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Promoting the Cause of Disaggregated Data towards Public Service Delivery Effectiveness

Availability of required data at disaggregated level is a critically important ingredient for proper tracking of the progress of SDG implementation. This is more so, particularly if the ambition of ‘leave no one behind’ is to be fulfilled. Targeting the potential and eligible beneficiaries under different public services at the local level and the associated allocation of budgets at the central level are often constrained in the absence of disaggregated data concerning many relevant indicators. Furthermore, SDGs are required to be monitored annually, while the key surveys which are to be drawn upon to provide data for the majority of the indicators, such as Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), Labour Force Survey (LFS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS), etc. are conducted with a 3–5 years lag. As of yet, there is no clear direction on how these indicators will be monitored during the gap period. No effort is visible with regard to recognising the non-official data. With regard to level disaggregation, there has not been much progress either; the data is very much concentrated on the criteria of gender, and in a few cases, age and region. Therefore, vulnerable and marginalised groups are not being captured adequately which is very important to address the concerns of leave no one behind agenda, which is central to SDG implementation.

In order to address the aforesaid gaps, an SDG tracking tool was developed under the project incorporating at least 75 out of 231 SDG indicators. It also includes an SDG profile which consists of district and, in few cases, upazila level data on SDG indicators for 13 districts. They were used during the training of trainers (ToTs) workshops with local authorities (LAs, LGs) and sub-national dialogues. Particularly the ‘District SDG Profiles’ were prepared to stimulate interest of the local authorities of respective areas. As a result of this, the local authority representatives were able to connect SDG related concepts, policies and associated services in the backdrop of the local context and this was an encouraging factor contributing to their active participation in the discussion. The project also sought to address issues of real-time and disaggregated data gaps in undertaking its different activities. Thus, in the course of undertaking research strategies, and conducting sub-national dialogues data was generated through household surveys, focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

During both the pre-dialogue interviews and event-day discussions, LAs associated with the implementation of Social Protection, Agriculture, Gender, Health services stressed the need for an

“ Union/upazila level database will need to be created where all the information starting from the socio-economic status of the farmers to details on crop production will be collected regularly. ”

— Upazila Agriculture Officer of Indurkani, Pirojpur during pre-dialogue field visit.

“ In the backdrop of the time constraint, if we had a central database with union/upazila level poverty rates and other disaggregated information of households, we could have targeted beneficiaries under COVID-targeted schemes such as Tk. 2,500 for 5 million household more efficiently. ”

— District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer, Netrokona

upazila/district level disaggregated database for more effective decision making. They highlighted the importance of updating the outdated BBS database of 2014 which often served as basis for beneficiary selection.

If the aforesaid recommendations and commitments made by the public service providers are translated into actions, both at the sub-national and national levels, the marginalised citizens will be able to enjoy better public services from the government. This will be achieved in three ways: i) through better targeting, avoiding duplication and better beneficiary selection by addressing the problems associated with unwanted inclusion and exclusion; ii) speedy selection of beneficiaries; and i) through making appropriate estimation of the needs and demands following any natural or health disasters. Such disaggregated and regularly updated databases will raise effectiveness of public service delivery and promote accountability, voice and transparency in SDG implementation in Bangladesh, and contribute importantly to good governance in SDG implementation in Bangladesh.

Disaggregated database for social protection services

- Local service providers in Gaibandha urged the need to establish a central database of projects included in the ongoing social safety net programmes at the district level, with disaggregated information on gender, union, upazila and age in Gaibandha
- Discussants at the sub-national dialogues in Netrokona, Pirojpur, and Shirajganj, representing both government and non-government stakeholders, recommended that to improve the effectiveness of the relief programmes undertaken in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, multidimensional measures need to be taken into account at the local level. This included poverty rate, population, unemployment rate, and others, rather than relying only on a single indicator to determine the allocation. To this end, it is critically important to build a detailed database with socio-economic indicators at the local level. This will make it easier to undertake relief and service delivery activities in light of the local situation and will significantly improve beneficiary selection.

Disaggregated database for agriculture services

Local administrations at the sub-national dialogue in Netrokona, Pirojpur and Sirajganj stressed the necessity for creating a central database of various assistance provided under the ongoing 'Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme' at the district level. The database should contain information on seed demand and allocation to compensate for the damage caused by union/upazila based floods.

Database for tracking the use of tech-based health services

Discussants at the sub-national dialogue in Barguna emphasised that a database should be created for storing information on the receipt of healthcare services (by type, age and gender) through using hotlines ('16263') at district and upazila level, which would be updated on a regular basis. This will allow the service providers to capture the actual scenario on the ground.

Database for preventing gender-based violence

Discussants at the sub-national dialogue in Swandip highlighted that a database should be created for keeping records of complaints referred to the District and Upazila Women's Affairs Offices (by type) and the steps taken. The database would be updated on a regular basis.

For more information, please visit:
www.localizingsdg.cpd.org.bd



Enhancing the Participation of Community-based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Democratic Governance in Bangladesh

