



Community Participation Strengthen Risk Reduction Interventions



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Reduction Interventions***

Preface

The Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) under the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM) is a collaborative effort with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Commission (EC) to undertake a more holistic and comprehensive approach, which includes the processes of hazards identification, vulnerability analysis, prevention, mitigation, preparedness, coordinated response and recovery within a risk management context to address the underlying causes of vulnerability.

The approach also considers the importance of disaster risk management in poverty reduction, particularly the most vulnerable sector among women, children, older people and persons with disabilities who have limited access to productive resources. CDMP therefore adopts a programme approach covering all aspects of risk management that aims to build upon the ongoing trend of shifting away from a response and relief focus to a broad and more encompassing risk management framework. Based on vulnerability to different types of hazards, CDMP focused initially its field level interventions in seven pilot districts of Cox's Bazar, Faridpur, Rajshahi, Lalmonirhat, Satkhira, Sitajganj and Sunamganj.

The Local Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (LDRRF), grants program component of CDMP provides the most vulnerable groups with resources and financial capabilities to broaden and strengthen the coping capacities of communities to the impacts of natural and human induced hazards. To build the technical and institutional capacity of the most vulnerable to resist and cope with disaster threat, increase resilience and more sustainable livelihoods, this component has been designed to support small-scale innovative and strategic interventions that attempt to foster policy development and capacity building at the grassroots level.

To reduce the devastating impacts of natural and human induced hazards the LDRRF has initially provided access to micro capital grants for pilot projects with innovative ideas for empowering local communities. LDRRF support the programme to forge strategic partnership with NGOs and CBOs, and ensure that all risks at the local level are addressed resulting in reduced vulnerability to a greater range of hazards, increased resilience and more sustainable livelihoods.

Intervention of LDRRF aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) at Union, Upazila and District level including NGOs/CBOs making significant contribution in leadership building qualities and encourage their pro-active involvement in community risk reduction initiatives and ensure community participation in high-risk zones with demonstrable and sustainable positive impact on vulnerability reduction and capacity building. By involving partners in developing Risk Reduction Action Plans both at Union and Upazila level through Community Risk Assessment (CRA) process involving community people, DMC members and other stake

holders, LDRRF focuses Disaster Management Committees to be involved in implementing risk reduction interventions at the community level. The geographic focus of the LDRRF was initially limited within CDMP's seven pilot districts selected on the basis of vulnerability. However the ultimate objective of LDRRF intervention is to replicate best experiences in other disaster prone areas all over the country.

This document provides an overview of some successful risk reduction initiatives that have been identified through Community Risk Assessment which involves community, Government and NGO partnership.

Community Participation Strengthen Risk Reduction Interventions

CDMP empowers communities to identify and analyze hazards and risks they encounter through Community Risk Assessment (CRA) process. This process is a participatory approach for risk reduction, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. In order to support implementation of action plans developed through CRA, the Grant Component Local Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (LDRRF) of CDMP provides financial and technical support to the most vulnerable groups in disaster prone communities to enable them to strengthen their capacity to address local disasters using indigenous knowledge. LDRRF funded activities also contribute towards strengthening the institutional capacity of Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) at Union, Upazila and District levels. In addition, NGOs/CBOs are also supported to implement interventions on risk reduction at local level and initiatives for enhancing their capacity building.

Risk Reduction Interventions in a Flood Prone and River Eroded Areas in Bangladesh

Nischintapur is an island Union of Kazipur Upazila under Sirajganj District. The Union covers an area of about 35 square kilometers with a population of approximately 21,228, of which 50 percent are females. This Union is located at the northeastern part of Sirajganj district town and about 18 kilometers from the Kazipur Upazila headquarters. Nischintapur Union comprises 15 villages, of which 6 villages have already eroded into the Jamuna River. The people of this union have limited access to health, education and other community services. The literacy rate is 42 percent. The main communication between Upazila headquarters and Nischintapur Union is by boat. Rickshaw vans and horse carts are available as means of transportation during winter season while small boats are used during the Monsoon session. Most community people are involved in farming, fishing or day labouring



In
October
2006,



CDMP through the National Development Programme (NDP), a local NGO, facilitated a Community Risk Assessment (CRA) and the development of a Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP) identifying risk factors and priority mitigation strategies to address these. The process involved Union Disaster Management Committee representatives, community people and other stakeholders. The CRA process identified that around 70 percent of the total area is inundated by the river during the flood season and a large area merges as a result of river bank erosion. The community also identified flood, river bank erosion, drought, thunderstorm, and tornados. Based on this the community, in consultation with the Disaster Management Committee, proposed a number of immediate risk reduction activities including the raising of vulnerable houses above the flood level and livelihood support to the most vulnerable families.

Flood proofing measures were undertaken by raising the community grounds, consisting of 15 vulnerable families in Char Panagari Village. For improved health, 10 sanitary latrines were installed and 8 tube wells were raised to secure the community's source of safe drinking water year round. Livelihood initiatives were undertaken to reduce the vulnerability of extremely poor families. These included the provision of 10 cows (for 10 at-risk families) and 130 chickens (among 13 at-risk families) for rearing, fruit trees with fencing and a supply of seeds for homestead vegetable gardening. To reduce the impact of erosion, wood trees were provided for the community to plant in areas of high risk.

UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon visited these community initiatives on November 02, 2008. During his short visit to Char Panagari village, UN Secretary General went around to meet 4 vulnerable families and spoke with female members and children of those families. He went inside their houses looked around to see homestead vegetable gardens and the poultry and livestock. Members of those families informed the Secretary General about their risk and vulnerability and briefed him about the Action Plan developed through CRA.



Then he went to an open place where community people were waiting to meet with the UN Secretary General. Here he reminded them that with CDMP's support, you have safe home and reduced your risk of flood inundation. He said that with livestock, poultry and vegetable seed support through CDMP, you can now improve your livelihood and bring changes in your life. He suggested them to send their children to school as there is no other alter

UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon visited these community efforts on 2nd November 2008 at Kazipara in Shirajgonj. During his short visit to Char Panagari village,



These community initiatives have increased Char Panagari Village's confidence to mitigate, prepare and manage disasters. The community has proved that "Disaster Management is Everyone's Business".

Early harvest of short duration variety of rice A lesson learnt to have a respite from the risk of flash flood

The people living in the Shunamganj district have been suffering from flash flood for a long time. The life and livelihood of the people of this area is seriously hampered by the effects of flash flood. The farmers are the worst victim of this local hazard. As a result the expected agriculture production specially the production of rice is seriously hampered.

