

6.3 Summary: Findings on the Five Principal Study Questions

1. HAVE PROGRAMMATIC INPUTS HAVE BEEN SUSTAINED TO (A) SUPPORT COMMUNITIES AND (B) HELP THE POOR?

A. Status of Ongoing Sanitation Promotion Activities

In monthly meetings with UP chairmen of their sub-districts, the chief administrative officers (UNO/Upazila Nirbahi Officers) all reportedly discuss sanitation issues. The more active UP chairmen rely on the moral and financial support of their UNOs in pursuing local sanitation goals.

The study team found approximately one-third of the 53 encountered UP chairmen to be actively trying to maintain and improve sanitation practice in their unions. Another 30 percent were found to be interested in the issue but working less consistently. The rest of the UP chairmen did not seem to be especially interested in sanitation matters. One energetic leader had died. Qualities of the most active and effective chairmen include the following: using all sorts of situations (even if they are conducting other types of business, such as dispute resolution) to continually remind their constituents of the importance of 'hygienic' latrine; declaring some local rules against open defecation and following up on complaints with the help of village police; routine checking up on compliance with rules against open defecation; [AND OTHERS...] Some are struggling to install public latrines or challenge Bazaar Committees to improve maintenance of existing ones. Their personal attention and interest communicates a sense of the importance of good sanitation to rural populations.

In some, but not all in-depth study unions the research team was able to ascertain whether or not the UP was currently using governmental Annual Development Programme (ADP) funds to support sanitation improvements. Out of 17 unions, 12 were found to be doing so, and five were no longer allocating funds annually for this purpose. One of these five [G-Don-1], however, used ADP funds to help families rebuild latrines after two recent cyclones. Two of the 12 were channeling their ADP funds for latrine hardware through a sanitation program working in their unions.

Monitoring of sanitation status is done informally if at all. In some places the public can bring complaints against neighbors whose poorly maintained latrines cause bad smells to spread. Rules against open defecation are rarely enforced by public agencies; but social norms against open defecation are strong. Children are likely to taunt or tease those who defecate openly, and their reputations in adult society suffer.

Other individuals and organizations beside the UP, of course, also have assumed responsibility to continue sanitation promotion in some places. In 18 out of the 53 study unions union-wide sanitation programs still are in place. They are conducted either by large, national NGOs, such as BRAC or WaterAid/VERC, by DPHE-UNICEF, or other Government-donor sponsors. In the unions covered under the Dishari program a UP [Water and Environmental Sanitation/WES] post has been created with funding from PLAN Bangladesh. Two WES officers seemed active in visited unions. Elsewhere there are more

limited local initiatives targeting specific areas or populations within the union. The program Targeting the Ultra Poor includes provision of improved latrines along with other assets to eligible households identified according to strict guidelines.

Of the utmost importance is the hygiene curriculum in schools of all areas. Interviews with both children and adults demonstrated that this curriculum is building and maintaining awareness of the importance of latrine use, along with hand washing and safe water management. School children tell their parents what they learn in school and exert pressure to install latrines. School teachers also tend to be influential shapers of public opinion. If schools have improved latrines that are well maintained, they too set a type of example for others to follow. Children are also the people who actively enforce, as well as transmit, anti-open defecation norms. [LK inserted, feel free to remove]

B. Help for Poor Households

Opinions differ regarding what kinds of help are most useful to poor people. A widespread view is that poor families need free or subsidized latrine parts, distribution of which is paid for by ADP funds or charitable donations. Another view emphasizes development of motivation and a self-help mentality among poor people. Yet another approach suggests that the internal dynamics of rural communities should be activated to help the poor, rather than getting them dependent on any outside agents or resources.

[ADD SOMETHING HERE: Pertinent findings of this study about how poor people are or are not helped at present....]

Existing programs and UP activities help some kinds of poor people more than others. Families who own their homes may get help with free distribution of latrine parts; but renters or squatters on publicly-owned lands are not likely to. Their relationships with those who are in charge determine whether or not even the permanent residents get benefits from local governments. Social dynamics and ethnic divisions also have an effect.

