country. As civil society, we have to help governments to achieve this goal in all sectors.

#### **Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation for All**

Access to water and sanitation is important for all. Globally 1.8 billion people are still without safe water (not contaminated), and 2.4 billion people still without toilets. These are very much gender issues. As we know, men are easy for going anywhere, but for women toilets are a necessity. It is

very much needed. And that is the difference. That water is more important for women, because they bear the responsibility for it in the household, is known to you all.

**Goal 13: Climate Action**

In the rural areas of most developing countries, it is mainly women and girls who are responsible for fuel and water collection for their families. When water and fuel is scarce due to climate change (droughts, increasing salinity, deforestation) women and girls need to spend several hours a day trying to access water and fuel for their daily needs, losing out on income, education, and rest. Also, worldwide, of disasters, women and children are more than 80% of the victims.

**Groupwork:**

Like with the WMCC members, there was a group work session with the NGO Network members.

The participants were divided in 2 groups. They were asked to discuss the following two questions:

1. Did the situation of WATSAN in Bhola Sadar upazilla improve, or do you expect it to improve this year and in 2019?
2. What did you contribute to the improvement of the situation?

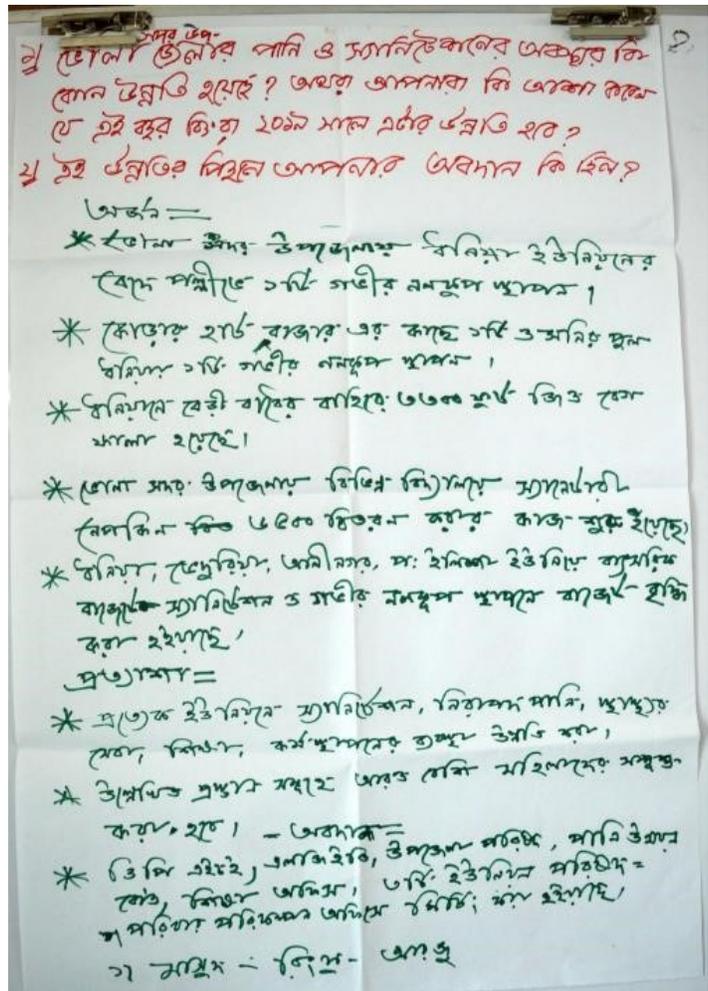
After the group work, one person from each group presented their group work.

**Group 1**

**Members:** Ringqu, Arju and Md. Masud, presenter

**Answer to Question 1:**

- 1 deep tube-well has been sanctioned for the nomadic people on the riverbank under Dhania Union of Bhola Sadar Upazila
- 1 deep tube-well in Korarhat market, and 1 deep tube-well Shonir Pul under Dhania Union has been installed for the poor and marginalized people.
- Geo-textile bag has been dumped over 3300 feet riverbank to reduce the erosion and protect the people.
- In different schools of Bhola Sadar Upazila, 6500 sanitary napkins have been distributed for the girl students.
- Allocation in the WASH budget has been increased in Dhania, Vedhuria, Alinagar and West Ilissha Union for installing deep tube-well and sanitary toilet.