Considering the above mentioned worst scenario the community people were imparted knowledge on early harvesting of rice in a short period. This good lesson was promoted and expanded in other areas of the region.

Here is a story of community gathering for sharing experience and learning. At least 25 people, all clad in lungi and shirts, suddenly landed in front of a restaurant in the small countryside town of Dharmapasha at about 9 pm on April 12 in 2008. The town was almost vacant as the residents have returned home after their daily work. The people

came from Jamalganj, another thana in the Haor area of Sunamganj district. It takes about seven hours by launch from Jamalganj to Dharmapasha. They started in the day but it was night when they arrived.

The people, all farmers, with two guides landed at the restaurant to have dinner and then they will stay at Dharmapasha to see the early harvest of paddy in the following morning of April 13.

A project “ Demonstration Plot on Early and Short Duaration Rice Variety” being implemented by the Institute of Environment and Development (IED), a partner organization of CDMP is contributing towards the identification of local risk and practices of mitigation options..

The interesting factor and a learning case is that farmers of Jamalganj upazila who also cultivated the early variety in 2007, but lost due to cold shock got the message of harvest here. The Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS), another NGO that piloted the early harvest in Jamalganj last year, brought the farmers to show them the demonstration here and learn the practical aspects done by IED-CDMP in Dharmapasha.

The Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) himself cut the bundle of paddy in a function organized by the partner NGO. The name of the variety is BRRI 45. Main purpose of its cultivation is to harvest the paddy at least some days before that of other usual varieties. The time of ripening of paddy is very critical to the Haor people. Their only crop maybe washed away within hours of flash or early flood.

Mukhlesur Rahman(55) of Dharmapasha village said he cultivated this variety for the first time on his land with the support of IED. He cultivated this variety on 16 decimals of land this year. He expected at least 10 to 12 maunds of rice from the land. “If we can reap this time at least three days before the possible danger period, that will be a great achievement to us. It matters least whether we have less production,” he said.

Farmers from both Dharmapasha and Jamalganj, local leaders, Upazila Agriculture Officer and others were present on the occasion of the early harvest programme in front of the paddy field. The seed of the variety was sown on 24th November, 2007 and rice saplings were planted on 26th December and it was harvested on 13th April of 2008.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Maksudul Haque said, “I am interested about the early harvest of BRRI 45 in Dharmapasha.” He thanked the Agriculture Officer for his efforts to provide fertilizer to the farmers during the peak time. The UNO also thanked him for protecting the dyke. He said IED has done a good job. Now it has to be ascertained whether all farmers can take the lesson from this pilot project. He said it is urgent to have the paddy harvested early. He thanked farmer Mukhles for this experiment on his land where he could cultivate other varieties also. The UNO said some risk has to be taken for achieving something good.

About the harvest of the early variety, Dilip Kumar Odhikari, Upazila Agriculture Officer, said, “Dharmapasha is a low-lying area.” During the 70s rice variety produced by International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) was introduced here. Before that farmers used to cultivate local variety rice on their own. In this area we have to think how good harvest can be achieved in short period. The number of paddy in the sheaf of BRRRI 45 is not that much. But its production is good. Other varieties maybe attacked by pest. But this is not affected.” The officer said this variety is appropriate for low-lying areas. He thanked the IED for introducing this seed and urged all to take it as it has been certified.

Former Chairman Fakrul Islam Choudhury said, “We have to achieve self- reliance in agriculture. He welcomed the initiative of IED. He said crops in this area are damaged in rain and drought. If the crops can be harvested early it will be very good. But the quantity of the production of BRRRI 45 has to be examined.”

Rezaul Karim, Field Facilitator of CNRS said last year an early variety was cultivated at their initiative in Jamalganj. But it was damaged due to cold shock. This year BRRRI 45 has not been cultivated in Jamalganj, so he has brought the farmers here to show them the situation. The farmers have already asked him to provide them the seed of this variety, he said.

It was also informed that his variety is used in Shalla and Dirai Upazilas in deep Haor. Per kg seed is 22 taka. Mohammad Abdul Hafiz and Md Alal Uddin came from Jamalganj. They said they have learnt a good lesson. Abdul Motalib, Former member Siraj of Dharmapasha and Rashendra Talukder of Dakhsin Banhshikunda have already asked Mukhlesur for the seed of the BRRRI 45 variety.

Lessons Learned

- Community friendly paddy cultivation should be encouraged as a coping mechanism to reduce disaster risks.
- Scientific research should be promoted for new variety of paddy suitable in the haor areas.
- Local Administration specially the local agriculture office can promote Community based best practices to other communities and areas.
- Experience sharing should be encouraged as a tool for promoting best practice

Earthquake Preparedness for School Children at Cox's Bazar

In line with the global campaign of UN/ISDR “ Risk Reduction Begins at School”, CDMP initiated a number of programmes involving the school students, teachers and guardian for reducing disaster risks at school. Considering the need for school based earthquake preparedness, Department of Civil Engineering, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) implemented a project “ Development of Preparedness Programme for Earthquake and Tsunami Hazard in Cox’s Bazar” with the

financial assistance from Local Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (LDRRF) under CDMP framework.

The following story shows how the school students participated in a mock drill and showed their preparedness mechanism to protect themselves from earthquake risks.

At least several hundred people lost lives and got injury in a earthquake that hit the Cox's Bazar , a city located near the largest sea beace of the world.

No this is not a real news and no such disaster struck Cox's Bazar on that day. This was the displays of two mock drillings on earthquake preparedness by local school students.

Raising awareness on pre-disaster and post-disaster situation can reduce the risk of disaster casualties to a great extent. The people of Cox's Bazar Sadar learnt such a lesson from the mock drillings at the ground of Poura Preparatory High School on May 23 in 2008.

Dr. Ashutush Sutradhar an Associate Professor in Civil Engineering Department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology informed that this project has two components 1. Academic research on Tsunami, earthquake, surge and tidal bore and 2. Preparedness.

Early warning is a part of preparedness. A total of 10 modern early warning equipment on a pilot basis have been purchased from a US company which will be installed in the district. These are four types of Addressable Satellite Radio. Some cost 400 dollars and some cost 200 dollars, said Dr. Ashutush.

He said message will come from Asia Star through satellite which will be received by such radio. A siren is attached with the radio. Whenever their will be any message on any disaster the siren will blow. He said before this mock drilling at least 25 workshops on awareness raising about disaster at the community level have been held under this project. School level participation has been ensured to spread the ideas among guardians and students.