Many rural areas see large numbers of seasonal migrants, agricultural laborers, coming and going; and these people are not likely to benefit from any sanitation service except public latrines. There also are nomadic groups (Bedde) who visit at certain seasons, "floating people" (homeless), itinerant vendors and collectors of recyclable goods, and even street children, in the rural areas visited. None of these groups is likely to benefit from the kinds of sanitation promotion activities currently underway.

Children who do not attend school, some 13 percent of those age 6 to 16 in sample union populations, have less access to information than those who attend school. School drop-outs are almost all poor.

2. WHAT ARE THE PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF OPEN DEFECACTION FREE STATUS AND LATRINE USE?

Latrine use is widely agreed to be important in all study areas. Open defecation violates social norms in all areas visited. Almost all of questionnaire respondents say that latrine use by all is important. Health improvement – avoiding the spread of disease -- is the most frequently mentioned reason for latrine use according to survey respondents and other

interviewees alike. Avoiding environmental pollution, especially bad smells and water pollution, is the second most frequently mentioned benefit of general latrine use.

In-depth interviews brought out a strong concern for village pride and family dignity; these matters were mentioned by questionnaire respondents but not as frequently as by focus group participants and key informants. Village cleanliness and the absence of bad smells make visitors feel welcome and raise every resident's status. Having a 'hygienic' latrine is considered essential to arranging matches with suitable families for one's marriageable children.

Women especially appreciate the newly introduced latrine technology. A great many people said in one way or another that household latrines enhance women's lives, because women, most of whom are trying to maintain purdah, formerly had to avoid elimination until night time hours to make sure their bare bodies were not seen by others while they were defecating or urinating.

Other positive benefits of latrine use were said to be that latrine use has religious value by enhancing purity and cleanliness; that latrine use requires less land area than open defecation; and that latrine use inspires others to use latrines, reduces anxiety, and generally improves living conditions.

3. ARE LATRINE FACILITIES BUILT PRE AND POST ODF DEFECATION STILL FUNCTIONING? WHAT IS THE DURABILITY OF FACILITIES BUILT UNDER THESE APPROACHES?

As might be expected of places where sanitation promotion started some time ago, the unions under study, at 93%, over-all have a much higher rate of "improved" household latrine usage than the 50 – 54% national average¹. Using this broad definition, any pit with a slab is counted as an improved latrine. Three categories of improved latrine were identified in this study, each used by a different proportion of 3000 sample households: (1) improved latrine with no cover or water-seal (47.4%); (2) improved latrine with a cover or polyethylene flap closing off the passage to the pit (5.8%); and (3) improved latrine with intact water seal (40%). These three are actually based on 13 different types observed. Those with vent pipes, septic tanks, offset pits, double pits, and other variations have been merged into the improved categories depending on the condition of the slab and the opening to the pit.

Shared latrines are included in the above counts, although some experts exclude shared latrines from the "improved" category. Twenty-six percent of sample households jointly own their latrines with other households; and seven percent routinely use others' latrines. Joint ownership and sharing correlate with lower household economic status.

Thirty percent of sample household latrines have been installed during the past two years, implying that many latrines installed at the time of ODF declaration either have broken down or have been replaced. Around 45 percent of all improved latrines, however, have been in use for more than five years, indicating that some of the pre-ODF and ODF period latrines are durable.

¹ National rates are unpublished, provisional data for rural areas from the Joint Monitoring Program or the Government of Bangladesh. (UNICEF Bangladesh, personal communication)

The average duration of owning the present latrine varies according to approach. The lowest duration is in CLTS intervention areas, where the median period is 48 months; and the highest is in both GOB and non-CLTS intervention areas, where 60 months is the median. GOB-Donor areas are in between, at 55 months median duration of ownership. The lower median in CLTS intervention areas may be related to the more frequent use of locally innovated, short-lived latrine technologies.

The household survey found that 47% of the households were continuing with the same latrine throughout the past five years; 41% had used two latrines during this period; and the remaining 10% had used three or more different latrines. During their most recent changes, 38% had upgraded the latrine type while switching; 53% switched to a similar type; and 9% down-graded: this includes some kind of change by 23% of the open defecation or hang latrine using group. Among former open defecators or hang latrine users, the majority (62%) upgraded to a slab latrine without cover or water seal.

