

Factors Affecting the Action Situation of Community Development Workers in Disaster-Prone Coastal Areas of Bangladesh: The Need for a Holistic Approach

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Abstract

Recent studies suggested that much of the practical movement towards social transformation occurs at the community level through the participation of community development workers (CDWs) who know better than others the needs and desires of their community. However, community development strategies often overlook a holistic approach underrating the social context that limits the capacity of the CDWs. Using Ostrom's Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework, the study intends to identify the factors affecting the action situation of CDWs of four disaster-prone coastal villages of Bangladesh, namely Keyabunia, Kalabati, Kanainagar, and Kanainagar Guchhagram. To serve the purpose, the study followed the qualitative method and tools consisting of four FGDs and four KIIs. In addition to the unsafe biophysical environment, the findings show, institutional arrangements such as landholding social structure, poverty cycle, poor leadership skills of the community people, the survival tension, time constraints, patriarchy, and the associated gender roles as a few of the major constraining factors affecting the action situation of CDWs and demotivating community people to take the role of a CDW. Finally, the study outlines a list of recommendations that would underwrite the holistic approach of community development initiatives during project design and implementation to keep the action of the community aligned with the strategic vision.

Keywords: Action situation, Bangladesh, community development worker, capacity, constraint, development, holistic approach

1. Introduction

Top-down approaches to disaster risk reduction strategies often fail to address the local needs and specific demands of at-risk communities because it is often difficult for outsiders to understand the biophysical environment and particular social and cultural contexts of local communities (Baudoin et al., 2016; Ainuddin et al., 2013; Onstad et al., 2012). Currently, the journey towards resilience and sustainability starts at the community level (Muhammad, 2016; Thwala, 2010; Nour, 2011; Baudoin et al., 2016; Henderson et al., 2005; Banks et al., 2005). Many policymakers felt the necessity of the adoption of a new strategy that directly involves the vulnerable people in the level of planning and ensures the implementation of mitigation measures by the community people themselves (Ainuddin et al., 2013). This strategy, known as the bottom-up approach, has received greater acceptance as communities are considered the best judges of their vulnerability in this approach and are expected to be the active agents with greater responsibilities regarding their well-being (Webber & Jones, 2012). Such an

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approach led to the emergence of the concept of ‘community development’ that has combined a community’s ability with development issues. It is often considered an empowering tool that seeks to equip individuals and groups with the training and skills required to improve community life (ScdC, 2019). Unlike the highly structured national and international bodies with hierarchy and centralization of power, community development initiatives tend to be more organic in nature and are implemented through a more decentralized governance system. Community development initiatives using a bottom-up approach, thus, ensures significant participation of the beneficiaries in the process of planning, operation, implementation, and monitoring (Muhammad, 2016; Laurens, 2012). The highest output is possible through the participation of community people and empowering them who can speed up and assist the development process by spreading out information about innovation to others who do not necessarily know about it or are trying to find out more detail about it (Webber & Jones, 2012; Mathbor, 2007). Thus, an effective community development approach is vital for development organizations working in tandem with the community people (Tan and Yuen, 2013).

However, community development strategies mostly supported by NGOs often focus on capacity building without considering a holistic perspective as an indispensable way to achieve sustainability (Dahir et al., 2009; Domeisen & Prema, 2006). Sometimes, NGOs lose their major focus on delivering cheaper and quicker service (Islam & Morgan, 2011).

The people of a community, the central stakeholders in the community development approach, are often not acknowledged or are left out of the entire equation (Henderson et al., 2005). In many cases, community development initiatives do not consider local context, power relations among stakeholders, cultural beliefs, and resource availability amongst others (Blackstock et al., 2007). Consequently, inappropriate training inconsistent with the whole social context fails to equip community development workers to deal with complex real-life problems. Besides, this narrow focus most often underrates the biophysical context that contributes to limit the capacity of community development workers and discourages rendering their services.