Two mock drillings were held at the Poura School Ground where the DC, UNOs, DRRO, other officials, school students and people were present. Largely participated by school students and BDRCS volunteers, this was the first exercise on earthquake. How buildings collapsed, people were killed and other things damaged were displayed in a way that looked like a real disaster. The second drilling was on tsunami. Volunteers shouted that a tsunami will take place and called upon the people to evacuate but many did not pay heed to the call. And there were huge casualties. On both the occasions BDRCS came up with rescue missions and provided treatment. Serious patients were taken to hospital by ambulance.

Dr Ashutush said the early warning equipment for disaster preparedness have been distributed one month back. These will be installed in all thanas of Cox's Bazar.

Abdul Aziz, DRRO of Cox's Bazar, said there is no government equipment for early warning on earthquake. "There is wireless equipment for message on cyclone and we receive that from the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management (MoFDM) through the Met office. We disseminate the message to all UNOs and UP chairmen. The equipment given by CDMP-BUET will start functioning soon and I think we can be better equipped on earthquake and other disaster preparedness after that," he said.

Dr Mehedi Ahmed Ansari of Civil Engineering Department of BUET said, "We assess risk of Cox's Bazar. We consider the soil and building in scientific method. The modern concept does not prefer vacant ground floor of the cyclone shelter, he said. Because this will collapse first in strong Tsunami or surge. Now lateral bracing is preferred." He said soil in Cox's Bazar is comparatively strong. BUET works with technical know-how on how to build building keeping in mind the issues of earthquake and other hazards.

Rajan Shaha, Civil Engineer from BUET, works as the Research Assistant in the CDMP-BUET project. He also explained various aspects of their activities.

Md Omar Faruk, Asistant Teacher, Vivekanada Bidyaniketan of Cox's Bazar said students are not aware of the preparation on any disaster. So, I have brought them here to participate in the mock drilling. They can learn it rightly and spread the lesson to the family and neighbours. Abed was the Chief Coordinator of BDRCS in the drillings.

Rumana Akter, a student of class eight, said, "Earlier I did not know about this. Now I know by this drilling. I can tell others about disaster and help them to survive. Asha Azad of class nine of C'Bazar Model High School, expressed the same view.

Pinki Dhar and Abida Sultana, two students, said, "If there is any tsunami we will take people to shelters."

Lesson learned

- School based Earthquake Preparedness activities create an opportunity to the school students for learning practical exercise to protect them from earthquake.
- The learning by the students from mock exercise can be reached to their parents and other members of the family.
- School can be used as one of the best platform for sharing information on risk reduction.
- Similar exercise can be organised in Chittagong and Dhaka City Corporation areas.

Renovation of a temple : An alternative arrangement for taking shelter during disaster

People of Hangarghona, particularly the Buddhist community at Rajapalong union in Ukhia thana of Cox's Bazar, were in real hazards for want of a shelter in the area. During any natural disaster like cyclone, surge, flood or tornado they used to go to the only Buddhist temple in the area.

Also for safe drinking water they did not have alternatives other than a tube-well at the temple. But the temple and the tube-well were in a shambles. The temple about 140 feet above the plain land did not have stair. The sloppy road and greasy soil made it difficult for the people to reach the temple during the rainy season, particularly in any disaster.

Hangorghona is the biggest village in Rajapalong union often affected by disasters. During the rainy season people used to get injured if they wanted to reach the top where the temple is situated. For purposes of prayer, water collection, sanitation and shelter they had to go there. Most of the Buddhist people are poverty stricken and they did not have the capacity to renovate the temple and construct long stairs for it. The tube-well was also obsolete. There was no toilet also.

Getting water in Ukhia is really difficult as it requires to sink pipes at least 500-600 feet underground which poor people cannot afford. Moreover, due to rocky soil sinking tube-well is not always possible everywhere. About 12 thousand people live in Hangarghona. Of them, two thousand people belong to the Buddhist community.

Bulu Barua(42) of Hangarghona said, "People from all walks of life come here for shelter. But we could not climb the top as the way was muddy and slippery. Moreover, there was no good arrangement for water and sanitation. Construction of such a big road or stairs leading to the temple and its total renovation require huge money which we together cannot afford."

Hitaishi Bangladesh that implemented several projects under CDMP support found in Community Risk Assessment (CRA) that in this area people were badly in need of renovation and stair construction of the temple.

After discussion at the UDMC and subsequent meetings of the Project Implementation Committee, Hitaishi constructed that stairs and set up a tube -well and a sanitary latrine. In 2008, at a cost of Tk 3 lakh and 44 thousand. Hitaishi did the job that drew appreciation of the community as well as the local government authorities. They also renovated the whole temple that now looks really good.

Under the renovation work Hitaishi completed the wall and floor plaster, set up new grill in the windows and the main grill to protect the statues inside the temple. Bulu Barua said, "We pray here for many years. Now our children can come and play on the

premises. We can take rest here. Women could not come due to slippery road. Now they come and take water. If there is rain we are not in trouble now.”

Sunil Barua of the same village said, “People used to take shelter here, but they did not have security. Their belongings used to be stolen. Now they are secure. There is a temple maintenance committee now. The people from Kutupalong, Shilpara, Barabil, Ajkhia, Puittachuri, Lambaguna, Darkhari will take shelter here during any disaster.” He further said people of all religion come here. There is no such high place in the villages.

Nirdarshi Barua of the same village said people can also keep their cattle-head in the large ground of the temple. If there was tornado or cyclone people used to fall on the road leading to the temple. Many women received injury in their legs and hands while climbing the top. Now this will not happen as the stair is very nice and strong, he said. It was found that people of all ages and sex were coming and taking water from the tube-well of the temple. The 11-member maintenance committee is headed by Ranbir Barua. The Secretary is Priodarshi Barua. In the surrounding area people fall in serious water crisis during the dry season as the underground water level goes much down. So they rush to the temple as the tube-well there serves all the time.

The Puruhit (religious leader) of this temple Anandapeu Vikkhu always stays in the temple and he conducts the prayers.

While getting down, this correspondent met Dipti Barua, a woman, in the stairs. She said, “Earlier we could not come during the rainy season. Now we can come here and take water. It has been a great job the Hitaishi has done for us,” she said. Ritu Barua, another woman, said, “We can now come here even in the rainy season. The temple premises are also used for immunization,” she said.

Project Manager Abu Sadat Mohammad Maidul Islam said they have renovated another school –cum shelter at Madha Rajapalong and planted 2000 saplings of Ekashi tree for boosting ecological balance and protecting road on two sides at Parerbilnalbania in Palongkhali union of Ukhia upazila.

