



Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability (JATRA)

CARE Bangladesh is implementing the Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability (JATRA) project. The project aims to strengthen the Union Parishads' (Lowest tier of local government) public finance management systems so that they are more transparent and aligned with the Local Government Act 2009. The project endeavors to ensure active participation of the community leaders, especially women, in key decision making spaces and bodies. Moreover, JATRA strives to allow the wider community to play an active role in social accountability mechanisms to ensure inclusive democratic processes, equal access to quality services and access to accurate information at all levels of Union Parishad.

Community score card initiated to improve service delivery of safety net programs in working unions under Gaibandha and Nilphamari districts

JATRA project has initiated community score card (CSC) with Natural leaders (Local leaders emerged from community mobilization process), Citizen Forums (Project supported community group who engages in democratic dialogue with UP for interest of poor and marginalized) and local government representatives to enhance citizens' voices for quality service delivery. The CSC exercises were practiced to include poor and marginalized citizens feedback in Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Old Age Pension and Cash for Work social safety net programs delivered by Union Parishads. These services were prioritized from a large number of issues identified by communities for assessment. These three services have been selected as they are target the poorest and the most marginalized women. In addition, there was dissatisfaction among the participants about the beneficiary selection and measurement of allocations given to beneficiaries. The Union Parishad is responsible for beneficiary selection and allotment distribution according to government circulation from the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs (VGD), the Department of Social Services (old age pension) and the Ministry of Disaster and Relief (Cash for Work).

The CSC exercises were commenced in three phases: input indicator identification and scoring from the perspective of government standards by local authorities, satisfaction scoring of the services from the civil society organization, and an inter phase meeting to identify gaps and planning for improvement. The whole exercise was conducted in two days by the presence of citizen forums, natural leaders, beneficiaries of services, respective committee members, UP members and chairman, journalists, district facilitator of LGSP-II (Local Governance Support Project) and UP secretary.

Key findings and recommendation

VGD card:

A total of 855 no of VGD cards were allocated for destitute women with a provision of 30 kg of rice/wheat per month distribution for 2 years in two union. The exercise revealed that the beneficiaries list was never published to citizen, participatory approach of selection was not taken, the amount of grain was lower in measurement, and absence of training on livelihood skill and follow up by NGO/UP.



Cash for work:

The 40 days cash for work program is implemented in 2 phase each year in a union. A total of 520 no of beneficiary cards were issued in the union, for male 350 and for female 170. The benefit is 200 tk per day. The beneficiaries were given job card with a registration of bank account. The exercise revealed that the cards were held in some places by elites, and each week in exchange of 50 tk the beneficiaries are allowed by elites to withdraw money from the bank. The selection is not participatory, chairman and member finalizes beneficiary list, do not make list public. The committee is ineffective, and beneficiaries are reluctant to disclose malpractice.

Old age pension:

A total of 65 nos of pension card were allocated into the union, for male 38 and for female 27. The amount of pension is 400 BDT per month from June, 2014, earlier it was 300 BDT per month. The selection is done from scrutinizing national ID, announced by loud speaker around the union, final selection is done by social service officer. The UP is less involved, except playing role of announcement

by loud speaker, and political influence is high in the selection. The number of card is very low considering the real number of old people residing in the union. The recommendation for improvement came to publicize more vigorously, use ward shabha to select beneficiaries by public consensus on considering poverty and vulnerability.

Decision in the inter phase meeting:

A six months plan was made to improve the service quality, sack was recommended for 30kg grain distribution, ward shabha was recommended for final beneficiary selection and beneficiary list was proposed to make in public.

- For improvement of VGD allocation, Union Parishads will ensure distribution of allocated 30 KGs of grain per beneficiary on a monthly basis
- Ward Shava (Formal citizen meeting with elected UP representatives) will be used for final beneficiary selection and final beneficiary list will be shared publicly
- A monitoring committee will be formed to follow up the proposed actions.