The existing literature on community development workers are mostly limited with explaining their roles rather than highlighting their challenges (Disoloane & Lekonyane, 2011; Gray & Mubangizi, 2010; Mokoena & Moeti, 2017) and a very few studies are particularly about community health care workers (Kawakatsu et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014; Sun et al., 2013). However, literature from the context of community development in coastal Bangladesh is hardly available. Based on this backdrop, the current study intends to identify the challenges of the coastal community development workers using Ostrom’s Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework. The framework contributes to identifying the factors, which are present almost in all institutional arrangements, affecting the action situation of an actor but whose values differ from platform to platform (Ostrom et al., 1994).

Grounding on the IAD framework, the current study attempts to diagnose the action situation of community development workers including complex institutional arrangements of disaster-prone coastal communities of Bangladesh. The study intends to explore factors affecting the action situation by putting continuous challenges and limiting the capacity of community development workers in their way of rendering services from the perspectives of three different stakeholders: community development workers themselves, local workers of various non-government organizations (NGOs) and the general community people. The study further intends to prepare a list of recommendations, based on the findings, that would help the project designers to adopt a holistic understanding of the whole social context during project design and implementation to ensure the action of the community align with the strategic vision.

2. Context of the study

The rank of Bangladesh is very high in the world in terms of vulnerability due to climate change (Alam et al., 2017; Hossain and Zaman, 2018). Climate change directly or indirectly contributes to many natural hazards such as severe tropical cyclones, heavier and more erratic rainfall during the monsoon with higher river flows, over-topping and breaching of embankments and widespread coastal flooding, riverbank erosion and increased sedimentation in riverbeds, and sea-level rise leading to submergence of low-lying coastal areas and saline water intrusion (MoEF, 2009). These hazards have wider impacts on the natural resource base and the eco-system, though the greatest impact evident mostly is on the livelihoods of the coastal communities (Mahmuduzzaman et al., 2014; Alam et al., 2017; Hossain and Zaman, 2018; Baten et al., 2015). In this situation, the community-based development approach is generally recognized as the key aspect in the process of disaster emergency management, preparedness, and recovery (Mokoena and Moeti, 2017; Ikeda, 2009) as it is evident in many cases that local communities are the primary agents and naturally the first responders when a disaster strikes (Kadel, 2011). Considering the situation, the policymakers of Bangladesh introduced the community-based disaster management (CBDM) approach in which at-risk communities are actively engaged in the identification of the risks, analysis of the local contexts, and assessing specific needs and demands to increase their adaptation capacity for disaster preparedness and emergency action (UNCRD, 2004). Recently, a number of community development projects have been undertaken by the NGOs in the coastal areas of Bangladesh where at-risk communities are actively involved in the process of planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development initiatives and actions. Despite considerable initiatives, the community development approach most often underrates the whole social context of these coastal communities and ultimately contributes to limit the capacity of the community development workers, demotivating them in rendering their services that result in fragmented and downstream solutions of the community problems. Thereby, it is imperative to discover the hindrances latent in their action situation and to outline a list of

recommendations so that they can contribute better to defend community people's interests.

3. Who are community development workers and what is their role in disaster management of the coastal communities of Bangladesh