Lessons Learned

The people of coastal areas in Bangladesh has very little access to Shelter Centers during disaster due to limited arrangement and also the lack of proper management. In view of such situation, alternative arrangement can be promoted to address the problem. Religious places such as the mosque, the temples, the church, the community centers etc can be used as Shelter by the people affected by disasters. Community initiatives can be promoted to make the venues suitable for taking shelter.

Reducing risk of the left-out indigenous people at Bagha

“We have long been untouchable and neglected. We could not go to others’ house and we did not have access to social facilities as we were kept isolated for long time,” lamented Shefali Mallick, an indigenous woman of the Roy Mallick community at Arpara of Bausha union in Bagha upazila under Rajshahi district.

Her husband Shitan, a day-labourer, said the present Chairman of Bausha Union Parishad Ashraf Ali Malin has helped people to change the attitude of the society.

“If we want to take tea in the market we are given it in a separate cup. We are given water in separate glass. We are not welcome at social events, said Shitan. But the present chairman has advocated for removing such discrimination.” Now it is not so as in the past, he said.

A total of 35 such families live here. They are all landless. The entire cluster did not access to safe drinking water and sanitation. They had no income generating activities or goats and cows. “As the day- labourers what we earn is not enough to buy vegetables after purchasing some rice, said Krishnapada Sarker, a leader of the indigenous people at Bausha. They kill jungle animals and eat them. They live on others’ land, he said. To remove their vulnerability and poor condition, Southern Gano Unnayan Samity(SGS), implemented a project “ Livelihood Support to the Indigenous Community” with the support of CDMP followed by CRA in 2007.

Member of the Bausha Union Parishad and PIC Chairman Tahura Begum(40) said, “The situation has been discussed in UDMC meeting along with SGS. The entire habitation of the indigenous people used to be under knee-deep water during the rainy season.

Shibani Gain, Project Coordinator of SGS, said the demand for elevating their homestead, providing tube-well, latrines, chickens and goats came up through CRA to reduce the risk of their livelihood. The foundation (Bhita) of all the houses of 35 families have been elevated. Sanitary latrines have been provided to 12 families (Khana), two goats each to 20 families, 14 chickens each to 15 families and two tube-wells for the cluster. Shibani said SGS-CDMP have contributed Tk 3 lakh 63 thousand for this project. The community contributed in the form of physical labour.

Bharat Chandra (70) of this community said, “Now we will not be affected during the rainy season. Earlier we had to go to the local school for shelter. There was no sanitation. We had to use shaft for attending the natural calls. Diseases were very common among us.”

Renu Bala, Alaka Rani echoed the same views. Nirmala was given 13 chickens. Now she has 30. It has given her a chance to have some income. Her husband Tapash gives labour to others’ field. They do not have land. But they have dream to expand and grow.

Hashi, another woman, has now 25 after she had been given 13 chickens. A disabled Sukumari(60) of Srirampur and sister of Krishnapada got Tk. 5 thousand. Five disabled persons have been given Tk 5 thousand each. Sukumari has a cow. She passes her days in distress. But one day she will have better time as the cow grows.

Addressing Disability in Disaster Management : A New Journey of Fatema

In Bangladesh 5.6 % people are living with disability. It was disclosed from the research findings that 60% disable people are deprive from proper attention during disasters. Considering the special need of this underprivileged group, CDMP has emphasised on special attention for disable persons in implementing its community based activities specially the issue has been addressed in the utilisation of Local Disaster Risk Reduction Fund (LDRRF)

It was in the afternoon of scorching summer of April in 2008 when Fatema was getting ready with her kettle, cups and other recipe for selling tea to villagers. Her kids were roaming; the old father, sister-in-law and her children, and some neighboring women around.

The whole environment in her vicinity at Nalgara village in Dharmapasha Upazila of Sunamganj district tells of a life in struggle but, as a whole, not halted by vulnerability.

Born in a poor and vulnerable family Fatema, now mother of three children, cannot say exactly how old she is. She appears to be in her thirties. Her father Abu Shama, also ignorant of his age (probably 85), had migrated with his father from Bhairab of Kishoreganj district due to family feud. But settling at Nalgara did not change their lot; rather the hardship of Fatema's father, a porter in his youth, compounded.

“My father was very innocent; our land was grabbed by the local influential persons”, Shama lamented. And Fatema, whose fairly complexion has now faded, found her childhood in extreme hazard, hunger and subsequent malnutrition. The toil for survival, along with her sister and brother, started.

“I worked door to door as a domestic help in the town; stayed in shelter even before my tender age,” said Fatema, who lost her mother before marriage.

But her hazard did not end here. It turned into disaster when the right eye of Fatema started itching and water dropping. Fatema lost vision of one eye that also affected the rest one. As the common belief still goes in the countryside, it was an impact of ‘bad air’. The poor father of Fatema by the time grew old. He fell into a sea of uncertainty with his two daughters and one son. He could do nothing but got her almost visually impaired daughter married to Abdul Jalil, also having disability in one leg and leprosy. He came from Patgram of Rangpur in search of livelihood.

The extent of distress doubled. It worsened with the birth of their two sons and one daughter. Efforts of Fatema and her husband could do little in changing their fate.

“At one point, I went to Mahanganj hospital for treatment of my eye. Some treatment was done, but it did not sustain as more and lengthy treatment was needed, which I could not afford,” Fatema continued. The kinship of Fatema was not in a position to help her. Her brother works in others’ land and he also became busy maintaining his wife and three children.

With three children and the disable husband, Fatema landed into a sea of uncertainty. She had no food and shelter. “Still I live in my brother’s room that is thatched and risky and can easily collapse with wind,” Fatema said.

Despite that Fatema can now have a sigh of relief. Fortune smiled at last on her to a great extent. Raising of a grocery-cum tea stall with capital worth taka ten thousand and a half brought a great solace for Fatema and her family.

“As I continued as the domestic help in the Upazila Sadar in different houses of officers, one day I came in contact and good book of this sir of IED who she respectfully calls uncle (Mama). They gave me the capital, a kettle worth Tk 550 and also a calculator and khata (ledger book). My husband can operate and maintain account with it in the shop,” narrated Fatema.

“We provided her with the money to set up the shop under a project titled *Rehabilitation of the Disabled with Small Business*. We supported 20 such families in this area under the partnership project of IED and CDMP,” said Sheikh Shahidul Islam, Associate Field Coordinator at Dharmapasha Thana.

Fatema said, “This shop gave me a new lease of life as it earns us on an average Tk3000 per month.” She has sent her eldest son and the daughter to school and has a plan to send the youngest too. Fatema and her husband sell rice, pulse, soap, oil and other essentials along with tea.