**Answer to Question 2:**

- Meeting in DPHE, LGED, BWDB, Upazila Parishad, Education office, 3 UP, and Family planning office.

**Expectations:**

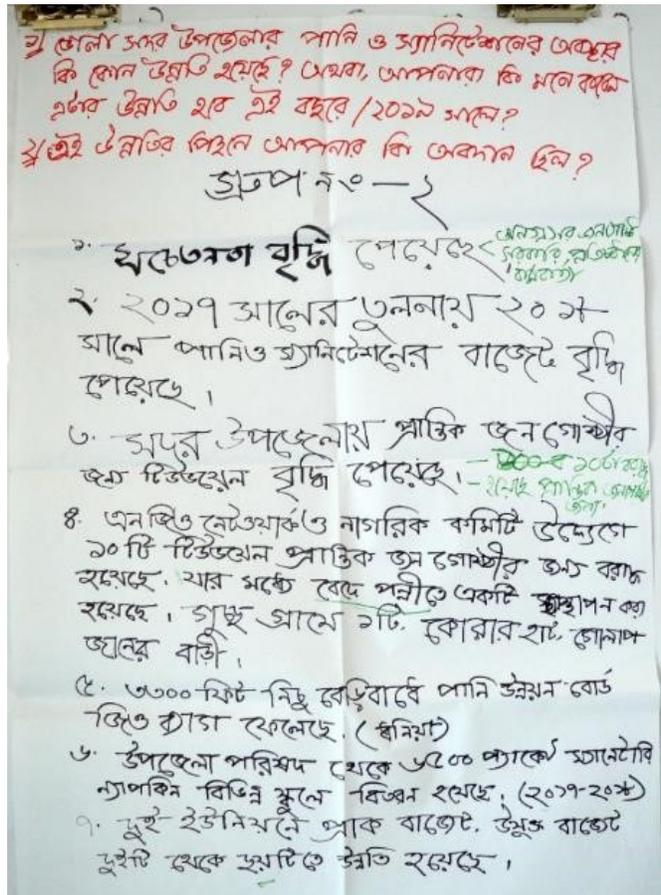
- Water, sanitation, health care, education, and employment condition in Dhania and Vedhuria union will be improved.
- More women will be involved in different aforementioned sections/fields.

**Group 2**

**Members:** Liton, Tania, Mannan, Munmun presenter

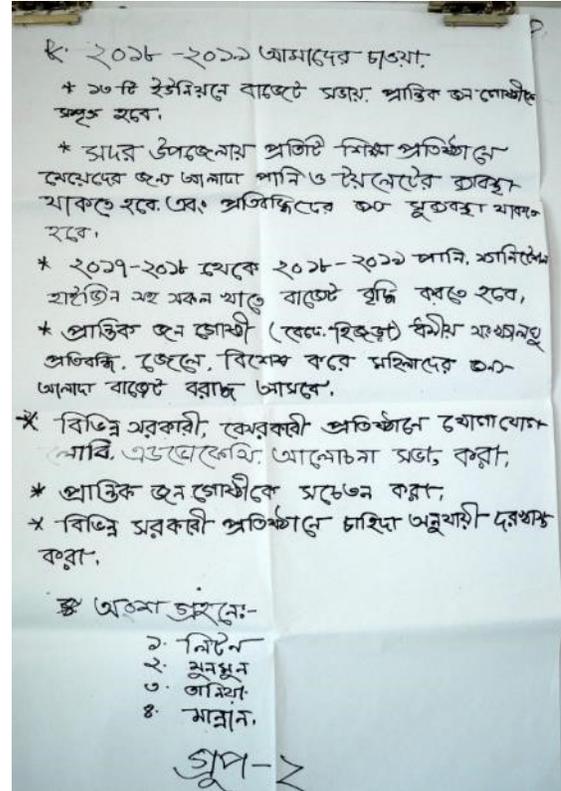
**Answer to Question 1:**

- Awareness of the marginalized people, officers of the government departments and CSO members have increased on gender and social inclusion issues of WASH and IWRM.
- Compared to 2017, the Union Parishad budget allocation for water and sanitation has been increased.
- As a result of the lobby and advocacy effort of the CSOs, in Bhola Sadar



Upazilla, the number of tube-wells sanctioned is increased and 10 have been sanctioned for the marginalized people.

