

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 divided into 9 wards) 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.

JOURNEY FOR ADVANCEMENT IN TRANSPARENCY, REPRESENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY (JATRA)



FACILITATING LOCAL POWER AND POVERTY ANALYSIS IN DEVELOPING PRO-POOR PARTICIPATORY LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING

As an integral part of understanding the local context for the development of context-specific implementation strategies, the JATRA project facilitated locally-led power and poverty analysis by involving Union Parishad elected representatives, the Citizen Forum in each union, and 'natural leaders' (publicly active community members) in each of its' working unions. The participatory analysis includes the mapping of resources and powerful actors and their influence over the decision-making process of local governance, along with the mapping of poverty dynamics and social and natural vulnerabilities.

The exercise begins with the construction of a large map drawn in the UP complex. All the Union Parishad representatives explain the resources, services, and

infrastructure from their respective wards. The home wards of UP members are identified, along with the homes of other major power holders. The members of the Citizen Forum and other community members are present to verify, add to, and discuss these inputs. After the mapping exercise, the distribution of resources, services, and infrastructure has been captured spatially, providing a greater comparative scenario of vulnerability and poverty.



Participatory poverty and power mapping in Khatamodhupur UP

The exercise reveals a picture of sanitation coverage, and the availability of services related to education, health, agriculture and livestock by ward. It also provides a scenario of infrastructurally poor areas and issues of privilege, disparity and exclusion.

In JATRA, findings and analysis of the exercise were used by Union Parishads to develop five year plans, as stipulated in the Union Parishad Act 2009. This planning is mandatory for obtaining block grants from the Local Government Support Program II of the Local Government Division. The analysis provides relevant information for the Union Parishad to articulate its vision of development for a five year plan, focusing on providing equitable resources and services for poor and vulnerable communities that have been overlooked in the past.



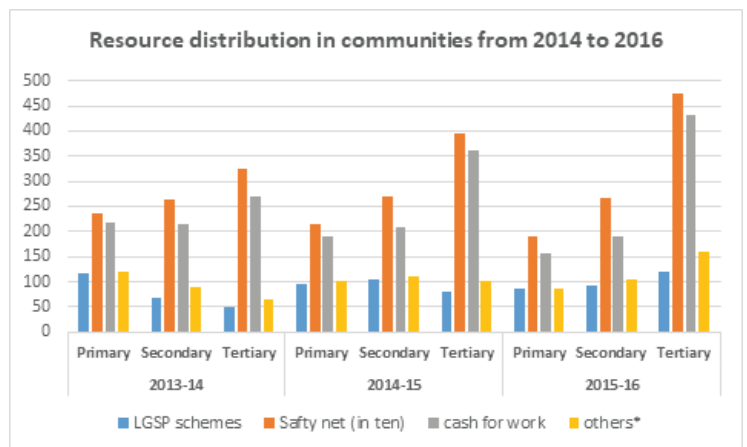
Vision and five years plan of Bothlagari UP

The outcome of the mapping exercises is then evaluated in the UP evaluation exercise conducted every 6 months (also facilitated by JATRA). Throughout the annual planning and budgeting cycle, UP members and chairmen recall the disparities which were identified in the mapping, and use the evidence from the mapping to negotiate for resource allocation; Citizen Forum members also use this data (which remains visible posted in the UP complex) to influence decision making processes related to resource allocation.



Review of five year planning in UP evaluation meeting in Kashiramelpukur UP

Over the course of JATRA implementation, the project monitored the resource flows to communities, according to 3 main categories: those categorised as 'primary' communities, where powerful actors have wide influence and have channeled more resources; secondary communities, where less powerful leaders, dependent upon contacts with primary elites, have some limited influence to channel moderate resources; and tertiary communities where leadership is weak, with few connections to more powerful actors and very limited ability to channel resources.



The monitoring report reveals the flow of resources (also pictured in the graph above). As can be seen, there are now more resource allocations flowing to poor communities (tertiary communities) in 15 operating UPs of JATRA in Nilphamari and Gaibandha districts 21% LGSP schemes that were allocated to poor community in 2013-14 fiscal year have gone up to 40% in 2015-16, similarly safety nets have gone up from 40% to 51% and cash for work from 38% to 55%. The others includes programs of ADP, 1% share of land transfer fees, own income revenue etc.

Challenges: Updating the information in the map is a challenge – JATRA staff have played a role in keeping the maps updated, but it will be important for communities/UPs to maintain updated maps in the future, to keep them relevant.



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