Several terms are used to name community-based workers or to describe the role they play. van Rooyen (2007) states that the terminology depends on the particular context in which the community development workers actually perform. Depending on the working place, they are sometimes known as community health workers (CHWs), community animal health workers (CAHWs), community home-based carers (CHBC), community forestry advisors, community development workers (CDWs), participatory change agents, community social workers and so on (van Rooyen, 2007; Friedman, 2002; Talbot & Verrinder, 2017; Sari, 2017). CDWs are most often defined as participatory change agents who are responsible for bringing positive social changes in the localities where they live and are accountable to the communities for their activities (Mokoena & Moeti, 2017). Community Development Workers (CDWs) can also be defined as the community-based resource persons whose responsibility is to collaborate with other community leaders to equip fellow community members with more information and resources. Their aim is to develop skills among vulnerable community people who can learn how to progressively meet their needs, achieve goals, realize their aspirations, and maintain their wellbeing (DPSA, 2007). They are supported financially and functionally by a range of government spheres and departments, particularly local government or they may be volunteers or employees of NGOs (Swanepoel and Beer, 2011). In Bangladesh, a large number of GOs and NGOs are working in disaster-prone areas to build community capacity to tackle disaster impact. For example, the Bangladesh Association for Sustainable Development aims to ensure sustainable food security and improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable communities in 42 villages in Khulna and Bagerhat (BASD, 2016). Climate Change Program (CCP) of Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) coordinated and conducted psychosocial Training of the Trainers (TOTs) to 764 women, who in turn passed on their knowledge to 19,100 women in their communities, and continued to reach more under this venture (BRAC, 2016). World Vision Bangladesh implemented 'Our Forest, Our Life: A Community-based Action Towards the Sustainability of the Sundarbans Reserve Forest (CBAS-SRF)' funded by the European Union in the southwest coastal region of the country to reduce the disaster risk in Sundarban dependent communities. Around 2,215 people consisting of community leaders and resource collectors participated in various workshops for knowledge generation (World Vision Bangladesh, 2019). The USAID-funded Aquaculture for Income and Nutrition (AIN) project was implemented by WorldFish Bangladesh where more than 69,900 women from 397 unions were brought under the capacity building training (WorldFish Bangladesh, 2015).

Community development workers associated with these projects play an advocacy role in helping their community to understand the project proposal,

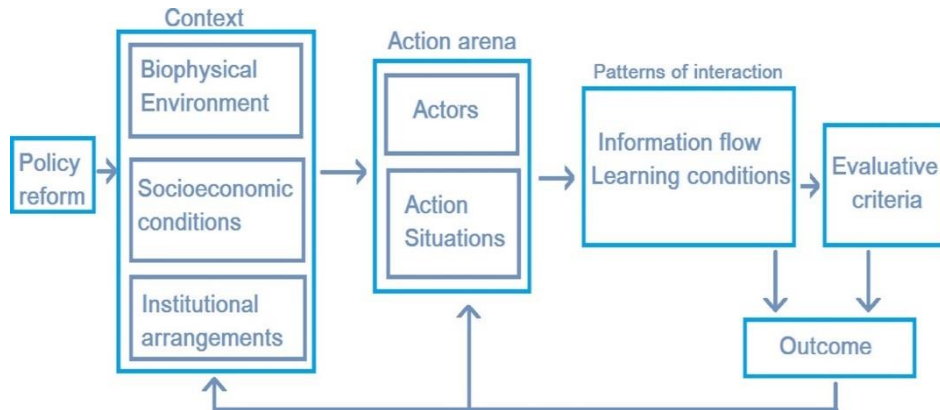
project effectiveness, and project benefits. They work as resources for their community. According to Swanepoel and Beer (2011), the three major goals of community development workers are to enable the people to fulfill their abstract human needs, to enhance the learning process, and to help the community people achieve meaningful empowerment. They assist in the smooth delivery of services by identifying and removing obstacles, strengthening the social contract between government and communities, and improving government–community networks (Mokoena & Moeti, 2017). CDWs in disaster-prone coastal areas of Bangladesh help various development organizations in assessing vulnerability and community risk. They serve an advocacy role to make various project outcomes or benefits comprehensive to their community. They also work as channels through which information flows. Sometimes they stand as a role model for the community people who get inspired by their success.

4. Conceptual framework

Development activities, vividly seen in the coastal areas of Bangladesh, are mostly designed to strengthen community resilience by providing training to community development workers (CDWs). Despite that, the current study believes that CDWs in the coastal communities cannot serve their role successfully due to some socioecological, socioeconomic as well as sociocultural characteristics within complex institutional arrangements. Ostrom's Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework has been applied in the current study to explore the factors affecting the action situation of CDWs. This framework has been used in a variety of studies that explain how people collaborate and organize themselves across varying institutional arrangements as well as social structures to manage common resources (Sutton & Rudd, 2016; Nigussie et al., 2018).