“We start selling tea at Tk 3 per cup since 10 am and it continues until noon. With a break it again starts in the afternoon and continues until 10pm.” She said she sells at least 40 cups of tea per day. Fatema and her father repeatedly expressed their gratitude to IED and CDMP (although they cannot spell out exactly). It has been a sustainable solution to the vulnerability of the family. Fatema now dreams to grow and build her own room and treat her eyes.

Shahidul Islam said this project started on 17th of September in 2007 and ended in 2008 with at a cost of Tk 221910. Md Liakat Ali, Chairman of Dharmapasha Union Parishad, said if IED and other NGOs come forward side by side with government efforts, the socio-economic condition of the country will improve.

Lessons Learned

Md Masudul Huq, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Dharmapasha, appreciated the risk reduction initiatives of CDMP addressing the special need of disable persons. He said, “We should not always wait for government help in all aspects. The community itself and the non-government organizations can do a lot and these are the examples.”

The case study shows that if the underprivileged groups are supported by any persons or organisations, they can improve their status in the society. In the long run a community having resilience capacity can reduce the disaster risks and contribute for the sustainable development.

Another learning is that addressing disability in disaster management with due importance should be expanded from grassroots level to national level planning process.

Building a Killa (High place) for shelter Elevation of a school ground lauded by community people

Background

Faridpur is a flood-prone district of the country. River Erosion has taken an alarming turn in its upazilas. The rainy season often visited by flood uproots people from their habitation. Flood-hit people are used to live in distress with their belongings and cattle-head. Movement becomes disrupted. Students cannot go to school as their school premises are also flooded. They cannot play for over six months in the year. These are the common scenario caused by the flood every year. Traditionally our relief focused disaster response addressed the problem with few immediate action such as distribution of relief items, emergency health care service and special agriculture rehabilitation.

Risk Reduction Initiatives for Continuing Academic Function during Flood

Hakimnagar Junior High School at Durbatek in Charnasirpur union of Sadarpur upazila stands by the river Brahmaputra. It has a large ground. But every year it is used to be submerged during the rainy season and flood. The school was set up in 2004. Students from Baliahat, Durbatek and Hakimnagar village take enrolment in this school. When the ground goes under water they have to stop coming to school. Every year academic activities of this school is disrupted due to flood.

As the RISDA Bangladesh, a Non-Governmental organization, works with the support of CDMP, identified strategic point for establishing shelter by the community members. After several meetings at the UDMC, it was decided that the RISDA would elevate the school ground so that flood waters do not reach that level. In view of such situation RISDA took the project Institutional Ground Raising to be use as Killas for temporary shelters

The work started on December 02, 2007 said Md Zahir Hossain Mia, Supervisor of RISDA. The ground has been elevated by six feet above the bage level. The CDMP-RISDA contributed Tk 3 lakh 20 thousand and community contributed Tk 67 thousand. Fifty persons worked regularly for 40 days, said Zahir.

Torab Fakir, Assistant Teacher of Hakimnagar Juinior High School, said this has been a good job. All people of this area will be benefited. They now can take shelter and can keep their cattle-head during any disaster.

Haji Abul Kashem Sheikh(80), who resides adjacent to the school, said, “During the rainy season water used to get stagnant earlier. Now it will not happen.”

Rozina Akter, a student of class 10 of Hakimpur High School, said it has been very good. Earlier it would get muddy and students could not play. Now sports event can be held here, she said. If flood takes place, the students will be able to continue attending the school.

The elevated ground has been surrounded by coconut trees. The erosion will be resisted. Md Golam Mostafa and Nuruzzaman of Baliahati, Nehar Begum, student of class seven

of this school, said people will take shelter during flood here. Abul Kalam Matobbar of Durbatek expressed the same view. Member of the union parishad Suruj Matobbar said RISDA has done a very good job by elevating the school ground. He said Chairman Md Mojibur Rahman and Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Nasir Uddin were also present during the inauguration programme.

RISDA has also constructed a road-cum shelter from Piajkhali Bridge up to Bepari Bari in Dheukhali union at a cost of Tk 5 lakh and 51 thousand with the support of CDMP.

The community participation is 20 percent. The height of the road is seven feet. Ekhlash Mrida of Akut and Hossain Hawlader of Munshirchar said it has come to the use of the people. But it would be better if the whole road was elevated.

Alauddin of Bepari Gram and Ainal Khan of Dabraddidangi said communication has improved for this elevated road. If there was a bridge connecting the new road with the approach road it would be better. Former UP member Abdul Barek Bepari said if the road was extended inside the village it would be good. It would reduce the time to go to Dhaka from here. During flood it will not go under water. Crop harvest will be easier. Earlier trawler was used through a distant road taking much time.

Member of the UP appreciated the project. Former UP Chairman, Abdul Malek Basar said it would reduce communication time. People can stay here with their cattle-head during the flood. They can carry their products to market easily. But the main challenge is to protect the road now.

Lesson Learned

- **Indigenous knowledge for disaster risk reduction can contribute towards socio-economic development of a community**
- **Community participation in risk reduction efforts can enrich the social movement for ensuring the rights of education and establishing communication.**
- **NGOs can play the role of catalyst in mobilising local resources for promoting risk reduction culture.**
- **Involvement local government bodies in risk reduction planning can enrich the community initiative for local risk reduction.**

Hope in the Haor: Community people build Gazaria dyke in Bhimkhali for saving crop from flash floods

The lifestyle, livelihood and climate of Haor areas are totally different from those of the plain-land. Haor areas constitute vast open low land that remains under water for six

months (June –November) during the rainy season and emerges during the dry, lean period (Jan-May) stricken by hunger and poverty. Whatever Boro farming they do in a year maybe washed away by early flash floods more often than not. The people living in the plain-land may be surprised to learn the level of hardship the Haor people face throughout the year. The cattle-head and poultry are also used to such difficulty where people have to embrace disaster in their daily life. Ignorance due to illiteracy and poverty is mostly responsible for their big-size family, in particular, devoid of safe drinking and sanitation facilities. They earn their meager livelihoods from fishing and farming not on their own plan, but as per the whims and caprice of the nature that often turns cruel to the vulnerable and marginal farmers of Haor like one at Pakner in Bhimkhali Union under Jamalganj Upazila of Sunamganj district. Seven districts in Bangladesh are basically Haor-oriented; such as Sunamganj, Habiganj, Sylhet, Moulavibazar, Brahmanbaria, Netrakona and Kishoreganj.