- 1 deep tube-well has been installed in the riverbank for the nomadic people. 1 deep tube-well has been installed in the cluster village and 1 in the house of CSO member Golapjan for the poor people.
- Geo-textile bag has been dumped over 3300 feet riverbank to reduce the erosion and protect the people by the initiative of BWDB.
- In different schools of Bhola Sadar Upazila, 6500 sanitary napkins have been distributed for the girl students by the initiative of Upazila parishad.
- 4 new Union Parishads who are not included in the Watershed project have been inspired to do pre-budget and open budget sessions seeing the example of Dhania and Vedhuria union.



**Answer to Question 2: (demands)**

- All the 13 Unions of Bhola Sadar Upazilla will organize open budget sessions where the marginalized people of the union will be present.
- In all the educational institutes of Bhola Sadar Upazilla, there will be separate toilets for girls and those school buildings and toilets will be disability-friendly.
- Budget will be increased for water, sanitation, hygiene and other sectors in the 2018-19 budget.
- There will be separate allocation for the marginalized people (nomadic people, hijra, religious minority, people with disability, fisherman, and women especially).



- There will be a discussion session, lobby and advocacy meeting in different government and non-government institutions and departments.
- Awareness of the marginalized people on WASH will be raised.
- Apply in different government departments and institutions according to the need of the people.

## Empowerment approach

Though the main objective of the Watershed project is: Empowering Citizen, till now they have not received any coaching session where ‘Empowerment’ has been discussed in detail. So Khadiza used the remaining time to discuss the four interrelated elements of empowerment in brief. These four elements are:

- Economic empowerment
- Social empowerment
- Political empowerment
- Social empowerment

All these empowerment elements were discussed in a participatory way. Participants were allowed to share their opinion regarding all those empowerment elements from the watershed and Bhola context. See **Annex 3** for the explanation of the empowerment approach.

At the end of the coaching session, there were closing remark from the GWA-B team and NGO Network members.



## Debriefing with DORP and CSO Members

After the coaching session with NGO Network, there was a debriefing session where some of the DORP team and a good number of WMCC members were present. The debriefing note is attached in the **Annex 2**. After the debriefing session DORP team and CSO members were asked to share their feedback and recommendations. Then they said that they are very happy with the activities of GWA-B and it is helping them to do lobby and advocacy in gender responsive and socially inclusive way. They also demanded more coaching session from GWA-B on gender and social inclusion, a next time.



Char Kukri Mukri in the South of Bhola

## Annex 1: Programme Schedule

Day 0 Saturday 8 September 2018			
Time	Activity	location	
19.00	Sadarghat Board on Launch to Bhola (arrive well in time: 5.00 pm.)	Port	
Day 1 Sunday 9 September			
7.00 am	Arrive in Bhola and go to the hotel.	Hotel Papillon	
9.00	Meet with the team of DORP, who has arranged the venue for the coaching event, and for the CSOs to be present.	Hotel Papillon	
10.00 – 1.00	<p>Coaching WMCC Water Management Citizen’s Committee  <u>Summarised the crucial themes for the coaching are:</u></p> <p><b>Recap of last time:</b>            Scarcity of water: different uses            Division of work related to water            Different interests of women and men, of vulnerable groups            Leave no one behind            Time use of women and men on average days            Key issues you need to know for advocacy, to convince politicians and decision-makers</p> <p><b>New subjects:</b>            Government policy relate to WATSAN in Bhola: what is changed and what was achieved compared to last year?            Who are visiting the service providers?            Do you think they are listening to you?            Do they understand gender and inclusion issues?            Do they understand that women have more needs for water and sanitation?            Are they asking women their opinion?</p> <p><b>Groupwork:</b> Divide in 3 groups.            Discuss the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did the situation of WATSAN in Bhola Sadar upazilla improve, or do you expect it to improve this year and in 2019?</li> <li>2. What did you contribute to make it improve?</li> <li>3. In the afternoon we will see the DPHE officer. What shall we ask him/her?</li> </ol> <p><b>If time permits:</b>            Empowerment approach, with four interrelated elements.            Closing words by deputy chairperson of WMCC</p>	Venue: Star Garden	
1.00	In case participants are interested, some individual talks will follow		
1.30-2.30	Lunch		
3.00	<p>Meeting with <b>DPHE</b>            The discussion is open, but some questions have been listed. Hopefully some interesting questions also have been suggested in the coaching session this morning.</p>	In DPHE office	
4.30 – 6.00	Transect walk through a rural village, which is not included in the project, asking some people if they are willing to sit with us for some time for inquiries to talk about their access to safe water and improved sanitation, their position and need for other water (agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, cattle keeping, small enterprise, etc.). See Checklist	(Close-by Village to be selected)	