IAD model pays prominent attention to the actors who are not independent of social structure, rather are highly influenced by the institutional arrangements which cover sociopolitical aspects, the socioeconomic conditions, and the sociocultural characteristics. The biophysical environment, which covers geographical and ecological aspects, is also considered as a key determining factor of the whole context (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) Framework



Source: Ostrom et al., 1994

At the framework’s core is the ‘action arena’ which is composed of an action situation and actors. The term action arena refers to “the social space where individuals interact, exchange goods and services, solve problems, dominate one another, or fight (among the many things that individuals do in action arenas)” (Ostrom, 2010: 268). In the current study, the action situation is assumed to influence the capacity of CDWs. The model seeks to answer: who are community development workers? How much access CDWs have to resources? Do actors have community support? Is there any system of rewards for the CDWs?

Using the action situation as a unit of analysis, the current study seeks to explain the institutional arrangements of coastal communities that include sociopolitical aspects (e.g. land holding social structure and associated conflict), socioeconomic conditions (e.g. universal social inequality and consequent poverty cycle), and sociocultural characteristics (e.g. traditional patriarchy and women’s triple burden¹). The study also explored the characteristics of the biophysical environment as an influencing factor of the whole coastal context. CDWs’ interest to render their services has been set as the evaluative criteria influencing the outcome.

5. Methodology

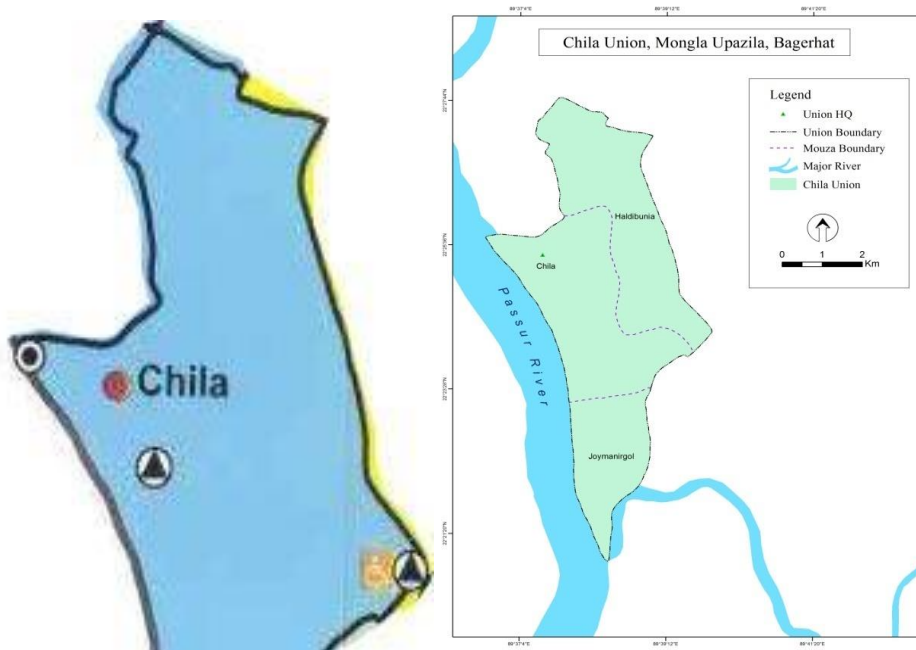
Study location

The study was conducted in Chila union under the Mongla Upazila of Bagerhat district, in the southeast coastal zone of Bangladesh. Like other rural areas of the Bagerhat district, more than 60% of people of this union belonged to poor socioeconomic class estimated by a Union Parishad representative (“Profile of Chila Union,” 2014). Fishing, fish culture, day labor, agriculture, crab fattening, wood collection, and honey collection from the Sundarbans forest were a few of

¹ Triple burden refers to the huge workload of women who are not only involved in economic activities but also largely occupied with domestic works.

the main professions of the people. The area was highly disaster-prone due to its special geophysical location beside the coast. The union is situated by the east bank of the Passur river and the north part of Sundarban. As situated by the bank of the river, Passur (see Figure 5.1), the land area of this union was gradually squeezed due to river erosion. The union was then at high risk as the embankment, once used to protect the union, was washed away during disaster AILA on May 25, 2009. Tidal waves hit almost every year and cause disasters by destroying houses and damaging crops. These increased their sufferings and made them poor/ultra-poor by maximizing vulnerability and minimizing adaptation capacity. After each cyclone and associated tidal surge, government and non-governmental organizations' interventions came up with a lot of interventions many of which were less effective due to the complex institutional arrangements of this locality.