As the rainy season sets in, the Haor goes under water. Although all farmers are supposed to have the right to catch fishes, but they are deprived of it due to some complexity arisen out of the existing government leasing system. Some influential musclemen in the Haor take lease of Khas (Government) land for fishing, but virtually they take control of other areas driving the poor fishermen and farmers away. On the other hand, a large number of the Haor people do not have their own land. They sell labour to others in the area or have to migrate to other districts for job. So the flash floods, monga (famine like situation) and joblessness are some disaster-related adversities they can hardly overcome. There has been no alternative.

But for the first time in the history of the Haor, the community members of Bhimkhali Union in Jamalganj Upazila, with the support of CDMP and IDEA, have been able to build resistance against the early flash floods that generally hit the standing and ripe Boro crop during May-June.

“The nature of such flash floods is that they come suddenly and may stay for some days. But the irony of fate is that by the time the standing crop is damaged and sometimes washed away by the flash floods within a few days. So during the peak harvesting season two or three days is a great factor for the farmers here,” said Azizul Huq, Project Coordinator of IDEA in Jamalganj.

“The dyke has been built at such a strategic point of the Haor in consultation of the concerned community members that it will protect huge crop land from the flash floods for at least those emergency days,” he said, adding the farmers of the villages to be benefited are from Bisna, Mirzapur, Kalipur, Jangalbari, Noagaon, Bahadurpur, Natunchanbari, Moulinagar, Puranchanbari, Hasnaganj and Kirtanpur. There are five unions in Jamalganj— Sachnabazar, Jamalganj Sadar, Beheli, Fenarbak and Bhimkhali.

“The dyke known as Gazaria Jangal (dyke) in Pakner Haor has brought blessings to farmers and day-labourers of several villages of Bhimkhali Union in Jamalganj Upazila,” said Abu Bakar of Puranchanbari, who is 35 and has two sons. He has no land of his own and is ready to harvest paddy on others’ land in the Haor.

He said, “Harvesting of rice and planting saplings in this Haor have been equally difficult and risky before the building of this dyke. There was no certain passage in the vast Haor through where farmers could move and carry their produce home. As a result, they could not put the sheaf of paddy in bunch on any comparatively high place after harvest. So, if water comes we are helpless. Moreover during the plantation there was problems of both shortage and stagnancy of water in the field.”

Md Rahim Ahmed aged 17 having two acres of land inside the Jangal said, “Earlier it was really difficult to carry our crops home as there was no specific road here. So it would cost more, but now it would be easier and safe. We need not pay a lot for carrying now.”

Shah Alam aged 20 has six brothers and two acres of land inside. He listed the benefits of the dyke in the Haor. These include movement facility which was not available earlier and the tender plants were affected due to rampant movements of farmers all over the land. Regulating water while planting rice saplings and water can be stored or passed away as per the need. At the time of harvest even if there is flash flood the paddy bunches can be kept on the high dyke and then carried home by boats. Fish can be cultivated in the mini-canal that have developed after earth lifting to raise the Jangal. Relief from earlier troubles of more labour that would lead to extra cost for cultivation. Liton, another day-labourer in the locality, echoed the same benefits of the dyke.

Mohammad Abdul Mannan Talukder(65) of Noagaon, who was passing through the Jangal along with some other villagers said he has one acre of land inside the Jangal. Father of five sons and four daughters, Mannan said, “It would be of immense use to us.” Making a different note, Mannan said it would be better if another such dyke could be built in the Haor as he showed pointing his finger to that location.

He said, “In this Nidan (lean period) the activity of raising the Jangal has provided employment for a lot of poor and landless people of this area.” Asked about the maintenance of this dyke after the rainy season he said, there is a supervisory committee to look after it. The mini- canals beside the dyke will be leased for fishing during the harvesting season and the income from this will be used for maintenance purpose.

Anwar Hossain (35), the member of the Bhimhkali Union Parishad and Chairman of the Project Implementation Committee, said the idea of this Jangal came one year back in 2007 through Community Risk Assessment carried out by IDEA among the vulnerable people of the area. Also the member of the UDMC, Anwar said, “It was discussed in our meetings and a joint decision was made with the IDEA-CDMP to implement the project at the community level.” He said the cross section of people have welcomed the project. Starting on 1st April in 2008, the 5700- foot Jangal of three feet height and six feet width is spread from Barokhola to Parkata. It cost about 2 lakh and 12 thousand taka of which community participation is 20%. But such participation is not in cash but in kind through their physical labour.

The UP member who has one son and four daughters, said the people have spontaneously worked and responded to the project. Even many of them gave their land for this by cutting tender rice plants. He said the plantation timing has a critical linkage with water. So this Jangal will help people retain necessary water in the field during cultivation. If there is water less cultivation will be required leading to less expenditure on the part of the farmers.

Shah Mohammad Faisal, Field Facilitator of IDEA, said about 400 labourers worked everyday during the period and the payment for cutting 100 cubic feet earth was 1,100 taka.

At least 16,000 people of 1,300 families in 10 villages are beneficiaries of the project implemented by IDEA funded by CDMP under its Local Disaster Risk Reduction Fund.

When contacted, Chairman of Bhimkhali Union Parishad Md Tajuddin said, this has been a great step forward in community participation for resolving the problem of the community people by themselves. He termed it community empowerment.

Helaluzzaman of IDEA, who works in Sylhet Sadar, accompanied this correspondent throughout the visit to the Pakner Haor. He said the Haor people go for Jirati (travel to other places). They go to Haor with their cattle-head and build makeshift houses there during October and then after farming, harvest rice during May and come back home through new water by boat. But this happens if everything goes normal, he cautioned.

Coping Mechanism for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Water-logging Areas

Background

Water-logging is identified as one of the major disaster in Bangladesh considering its negative impact in agriculture sector and disruption of social life which creates setback in achieving livelihood security.

Sunamganj district in the north east part of the country is well known as a area of Haor. Waterlogging is a common feature in this area. A total of 120 acres of fertile land in a

Haor at Inatnagar in Beheli of Jamalganj thana under Sunamganj district used to remain abandoned for years after years due to water-logging. This is known as Kosmar Haor. The Kosma has been a boon to many farmers on the right side of the dividing road. But on the left it has been a bane to a large number of poor farmers due to water stagnation even in the dry season when the other parts of the Haor remain dry and fit for rice production.

At least 40 families of four villages had to shed their tears for years together as in the dry season of cultivation, they kept on sitting idle and saw other people planting saplings of paddy just opposite the road. Water remains stagnant on their land because of a nearby dam of the Water Development Board. There was no passage for water from their part. The affected villages are Inatnagar, Radhanagr, Beheli and Alipur.