6.30 or 7.00 pm	Back in Hotel Reviewing the day, Making notes and reports; Planning for tomorrow	Hotel	
<b>Day 2 Monday 10 September</b>			
9.00 – 10.00	Visit to <b>Ukilpara</b> Government Primary School and Ukilpara Girls Secondary School offered by the <b>DPHE</b> officer to see the WASH facilities in the school.	Ukilpara Schools	
10.00 – 11.00	Meeting with: <b>BWDB</b> The discussion is open, but some questions have been listed. Hopefully some interesting questions also have been suggested in the coaching session yesterday morning.	BWDB Guestroom	
11.15-12.30	Visit Cluster village ( <b>Guchchagram</b> )	Dhania Union	
12.30- 1.30	Meeting with Union Chairperson of the Union <b>Dhania</b> The discussion is open, but some questions have been listed. Hopefully some interesting questions also have been suggested in the coaching session yesterday morning.	Union Parishad, Dhania	
1.30-2.30	Lunch		
3.00-5.00 pm	Transect walk and Focus Group Discussion (mixed). See checklist	Dhania Union	
5.00-5.30	Inquiries with one or two persons who live in the <b>cluster village</b>	Dhania Union	
5.30 pm	Back to Hotel Reviewing the day, Making notes and reports, Planning for tomorrow		
<b>Day 3 Tuesday 11 September</b>			
10.00	Meeting with <b>LGED</b> Local Government Engineering Department	LGED Office	
11.30-1.00	Meeting with: <b>Veduria</b> UP Chairperson and members The discussion is open, but some questions have been listed. By now we have more specific questions.	Union Parishad, Veduria	
	Lunch		
3.00-5.30	Visit and see some achievements of the Watershed project	Dhania and Veduria	
5.30	Back to Hotel. Reviewing the day, notes and reports, Planning for tomorrow		
<b>Day 4 Wednesday 12 September</b>			
10.00-1.00	Coaching of NGO Network members <u>See Day 1, 10.00 – 1.00, similar programme.</u>	DORP Office Bhola	
1.30	Lunch and prepare for debriefing		
3.00-4.00	<b>Debriefing</b> with DORP and those of CBO Network and WMCC who are interested. They are all invited.	In office DORP	
4.00	Travel to the South of Bhola, to Char Fasson, to see the whole Bhola Island, only the GWA team and Jahangir of WMCC	Char Fasson Hotel	
<b>Day 5 Thursday 13 September</b>			
	By boat to Char Kukri Mukri, and back to Bhola Sadar by car.		
	Night Launch to Dhaka		
<b>Day 6 Friday 14 September</b>			
	Arrive at Sadarghat, Dhaka		

## Annex 2: Debriefing note

### Debriefing Note

#### Visit to Bhola by team of GWA-B, 9-12 September 2018, four days

**Participants:**

<b>GWA:</b>	<b>Joke Muylwijk</b>
	<b>Khadiza Akter</b>
<b>DORP Dhaka:</b>	<b>Partha S.K.</b>
	<b>Dr. Sylvana</b>
<b>DORP Bhola:</b>	<b>Md. Abdul Mannan</b>
	<b>Tarun Kanti Das</b>

