

Integrated approaches to promoting sanitation: A case study of Faridpur, Bangladesh

M. Ali, L. Stevens

Access to Services Programme, Practical Action, Bourton on Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire CV23 9QZ, United Kingdom

email: mansali@practicalaction.org.uk

Received 31 January 2008; revised accepted 15 May 2008

Abstract

This paper summarises the experience of Practical Action in promoting water, sanitation, waste and hygiene-related infrastructure and services in the town of Faridpur, Bangladesh. In addition to the improvement in health and local environment, the project attempted to increase income and employment through the provision and operation of services. Practical Action and its partners have organized community groups and developed participatory slum improvement plans. This then leads to the prioritisation of immediate needs and agreeing roles and responsibilities in the delivery. To address other needs identified in the plans, slum dwellers were encouraged to develop partnerships with the municipality and other service providers. The involvement of people and their empowerment has lead to better use and maintenance of water and sanitation-related infrastructure and services. Community members, once organized have also negotiated better deals with the municipality. However, income and employment from the services, appears to be a more complicated issue in practice as compared to what was planned in the project. This is because of social structures in the slum areas and community expectations. Overall, the Faridpur model appears as a potential model to improve access to services in urban slums of Asia to achieve health, environment and well-being outcomes.

Keywords: Urban; Slum improvement; Participatory planning; Income from sanitation services and Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Bangladesh has a population of 144.2 million (2006), a highly population-dense country with many people living on land which is small as compared to the size of its population. Officially, 24.7% or 35 million of the total population was living in urban areas in 2006 and the urban population growth rate is more than double the national growth rate. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Human

Development Index (2006) [1] ranks Bangladesh 140th out of 177 countries. More than one third of the Bangladeshi population lives on an income of below \$1 per day. Rural to urban migration is high and the quality of life in urban slums is extremely poor. These trends will continue and in future a large and concentrated urban population will have even greater needs for services such as water supply, sanitation, transport and electricity. Even now, the proportion of the urban population living in slums is huge. UN-Habitat

Presented at the Water and Sanitation in International Development and Disaster Relief (WSIDDR) International Workshop Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, 28–30 May 2008.

estimated it at 84.7% in 2001 (UN-Habitat, 2003) [2] and while there are different definitions used by Habitat and national governments, on an average one third of the population in cities and towns live in conditions without access to basic services. Nationally, than 50% of the Bangladeshi population has no access to improved sanitation and 30% of the population need improved water supply. Improved water and sanitation services brings health benefits to the population and improve the local environment. Over time this leads to a healthy population ready to invest in a cleaner environment and the area attracts external investments. Conventional approaches to improve water and sanitation do not attempt to enhance direct income and employment of the poor from the provision and management of services. Neither do they integrate the role of the poor as service providers. Practical Action is experimenting with approaches, which can strengthen the participation and ownership of poor people in planning, building partnerships with others and creating opportunities for direct income from the services. This paper summarises our learning from an urban slum project in Faridpur, Bangladesh. The paper attempts to answer the research question; ‘to what extent can participation and planning with poor people lead to sustainable infrastructure services and enhanced livelihoods and income for urban poor’.

2. Practical Action integrated approaches

Practical Action has been working to improve the lives of poor people for more than 40 years and in the last 10 years it has paid increasing attention to access to urban services as a means of liberating people from poverty. The intended outcomes from this work are better health, an improved environment and increased income opportunities for the poor from using or providing services. Our approach recognises the multi-dimensional nature of urban poverty, and therefore seeks to overcome a range of barriers to improving people’s lives. The approach was inspired and adapted from the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework as promoted by the Department for International Development (DFID) [3], and interpreted by others in urban contexts, for example, Rakodi [4] and Beall and Fox [5]. In this sense, ‘integration’ means working on various assets simultaneously by building the capacity of

community-based organizations (CBOs), supporting small enterprise development, improving access to credit, and lobbying for more secure land tenure and pro-poor changes in policies and regulations. In Faridpur slums, we did not work only on water and sanitation, but on a wider range of issues as prioritised by slum residents. A second key aspect of ‘integration’ is in terms of partnerships and co-ordination between a wide range of key stakeholders. This leads to the processes in which poor people and their concerns take the lead (Stevens, Coupe and Mitlin, 2006, vol. 4) [6]. Our key indicators of integration are:

- Community collectively planning to achieve access to water, sanitation and other services and infrastructure.
- Inclusive prioritisation of services essential for their health, environment and livelihoods.
- Community partnerships with other organizations established, leading to improved access to services.
- Sustainable and affordable services delivered with direct income and employment benefits to the poor.
- Community capacity developed to demand improved services.

3. The situation in Faridpur, Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, Practical Action has been working in a number of secondary towns including Faridpur. The district town of Faridpur, located 130 km southwest of Dhaka is home to 126,226 people, while the Faridpur town population is estimated at 109,000. The town has moved locations several times due to erosion cause by the mighty force of the river Padma. Faridpur town still wears the look of a rural setting and lags behind many other district towns in terms of infrastructure and urban facilities. The town is home to a high number of victims of floods and river erosion, who take refuge mainly in the elevated *khas land* (fallow government land) and along the embankments and riverbanks. There are 22 informal settlements (slums) within the municipal area. According to data from the Municipal authority, 9955 people are living in these slums. However, the actual slum population may be much higher than this, as it is not easy to update the official records. The living environment in many low income areas is also very similar to slum areas. The services in these areas are lacking and there are major investment needs.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/626342>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/626342>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)