

Community Based Organizations (CBOs)¹

Besides religion, Caste, tribe, aboriginal tribe a group of people living in a particular area or place (e.g. a village or part of village or part of town or more than one village) work for the better for the people is called "Community". Peoples living within the community having the more or less same occupation, culture etc with common interests. Condition of sharing having things/issues in common, being alike in some way of community interests.

In Bangladesh Community based Organizations (CBOs) have been working since long time in rural and urban areas. Various CBOs are existed in rural areas in Bangladesh such as cooperative society, IPM Club, ICM Club, Sport Club, Youth Club, Agriculture association, Landless association, Farmers association, Water user association, Irrigation Club, Farmer group, Krishok Samobay Samity (KSS), Milk cooperative Society, Fisher men association etc.

CBOs in Bangladesh are either formal or informal Organizations in the communities who act together towards a common goal in order to realize common interests and CBOs operate in an institutional manner. Most formal CBOs are registered with authorized Government departments to meet their legal status such as department of cooperative, Department of youth development, Department of social welfare etc. Maximum CBOs are informal and they do not have any legal status. In general CBO's registration with authorized department of GOB is a complicated processing with several limitations such as lot of paper work, time consuming, following complex formalities and unauthorized payment need to be done by the members of the CBO. Conflicts among the members of the CBO can be overcome formally for the legal CBOs than the informal CBOs. To beat out the registration hazards, CBO may be registered with sub-register Office or as welfare trust, so that members have rights within legal status of the CBOs.

Both formal and informal CBOs are worked in the communities. Members of each CBOs who act together towards a common goal and objectives in order to realize common interests and operates in an institutional manner. CBOs are involved for different type of works in rural Bangladesh. However, CBOs are playing important role in various agricultural activities including disseminating agricultural technologies in cost-effective manner. Various projects, NGOs, private organizations, GOs etc have been working with CBOs on various agricultural activities. In general NGOs are worked with farmer groups for their credit program operation. But several NGOs have been working with CBOs for implementation of the donor funded development projects. Poverty Elimination Through Rice Research Assistance (PETRRA), a Project of IRRI funded by DFID was used CBOs for implementation of large number sub-projects during 1998-2004 with various organizations including Agricultural Advisory Society (AAS). Eventually, on the basis of the findings of AAS and other involved organizations of PETRRA concluded that working with CBOs is more cost-effective and

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successful than with NGOs, especially with small fund resources (Mele, P.V. et.al. 2005 and Rashid, H. 2004)¹.

In Barisal region, DANIDA is supporting both the DoF and DLS in implementing the Regional Livestock and Fisheries Development Component (RFLDC) activities as part of their Agriculture Sector Program Support (ASPS). Principal activity of RFLDC has been organizing farmers into CBOs for engaging in development efforts in agriculture. A large number of CBOs have accordingly formed with project support for their institution building and capacity improvement (RFLDC, 2010) in participation and contribution with the activities of RFLDC (RELDC,2010)².

As reported, Uttaran has 24 CBOs for water committee, land committee and youth club. CODEC has 4515 total CBOs of which 3500 CBOs at village level, 900 CBOs at word level, 98 CBOs at union level and 17 at upazila level. Shushilan has 1000 CBOs as most informal organization for several activities including agriculture. RRF has 115 CBOs for various project activities, of which 21 CBOs at urban area (Jessore Municipality). JCF has 136 CBOs mainly for IGAs (agriculture) through skill development initiative. *Most of the NGOs are working with CBOs on the basis of donor funding guidelines and pushing without clear understanding the purpose and objective of the CBO.*

Strength: CBOs are located at community, usually CBOs are formed on the basis of initiative from the community and participation of interested people from the community, work for the community people on demand driven basis, lead by the community leaders / lead farmers, management and staff cost absent or minimum, participatory activity plan prepare, members' benefit visible and so on.

Weakness: Most CBOs are not systematically established, lack of institution building and capacity development, conflict exists among the members of CBOs,, lack of technical knowledge particularly in agriculture, few CBOs has IGAs and so on. To make CBOs most effective in agriculture project activities, CBOs' strengthening should be a prime initiative before implementation of any project in cost-effective way.

On long term basis CBOs must be self sustained at rural communities. In this circumstance during implementation of various projects, some over head should be accumulated in favor of CBO. Moreover, each CBO should have IGAs for its long term sustainability in the society. Various activities such as institutional building and capacity development for the Existing relevant CBOs and newly formed CBOs need to be under taken for engaging the selected CBOs in agricultural development efforts with proposed BATP in south central and southwest coastal regions of the country. Accordingly, established legal and formal CBO may be very well poised to participate and implement activities finalize by BATP.

¹.Mele P.V.21. at. 2005: In Innovations in rural extension: Case studies from Bangladesh.

¹Rashid, H. 2004: In. completion report on strengthening FARMSEED extension method.

²Mid-term study on impact of RFLDC and RRVIAC, ASPS-11: Findings: Impact of community based organization, DANIDA, 2010