Three percent had down-graded during the change from the first to the second latrine; but none down-graded during the change from the second to the third.

Simply *having* an improved latrine does not guarantee that it will be maintained in a hygienic manner. Surveyed latrines (improved types only) were carefully checked for conditions defeating their public health value. For example, the questionnaires noted such problems as breakage of pits to allow feces to run out into open water bodies or land; a strong, bad odor coming out of the latrine; whether feces are lying around on the latrine floor or pan; and whether the pit is leaking profusely or not.

On the basis of these observations all improved latrines were divided up into two categories: "hygienic" and "unhygienic." If any of the above problems was noted, a latrine was put into the "unhygienic" category. A large percentage, 65% of sample household latrines, was found to be "unhygienic" by this definition. It is important to note that both hygienic and unhygienic conditions were found in all three categories of improved latrines -- both with and without intact water seals or covers. The percentages of unhygienic conditions were, as might be expected, higher in the categories without water seals. But nearly half, 45.6 percent, of those with intact water seals were found to be unhygienic in terms of their maintenance.

Unhygienic types were found among all intervention groups (61% to 71%), in all geographical regions (somewhat less in hilly areas, at 47%), and in all economic status groups -- more among the poorest (79%), but still 61% and 41% among upper-middle and rich households, respectively. There were slightly less in areas where the ODF declaration was followed up by another program (62%) than in areas where there had been no follow-up (68%).

4. HOW HAS THE GROWTH OR ATTRITION OF SANITATION PRODUCTS AND SERVICES (MASONS, PIT EMPTIER, FINANCING) AFFECTED SUSTAINABILITY OF SANITATION BEHAVIORS AND FACILITIES AND ODF STATUS?

There are five different ways that households get latrines: 1) purchase from a shop; 2) through free or subsidized union council distribution; 3) free or subsidized NGO distribution;

4) as donations from wealthy individuals or volunteer associations, such as youth clubs; or 5) by making their own latrines.

Ring-slab latrine sets are generally purchased from commercial establishments. The study has found most unions to have adequate numbers of latrine-parts sellers relative to demand. Unions typically have from two to six such businesses within their boundaries. Over-all 69 percent of household survey respondents (78 to 80 percent in CLTS intervention areas) said that latrine-making materials are easily available in markets; and 29 percent said they were available 'with effort'. Services of masons are easily available according to more than 90 percent of survey respondents in all types of intervention areas.

Financing assistance for latrine purchase is not universally available in study unions. In some places there are no organizations offering credit for this purpose, even though NGOs may offer micro-credit for other purposes. In around half of the 50 study unions latrine owners mentioned borrowing from NGOs to pay for materials or labor. Latrine sellers, on the other hand, often say that they sell materials to poor people at reduced prices or on installment terms, and household questionnaire responses confirm this.

Several of the more successful business owners interviewed started out as masons installing latrines. Many businesses have been set up in response to the recent sanitation campaign or early NGO sanitation promotion efforts. One stimulant for establishing a latrine parts business was getting large orders from unions or NGOs at the initial stage of the sanitation campaign. Some businesses continued after this peak demand period, but some did not. Some (but not all) businessmen say that there is more demand now for replacement parts and repair than for new latrines, and that business has declined since the campaign days.

The general trend is an increase in numbers and volume of latrine parts businesses, but demand varies from place to place, depending on local preferences in latrine type. In places where alternative technologies – unlined pits, pottery or bamboo pit liners – are popular, there is less demand for concrete ring-slab sets. Supply also tends to be somewhat less in such areas.

Pit cleaning services, like latrine parts businesses, have become increasingly available in response to the public's increased use of pit latrines. Some pit cleaners mention providing occasional services to owners of simple, unlined pit latrines. But those with bamboo linings are replaced rather than being cleaned.

From the poor household's point of view pit cleaning costs are an important concern. While they are usually available, pit cleaners' services often are not considered to be affordable by the very poorest households. Ring-slab sets thus at times remain filled up or are under-utilized because of concerns about pit cleaning costs.