People of these villages thought themselves many times how to resolve the long-standing problem. But there was no way-out as they are extremely poor and do not have any such money that they can dig a canal and pass water through a box culvert on the road. The people in the area are so poor that they cannot give Tk.200 each for the purpose.

Institute of Development Affairs (IDEA) is implementing a project “ Construction of Box and Ring Culvert to Protect Inundation of Crop Fields by Controlling Water Flow” with the support of CDMP under its Local Disaster Risk Reduction Fund in this area.

The Beheli Union Parishad Chairman, Dharmaraj Chowdhury, on behalf of the affected people talked to the IDEA over the issue in a meeting of the Union Disaster Management Committee. Considering the recommendation of UDMC and realising the community need IDEA came forward to assist the poor people.

Abdul Hashim (45), member of the UDMC and Box Culvert Project Implementation Committee, said he is also affected by water-logging. He said after the project was started people worked voluntarily to construct the box culvert and the connecting canal. About 150 people worked for two days for the culvert. For digging the 450-foot long canal about 40 people worked every day for 10 days. The depth of the canal is eight feet. Azizur Rahman, Project Manager of IDEA, said through this culvert passage of water can be regulated after digging of the canal and construction of the culvert in March 2008. At least 30 acres of land inside the area have been brought under rice cultivation this season.

Md Shahed Ali (30), an affected person of water-logging said, “After long six years I have cultivated rice this season on my land in the area. This is really a joy for me. The future generation that plunged into the darkness of uncertainty will have bright time now.” Shahed Ali has one acre of land inside the area.

Md Joynal Abedin (35) has one acre of land inside the area. He could not cultivate this time, but he is hopeful that he would be able to cultivate here next year. Rajtika, the step mother of Joynal Abedin, who lives separately and owns some land inside the dam area, has a sorry tale, said the people of this area.

IDEA Project Manager said during the winter Rajtika used to sit beside her water-stagnant and vacant land. People saw only tears dropping from her eyes as this has been a real tragedy for her. With two daughters she had to starve as her only agricultural land was under water for the whole of the year. This time Rajtika has cultivated rice and as the people say she is waiting for a good harvest.

Abul Kalam, another beneficiary, said he has one acre of land inside, but he could not cultivate this time due to lack of saplings in time. Aina Mia, Lal Mia, Aftab Mia, Mortoza Ali, Laous Mia, Tara Mia, Abdul Rafiq, Abdur Rahim of Inatnagar have land inside the area. Nurul Amin of Harinagar and Faruk Mia of Beheli were in utter distress. All of them used to carry sand in Sachna Union before. Now they plan to come back to their paddy field inside the dam.

Lesson Learned

- Water Development Board did not consider risk factors during construction of dam. As a result due to absent of pass way for water, the problem emerged. The incident shows that every development planning should address the risk mitigation options.
- Empowerment of local Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) is must for addressing local risks.
- Local coping mechanism should be considered with due importance for encouraging community participation in disaster management.

Tree plantation in saline water area A move for climate friendly environment

The increasing salinity in the water in Kaliganj upazila of Satkhira district is leading to multi-prong problems. It has impact on both human health and environment. Moreover, for quick and easy return, people opt for shrimp cultivation that triggers salinity in water throughout the area. In such a situation, developing greenery has become important for protecting environment and soil in different areas of Kaliganj upazila, particularly on the roadsides by the rivers to resist erosion.

The people of Kaliganj upazila, majority of whom are engaged in shrimp cultivation, suffer from scarcity of safe drinking water. But they bothered a little about its hazards and subsequent fallouts. Education level is very poor and also same the level of awareness about burning issues. In the entire upazila the condition of the homestead tells such a situation.

Baburabad is such a village in Nalta Union under Kaliganj upazila. At least 1200 landless families have been allotted government land under a rehabilitation plan in Nalta and Noapara unions. Water crisis is in an alarming state in this area. While visiting the area a woman was found to be carrying water in containers by tying with her waist from a narrow canal. She was swimming to advance as she cannot walk with such heavy container full of water. As there was a move to take a snap she felt shy and tried to set her well by standing in the canal.

Md Abdul Bari Gazi (53), hails from Baorabad, leads a community in the area of several hundred people who have been provided the land from the concerned department of the Government. The Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) has implemented a project under Disaster Risk Reduction Fund of the CDMP in Kaliganj. The interventions included Pond Sand Filter, tree plantation, culvert and extended pipeline for safe water supply to people in different unions of Kaliganj upazila.

All such interventions came through CRA. Md Abdul Bari is a CRA participant and PIC member on tree plantation and PSF at Baburabad. In October 2007, DAM took up the tree plantation project to reduce environmental risks on the premises of a mosque in two bighas of land. DAM contributed Tk 9000 and community people Tk 2500. At least 200 saplings of Mehgani and Shirish have been planted there which have grown better at present.

Mohiuddin Molla, Union Parishad and PIC member, said this has been discussed in the UDMC. Chairman of Nalta Union Parishad, Ansar Uddin wrote to DAM for the project. Noor Hossain, teacher of Dhepukhali High School, said this tree plantation on the premises of the mosque will facilitate the Eid prayer under the shed of the trees. This will provide fresh air and protect the people and area from natural disasters. He said nowadays the education level is improving. A mosque committee has been formed for maintenance.

Nurul Islam (50), a shrimp trader, earns 2 lakh taka a year. He is also a PIC member. He said this will be an asset for the mosque. The community people have arranged fencing with bamboo. They planted the saplings. The DAM has provided those and also the supporting pillars.

In the nearby area there was an abandoned pond. Chairman Ansar Ali stated that DAM renovated it and set up a PSF for providing safe drinking water to the surrounding people. The pond water is good in test. DAM installed the PSF. Md Bari said people of seven to eight villages used to take water from this pond. The PSF has three chambers. The water is pumped out at the receiving end by tube-well. Md Nurul Haque, Imam of the mosque

and also PIC member said, “The PSF is of immense use to us. But it needs further renovation.”

Latifa (30) of Baburabad said, “Earlier we had to bring water from distant places. Now this has been a great opportunity for us as the source of safe drinking water is available within our reach. We also suffered from diarrhoea and other stomach problems for having open pond water. Now we are safe.” Nurunnahar of the same village echoed the same view. Abdus Salam, son of Abdul Hamid of Paikpara village in Debhata upazila, said, “W

Saving people from onslaught of flood and robbers Kabirpur Char is now safe, people united

People in Kabirpur Char or Sonamollardangi, named after the septuagenarian Sonamolla, had double trouble. Although close, every house was detached. Boat was the only means to go from one to another during the rainy season. And during flood their sufferings would mount. They had to live a inhuman life.

