

There both service providers and local community

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There has been a significant change in citizen engagement through awareness raising and capacity building of the community people. They have been proactively participating in ward shavas, planning meetings and open budget sessions. Women participation has been increased in UP led initiatives.

Community support groups have proactively visited the implemented development schemes and provide recommendations to UPs. Capacity building of the institution made the UP representative more responsive and accountable to the service users. A large number of first and second round Wardshava has been conducted ensuring participation of women and poor and vulnerable groups. This has capacitated the local governments to become familiar with the accountability process in planning and implementation of their budgets. By exercising two rounds of community score card process the local elected public officials have gained confidence to become more responsive to the community. Enhanced responsiveness has been attained by engaging both service providers and local community through developing joint action plans aimed at improving the service quality through efficient use of public resources. The systemic introduction of the complaint mitigation process in local governments has helped people to lodge complaints in relation to schemes implemented by using Union Parishad budget and block grants.

Respective community support groups and the Union Parishads jointly developed a mechanism to redress people's grievances by monthly meetings of respective UPs. Rights of access to information has been the key area of improvement in terms of capacity building of the community and their local government institutions. The local governments have changed their views on <https://assignbuster.com/there-both-service-providers-and-local-community/>

proactive disclosure of information regarding development initiatives, the fiscal information in particular. Community people have changed their reluctant behavior pattern on access to information. Now, they are eager to know more information about the services provided by the service providers. Transparency and accountability of the Union Parishad through disseminating information to the people and identifying if there is any flaw in budget expenditure in particular in relation to the block grants disbursed under LGSP II as well as defined recommendations for respective service providers. IDEA-SEBA project has been implemented in 09 UPs of Dakshin Surma Sub-district under Sylhet district with a view to enhance the fiscal transparency of local public spending ensuring people's participation and to create a responsive and accountable local government. For this, the project has formed community support groups and capacitated them through different training and meetings on LGSP-II and Social Accountability tools through which they can create an enabling environment for citizens to greater access to information and services.

UP representatives had been capacitated by different trainings and workshops on LGSP, social accountability tools and Right to Information (RTI) Act-2009. Throughout the project duration, the UPs were sensitized in disclosing different information and engaging local community in development initiatives. But after the latest UP election in 2016 the situation has been changed because of newly elected UP bodies. Now, there are some newly elected UP representatives along with some re-elected members in the local governments.

The re-elected members should orient the newly elected members on social accountability mechanism and their roles in ensuring transparency and accountability of the public spending. Knowledge needs to be transferred through institutional process so that the local governments continue with the changes acquired over time. The district administration of the local government department should become the vehicle to capitalize the lessons learned.

The designated officials responsible to implement the LGSP had been engaged with the project interventions. They are also informed about the learning captured by the project. The community support groups are the local change agents which need to remain functional. It is possible by the local government department and UP bodies to ensure people's participation in the political-administrative and governance system through recognizing the community support group. Historically the accountability to the people in political-administrative and governance system has been insignificant in practice in the context of Bangladesh.

The colonial culture of political-administrative system which is mostly top-down in nature has been sustained in local governance system. The idea of social accountability is relatively new in Bangladesh context and has been practiced by donor driven CSO programme. The educated and more informed segment of the society want accountability to be ensured in providing basic services. The poor and marginalized community people are indifferent about their rights into basic services. However, once they are educated on their rights entitlement and they become familiar to the

process of participation they tend to demand accountability from their service providers.

The entire social accountability mechanism needs facilitation particularly in educating community people the process of participation and its importance to establish people centred governance. The Community Score Card tool needs to be practiced for a long period of time to benefit both the service users and service providers. The success always depends on peoples' participation.

Also, success in a particular context never confirms success in every other context. There is no short-run process for this mechanism to achieve ultimate success.