*The GWA-B team spent four days in Bhola Sadar, mostly in the two unions selected for the Watershed project: Dhania and Veduria. On the last afternoon we organised a Debriefing session for DORP staff and for the CSOs which came to the coaching sessions earlier.*

*Joke read her notes, and Khadiza translated it, and added details for clarification.*

We are happy to see you all here at this session in which we will briefly inform you about our findings of the two coaching sessions, the various visits to villages, Focus Group Discussions, meetings with service providers, interviews, and our observations.

The two days coaching sessions were both interesting and different. This time the Water Management Citizens Committee was headed by Mr. Ruhul Jahangir, as Deputy Secretary. He accompanied us to most of the visits.

The meetings with the Government Agencies, service providers and the two Union Parishads, were also interesting, and we found much interest in the work of the Watershed Project, even though it was also mentioned that they would deal with the WASH committee of the Upazilla Parishad, a standing committee. But these committees are sometimes dormant. Yesterday we looked at the DTW of the Bede, the sand-bag pre-embankment and the Budgets on the walls, which are to be seen as resulting from the project, so something to be proud of.

Here follow the subjects:

#### Drinking water:

Like last time we found overall the drinking water of the deep tube-wells to be fine: no arsenic, no salinity, no iron, and also no dry tube-wells. One exception is the cluster village (Gucchagram) which we visited, where the water was saline and with iron, not suitable to drink, whilst other, safe tubewells were 1,5 km away.

The Bede (river nomads) were lacking a tubewell last time, but now DPHE has, thanks to the project and advocacy work of the WMCC, installed one deep tube well and hand pump for them, close to the place where they usually stay with their boats. They are very happy with this high-quality water.

#### Sanitation:

The sanitation situation is still poor everywhere in the two unions: The latrines are katcha, and with the rains and waterlogging during monsoon, they overflow and spread the sludge everywhere. DPHE informed us that 89 or 93 % of the people have good toilets, but we visited people with unhygienic toilets, which they also had to share with some villagers.

In the cluster village there are ten toilets, but they were constructed very low, and are now, after only 9 years, totally unusable and a threat for the public health. Now women have to find some place in the night or walk far, all risky.

#### Agriculture and landownership:

Irrigation is only done with river water, and vegetable gardens with buckets. No groundwater is used. This is a very good point because even though the groundwater level is not at risk, the more water is used, the higher the chance that the groundwater becomes saline.

Because of river erosion the group of people who lost their land and have to continue to live landless, actually increases.

Even though women have no land titles, we were informed by the Union Chairman of Vedurua that after losing land, women-headed-households get priority in being resettled.

The cluster village which was built in 2009, looks already ancient, and the houses are very small, less than 3 meters wide, are built on very low land. There are no functioning facilities any more, and none of the inhabitants have a card of some sort.

#### Employment:

There is hardly any employment for women or for adolescent girls. For boys the situation is nearly as bad. Institutions tell that women are not allowed and willing to go out for work, but those we asked all wanted to do jobs, for example in a garment factory, if it was in Bhola, and also in earth work.

#### Protection:

Embankments are planned to be heightened, somewhere in the future. In the meantime, a stretch of about one kilometre along the Meghna is strengthened by a row of sandbags, which BWDB had put in place with the help of contracted workers, and after lobbying by the WMCC. This row of sandbags will hopefully take the strength away from the heaviest waves of the Meghna.

#### DPHE

The engineers have bimonthly meetings with the standing WASH committee at Upazilla level, following the Upazilla Act. In fact all activities are based on the government rules. Related to selection of who will receive the very few toilets for public places, the Union Parishad decides. He cannot yet construct a toilet for the Bede in Dhanua Union, because there is no free land available.

#### BWDB

BWDB agrees to involve more women labourers in labourers societies, if these groups can be organised by NGOs. They see CDSP in Noakhali as an example.