Moreover, the robbers used to take the chance. They used to come by trawler and loot belongings and cattle-head. People were helpless as they were scattered. Most of the inhabitants have settled in this Char from other areas. They were used to displace due to river erosion.

Sonamolla (70) said, “My ancestral home was in Talukerchar. I had to shift my house 10 times due to river erosion. Earlier it was in Tepurakandi. In total I had 30 Bighas of land. As I settled here now I have nothing. The mighty river Padma has eaten up whatever land I had. After settling at Kabirpur I have been sufferings due to flood frequently and the robbers loot our belongings during the flood. So we had double trouble.” His wife Nurjahan said, “We did not have any latrine or tube-well. Diseases were our everyday affairs.”

In this situation, Faridpur Development Agency (FDA) with the support of CDMP, carried out a CRA in the area and identified the extent of vulnerability of the char people in the North Channel Union under Faridpur Sadar.

Member of the ward No. 4 of North Channel Union Parishad and DMC, Md Hossain Sheikh said, this is a very poor area. UDMC has requested the FDA to select this place for their disaster risk reduction project.

He said, “Our Union Parishad Chairman Abdus Salam himself worked for this with the FDA. Asked about the activities of Union Parishad to reduce disaster risk, he said we get minimum support from the Government under VGD and VGF. With this we cannot work

for disaster risk reduction.” The member himself is a victim of river erosion for four times.

Shaer Alam, Project Coordinator of FDA, said 25 houses at a stretch have been elevated by six feet. Thirteen tube-wells have been installed for safe drinking water. Each of the families has got a latrine. At a cost of Tk 5 lakh 99 thousand the work began on 17th January and ended on 16th February in 2008. The community contribution is 15 per cent amounting Tk 66 thousand and six hundred. They contributed in the form of physical labour.

Sheikh Asad (70) of this Char said, earlier the houses here were much lower elevated and could be flooded easily. Now it will not happen. “We now can go from one part to another on foot. So, we can now resist the robbers unitedly. During the flood we had to leave our house. Now we can stay here after elevation of our homestead by FDA. Our children can walk and play. They can read in the school set up by FDA here. He said North Channel was named during the British era. This is the boundary between Dhaka and Faridpur.”

Sheikh Ibrahim(35) came from Degreer Char driven out by river erosion. “I have lost every thing in river erosion. In 25 families, there are eight members each on an average.”

Sheikh Bablu(40) said, “We could not sleep during the rainy season due to attack of robbers. Our children could not play and go to school. But now these problems are over.”

Hajera Khatun (60) said all people here are landless. “I came from Degreer Char due to river erosion.”

Md Yunus, PIC member, said now this will not be flooded as it has been elevated above the normal flood level. If it is flooded the whole Faridpur will be submerged, he observed. He has two sons and three daughters. One son has passed MA from Jagannath University. He has united all people here, said Begum (35). Her husband Badsha Molla is a rickshaw-puller.

Begum said, “Earlier we could not arrange fuel for cooking during the rainy season . Now after elevation we have planted trees and grass around the houses. We will get fuel from those trees. We the women even carried earth during the elevation in teams.” They now hope to stay at home during the flood. Member Md. Hossain said 80 per cent of the North Channel has been devoured by the Padma. Jahanara, PIC and UP member and Rosina Akter Lata, UP member, said they worked for this project with the FDA.

Abdul Motaleb Mia, Headmaster of Char Natakhola Government Primary School said his house floats on water during the flood. He does not have adequate number of benches and chairs in the schools. Assistant teacher of the school Lutfunnesa, who has honours and master’s degree in Economics said, “Our time is lost by traveling in trawler to go to school in the Char.”

In an interview Executive Director of FDA said the beneficiary of the homestead elevation can now cultivate vegetables on their premises, plant trees and they are united to fight any adversities. “We work to raise such instinct among the vulnerable so that they can work together to fight natural disasters on their own. The self- initiative should be sustained through different programmes, he said. We no longer suffer from gastric p

Dug-well renovation: A model under LDRRAF at Durgapur Tree plantation to boost environment

Durgapur thana has seven unions and one pourashava (municipality). These are Deluabari, Nowpara, Pananagar, Joynagar, Kismatganokoir, Maria and Jhaluka unions, and the pourashava.

The biggest risk identified by the people of this areas through CRA is drought, leading to lack of safe drinking water.

People use water of old dug-well (Indara) in different areas of Durgapur thana. During the dry season other water sources dry up and those are not safe. Even the condition of dug-well was also not good.

Dhaka Community Hospital implemented two projects in Joynagar and other unions. In Joynagar, DCH implemented dug-well renovation with the support of CDMP. It has renovated seven dug-wells in Durgapur Thana. One dug-well is in Maira, three in Joynagar, one in Nowpara and two in Kismotganokoir unions.

The DCH also planted tree saplings on both sides of roads in Deluabari and Pananagar unions.

At Joynagar village in Joynagar Union, DCH has renovated a dug-well in 2007. The dug-well is situated at Riazuddin’s land. He has donated his land for the community.

Altab Elahi, Project Coordinator at the time of implementation, said water crisis is the biggest problem here.

The physical condition of the dug-well was not good. It did not have any to cover and proper drainage system. It had no platform and the wall was going to be damaged, he said. “As per the CRA demand, we repaired the well and attached hand tube-well with it, and covered the top of the Indara. We purified the water and formed a committee for maintenance. All decisions were taken through the UDMC meetings.”

Chairman of Joynagar Union Parishad, Karim Molla said the water leble is so deep here that poor people cannot sink tube-well easily. DCH project has helped them a lot. Now at least 20 families use water from each of such dug-wells.

Rehana (30) of Joynagar said, “We can have safe water now from this dug-well. Kohinoor, Shahijon, Parul, the users of this well expressed the same views.

Chairman of Nowpara UP, Azad Rezaul Karim said water crisis is serious here. The dug-well that has been renovated is now used by 150 families. He said 90 per cent of the tube-wells are out of order in this dry season. Water has gone so down that these tube-wells do not work.

Chairman of Deluabari UP, Abdul Khaleq Mantu, said the people have been benefited by this project.

Field Facilitator of DCH Ratan Kumar said allocation for each of the dug-well renovation was 40 thousand taka. The community people contributed in the form of physical labour, he said.

Project Implementation Officer of Durgapur Upazila, Md Amjad Hossain said the DCH has worked in the field and the needs of the community arose through CRA. Dug-well project has been very successful. But for resolving the water crisis more ponds, open spaces should be re-excavated in Durgapur. Because getting underground water is very difficult here. It is about 365 feet down, he noted.