Human feces removal is traditionally the role of specific, low-caste Hindu "Sweepers" in Bangladesh, like the rest of South Asia. In [three-four] visited unions, however, the study team found some poor Muslim men choosing this low-status occupation, as it offers much better earning opportunities than rickshaw- or van-pulling, and possibly even daily-paid agricultural labor work.

5. HOW HAVE HOUSEHOLDS AND COMMUNITIES MANAGED TO SUSTAIN IMPROVED SANITATION PRACTICES? WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPAL CHALLENGES?

5.1 Challenges

Political Challenges

The UP chairmen who led ODF campaigns and got awards for “100% coverage” are, of course, elected officials. As the tides of political party dominance have changed since the initial sanitation campaign, some will find themselves out of office, or otherwise politically sidelined. Putting them in charge of maintaining ODF status has been a good idea, but political factors will influence outcomes. Here and there opponents have done as much as possible to diminish public support for *any* issue championed by a political rival. In one case political opponents reportedly defecated on the road near the UP office just before a meeting about sanitation. It would be naive to assume that sanitation is exempt from being affected by these processes.

- The National Government’s message not consistent; and funding flows, following party lines to some extent, also are inconsistent. It is not entirely clear whether the Government is paying attention to sanitation at present.

-Some UP chairmen and members reluctant to pressure their people before election

-Weak commitment of some political leaders

-Hardware emphasis

-Awareness raising or public education

-Building new houses, new settlements without attention to sanitation: There are no local building codes or strong requirements.

Economic

-Extreme economic hardship in some parts of the population

-Concerns about pit cleaning costs

-Crowding, congested settlements

-Space for disposal of pit contents may be limited

-Large numbers of agricultural laborers or floating people

Social divisions and disparities

-Insecurity of land tenure (*khaash* land)

-Social exclusion

-Quarrels between families

-Joint family separation

-Latrine sharing

-School children drop-outs

-Gender relations: pollution concerns of men (not a major threat to sustainability)

Motivational

-Small % never gave up OD

- Some areas have weak community spirit
- Reluctance to repair broken latrines

Conceptual

- A “latrine” - It is not just rings, slabs, pit, cover
- It also includes superstructure

Technical

- Poor quality of concrete latrine parts
- Superstructure tends to be poor in poor HH
- Soil conditions: very hard earth, sandy soil
- Land level (High/Medium/Low)
- Flood-prone areas: latrines are submerged
- Flash floods: destroy super-structures
- Cyclones & storms
- Inconvenient water supply or seasonal water shortage: low priority given to carrying water for cleaning
- Self-installed latrines may not be technically sound

5.2 Factors Contributing to Sustainability

Being ODF is perceived as a national priority, which helps to reduce political divisions at local and regional levels.

Institutional Factors

- Expansion of the campaign in the past 5 years to the full population
- Strong role of schools: expansion teaching from personal hygiene to latrine use
- Ongoing efforts of UP (2/3 active) and inspired volunteers
 - A few ‘rules’ & requirements (or perceived)
 - Good cooperation between GO & NGO
 - Chowkidars: some are still observing, reminding. They are the face of local government at village level.
 - Pit cleaners in one union remind and warn people too. [Saliabakpur KII]

Social & Economic Factors

- Change in public ‘mind-set’ resulting from 5 – 30 years of sanitation promotion programs: SHAME (*lojja*) associated with open defecation
- Public understanding of health benefits is nearly universal
- Social status needs are closely associated with latrine use and clean villages: marriage arrangement, good relations with in-laws, welcoming visitors
- Perceived spiritual/religious benefits of latrine use
- Local pride & public occasions – village festivals, cultural events
- Neighbors remind each other about problems: quarrels, even *salish* – sign of social norms changing

- Self-help mentality in some poor communities
 - Install their own latrines
 - Maintain their latrines (at high rates in places)
 - Do their own pit cleaning
- Enhanced economic capacity of households getting remittances from abroad

Supply Chain

- An adequate supply of latrine parts and pit cleaning services has developed in recent years

The sanitation campaign has stimulated the expansion of mass production of concrete rings and slabs. This has made latrine ownership a real possibility for households of modest means, which is a positive result. Like all mass production systems, however, it results in dissemination of the technology to regions and groups for which it may not be totally appropriate.