#### LGED

LGED already involves women's labour societies, even 1000 women workers to maintain roads, etc. Women also construct rural markets, and there is even one women's bazar. (in Monpura).

#### Union Parishad Dhanua

We are informed that many toilets are sanctioned. The Upazilla and Union chairmen go together to find the most densely populated areas to select these for tubewells. The Chairmen offers to take care of land, if others have an initiative for a toilet, f.e. for the Bede.

#### Union Parishad Veduria

This Union Chairman is already working with the WMCC.

This year 40 families lost their land, and 2 are women headed households who will get priority with getting khasland.

#### Union Parishad Alinagar

Alinagar is not included in the Watershed programme, but by their interest they have also published the budget, and with a separate amount for WASH on the walls of the Union Parishad Building. Dhanai and Veduria were examples.

#### Ukil Para Government Primary school

DPHE has constructed a block of 3 toilets for girls in 2014, two toilets are locked continuously and one toilet is not too bad, apart from the rusted door and the basin does not work.

DPHE constructed a block of 3 toilets and 2 urinals and one handbasin in 2017. This block is for boys and is in good condition. These 5 facilities are for 170 boys.

#### Ukil Para Secondary Girls' School

This is not a government school, and anyway, DPHE is not responsible for the toilets of higher level schools. This school has two toilets, both unreachable by dirt and mud, and one is closed, the other is very primitive. The girls use the toilet of the primary school. In total that one toilet is for 670+ girls.

#### FGD in Dhania Union, mixed

Tasks of women were listed by men, and then supplemented by women.

Tasks of men were also listed. The number of hours of women's work is between 15 and 18.

Men work 8 hours (when employed) and 12 hours (when self-employed).

Issues raised are:

- River bank erosion, leading to many homeless people
- Lack of fish in the river
- All are indebted (paying the one NGO with the loan of another)
- No employment for adolescents
- No fuel for cooking (riverside plants are dried for the purpose)
- No clinique and the cost to go to the hospital is Tk 100.
- Education is too costly.

Positive points are: good electricity, good roads, tubewell with good water, lots of culverts, schools and mosks.

#### FGD in Gucchagram (Dhania Union), mixed

At one time all the inhabitants of the 20 houses in this so called cluster village were owning land and their own houses. By river erosion and cyclones they lost it all into one of the many rivers. Now they live in a small low shed, without facilities, without cards, and with hardly any employment. Some of them are quite old, and will not find work any more. Only boys attend the secondary school, by lack of money for schoolfees. A miserable situation.

Diversity: Leave no-one behind:

Last time we had a lot of information about the different categories of people. We now found no evidence that that information was incorrect. So we stay with these statements.

Muslims:

The majority of the people are Muslim, some are poor, but many are able to look after themselves, even though they are all indebted.

Hindus:

The number is small. The Hindu people we spoke to were happy, relatively well-off, well-educated, had proper access to water, toilets close by and were not scared of the flood.

Disabled people:

Most disabled people are begging in and around their own villages. They have no adapted toilets anywhere. We saw a relatively large number of young children that are disabled, mainly mentally. Some children are lucky if they get a place in the “Bangla Children”, a home and school for disabled children in Bhola. The NGO that runs it is one of the members of CSO Network.

Elderly:

The old people are often very poor, unless taken care of by their children. With fetching water they have a problem: it is far and heavy and they have a problem walking. Everybody knows that elderly like to use a high commode, but they are not available.

Youth:

Many young people are unemployed. In general there is a serious lack of employment opportunities. This is a dangerous situation. Few try to get away, but need a loan to do so, which indebts their mothers even more. It is also not easy to find work in Dhaka when coming from a village in the South.

Women:

Women are also mostly unemployed: mothers and housewives, which is not less work, but a loss of economic capacity. They spend quite some time fetching water, and walking to toilets.

Fisher people:

Most of them are living below the embankment, on either side, much at risk of flooding and eroding. They have access to very few tube-wells and hardly any toilets, which are all katcha.

River-nomads:

Bede are also fisher people, but they live on their boats, having no access to land at all. Some may have a reasonable income during monsoon when there is more fish. They have no access to schools, and they are not allowed to take more than one pitcher water. They are only allowed to use the hanging toilets. On the boats especially the women suffer.

