



Awareness Building and Access to Information regarding Public Service Delivery at the Local Level

Raising awareness among citizens about their socio-economic and political rights and entitlements and ensuring access to information related to national policies and public services are the two important elements of good governance and accountability. The SDGs have also stressed the need for raising awareness through education and training and disseminating relevant information among the citizens. Specifically, SDG target 12.8 mentions,

“By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.”

In addition, SDG target 16.10 emphasised the obligation of public institutions to ensure access to reliable information on the part of the citizens. It mentions,

“Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.”

The need for enhanced awareness building among the citizens as regards policies and implementation guidelines regarding public services emerged as important issues from both sub-national research undertaken as part of the programme and sub-national dialogues that were organised on service delivery effectiveness. In order to raise awareness, there was a general consensus among the dialogue discussants that free flow of information from service providers to service recipients through wide-ranging promotional activities is critically important.

Awareness-building activities among CBOs with help of findings, sub-national dialogues and several follow up activities such as the half-yearly meetings of the district-level network and community consultation with service providers, which were implemented under the project have contributed significantly towards better access to public services among citizens. Greater knowledge as regards public policies and the use of technology by local citizens also contributed to attaining better public service objectives.

“ **The work of disseminating information at the local level should be further enhanced. Information dissemination will play a significant role in ensuring transparency of relief activities at the local level.** ”

— **Md. Asib Ahsan**
Deputy Commissioner, Rangpur District, stated during sub-national dialogue at Rangpur.

“ **We need to create mass awareness to reach out to the people in need.** ”

— **Debapriya Bhattacharya**
Convenor, Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh and Distinguished Fellow, CPD observed in summarising the discussion held at the sub-national dialogue in Pirojpur.



Awareness building and free flow of information among CBOs are contributing to reduced child marriage and violence against women

- CBO and youth monthly meetings are making guardians and parents more aware of **education and child protection policies** and contributing to increased school participation of their children. They are also contributing to a reduction in violence against women and children in Pirojpur.
- Discussion in the district network meetings on **child protection policy** is making members more aware about the bad impacts of child marriage. For example, they were able to stop one child marriage in Sirajganj.
- **Messenger group and hotline numbers** have been introduced to exchange information between district network members. This helped stop one child marriage in ward 7 of Barguna municipality.
- As a result of the District Network Committee stopping two child marriages in Sandwip upazila and **bringing the prospective bride and groom under the purview of the law**, child marriages are not taking place in Sandwip upazila as like previous times. People are now more aware about the bad impacts and legal provisions of child marriage.



Awareness building on SDGs and associated policies contributing to greater access to public services among CBOs

As a result of workshops with local administrations, public hearings and media briefings with concerned local administrations and local governments, and regular discussions on SDGs in CBOs -- all held in the working area during 2018-19, 25 CBOs participating in the programme could memorise and **speak about 6 out of 17 goals fluently**. Thanks to this, the CBO leaders are now more keen to contribute to SDG implementation in concrete ways. They are in regular contact with the concerned government offices, especially the agriculture office, livestock office, youth development office, women's affairs office, social service office and union parishad in general, and are **able to get more access to services earmarked for them** in Swandip, Chattogram.

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