Recommendations:

- Compared to last year the Water Management Citizen’s Committee is now more functioning as one group, with less contradictory feelings. The variety of different categories of people from very influential to extremely poor and marginalised, is an enormous achievement to get together. On the other hand, the hierarchical culture (all over Bangladesh) makes it difficult for the influential members to listen to the women and the poor, and to take them seriously. To see much improvement is a great achievement.
- We recommend the well-off members to continue the effort to listen more to the poorer or less influential categories because they have a lot of experience about the water and sanitation situation, and are as such valuable members to learn from.
- Groups of women to be organised as Women Labourers Societies.

- Other forms of employment to be stimulated, for women, girls, men and boys to earn an income, so that they don't need subsidies and ration-cards.
- Invite NGOs that provide hardware for sanitation for the most marginalised.
- Last year we suggested to include more unions, and now the process has started with Alinagar and 3 others. It would be good to see unions included that have quite different water problems.
- Training or coaching of Government Agencies in Bhola regarding Gender and Inclusion would be helpful for them in their work.
- Awareness raising, coaching and training is required on different subjects for different



groups of participants, mostly by DORP:

- o SDGs, gender and water
- o WASH in schools, including Menstrual Hygiene Management
- o Collecting, using and processing GDDs (Gender disaggregated data)
- o Rights of all citizens in Bangladesh, government rules, policies and inclusion
- o Sanitation Technology in the context of waterlogging, and adapted to different users. The toilets that will be approved following the definition of the SDGs.
- Some other issues to given due attention:
  - o Strengthening of the embankments and more sluice-gates to help against water logging
  - o Those who lose land need proper compensation, women and men
  - o River nomads and other fisher people need tube-wells and toilets around the shore on the embankments.

## Annex 3: The Empowerment APPROACH

### Empowerment, 4 elements

Empowerment is a process of improving one's position, gaining self-confidence for individual development as well as to contribute towards development of others. It refers to increasing the economic, social, political, physical strength of any individual or group. Empowerment is not only of women, but also of men and of children and of minorities and vulnerable groups.

- 1. Economic empowerment:** is about the right to relevant educations and to choose one's subject of schooling. It also deals with the right to work that one enjoys, and the same income for same work for women and men, access to relevant resources, assets, land, money, water, etc. One's work must be recognized. The right to decide about spending benefits and income belongs under economic empowerment. Economic empowerment is important but not enough. The other three forms of empowerment are necessary to turn economic progress into real empowerment.
- 2. Social Empowerment:** is about a positive self-image, and a high social status. How does the society see you, as one of this particular category? Increasing one's positive self-image and overcoming stigma is part of social empowerment. To take part in decision-making, and to make one's voice heard, so that one's voice is making a difference. Also here access to education and to information is important. Freedom of movement and mobility in a safe and secure environment is a condition for social empowerment.
- 3. Political empowerment:** entails the right to organize one selves, for example in Water Management or Farmers' Groups, it also is the right to vote and to be voted for, in general to take part in democratic processes. Decision making power and leadership qualities are important for political empowerment. Also access to information, and above all to live under rule of law: to be able to utilize the institutions that are meant to protect the citizens.
- 4. Physical empowerment:** is of great importance. All economic, social and political empowerment becomes without meaning if physically the basic conditions are not fulfilled. These are amongst others, the right to decide about one's sexuality and about the number of children and spacing between them, family planning methods and use of contraceptives. It also is necessary to have right to proper healthcare, recreation, choice of food, and physical mobility. Most of all access and right to clean water, sanitation facilities are important. The ability to resist violence, the right to safety and security, are steps towards empowerment.

**All the four elements of empowerment are interrelated** and together they indicate the degree of empowerment of an individual or group. So, for example, just being educated (socio-economic empowerment) on its own does not mean a woman is empowered, if her husband does not allow her to work after marriage. Groups and individuals (not only women) who are on the lower side of the hierarchy, empower themselves if they are convinced, and if they are able. Empowerment means to be proud of one's own identity.