Figure 5. 1 Map of the study area



Source: "Profile of Chila Union" (2014)

Research method

As the action situation of this locality is complex due to its special geographic condition and socio-cultural context, the quantification of these issues may distort the actual reality. Thereby, the study has chosen a qualitative research method under the interpretative paradigm to discover these complex, both manifested or latent, institutional issues that are constraining the delivery of services of the community development workers.

Data collection: method and process

In order to serve the purpose, the study randomly selected four vulnerable villages of this union: Keyabunia, Kalabati, Kanainagar, and Kanainagar Gucchagram. The selection of sample size in qualitative research has been the preliminary work, but it requires the standard technique of selection. Creswell and Clark (2007) mentioned Bulling's model which showed a minimum of six interviews could be accepted for qualitative research. Following this sampling technique, the study conducted a total of 4 FGDs with two stakeholders: two FGDs with community people, and two FGDs with community development workers who worked under different community development projects. For a holistic understanding of reality, 4 KIIs were conducted with local NGO workers from each village. Data were collected in May 2019.

Table 5.1 Tools of data collection and distribution of sample size

| Keyabunia village | Kalabati Village | Kanainagar | Kanainagar Gucchagram |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 FGDs (one with community people and one with community development workers) | 2 FGDs (one with community people and one with community development workers) | 2 FGDs (one with community people and one with community development workers) | 2 FGDs (one with community people and one with community development workers) |
| 1 KII | 1 KII | 1 KII | 1 KII |

FGDs included men, women, primary school teachers and female heads many of whom had the experience of serving as a community development worker. Each group is comprised of a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 6 participants who were selected by using a purposive sampling technique. Another form of purposive sampling named the judgmental sampling technique was used to select the KII as the researcher thought them to be proficient in providing 'information-rich' interviews based on their extensive working experiences in the coastal belt. Besides, KII helps more to penetrate reflective understandings about the nature of life experience (Johnson, 2001). As most of the clients of development organizations are female, thereby more females were prioritized for the study.

Table 5.2 Sampling techniques

| Data collection tools | Sampling technique |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| FGD | Purposive sampling |
| KII | Judgmental sampling |

Techniques of data analysis

The current study has applied the thematic method as an analytical tool for the organization and analysis of data. On the basis of the interviews, the researcher has arranged data under the themes of the IAD framework that include biophysical environment and institutional arrangements including sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural features constraining the action situation of community workers. All the data collected was analyzed manually. The researcher used pen and paper for documenting the data. Data collected haphazardly were put under the relevant theme at leisure time. As poor people always remained busy for the survival tension, time management was a challenge for the researcher to conduct the interviews. However, participants' cell numbers were collected for supplementing the missing data. As the paper is dealing with some sensitive issues such as unethical treatment by local elites, insensible policy initiatives without considering the social contexts, and so on, the researcher has committed to keeping participants' identity anonymous to get the best outcome of the findings.

6. Results

Development organizations undertook several projects for empowering CDWs in disaster-prone coastal areas for community development purposes. Despite considerable initiatives, many socioecological, sociopolitical, socioeconomic, as well as socio-cultural factors were affecting the action situation of CDWs. Based on FGDs and KIIs, the study explored the following major variables as the main barriers under the shadow of which a large number of sub-issues are discussed below:

Biophysical environment

Villages in the coastal belt were geographically low-lying and used to get inundated regularly by seawater, as mentioned by a school teacher who was one of the participants of an FGD. Thereby, local people could produce crops only once a year. The rest of the year they earned their livelihood in many other alternative ways. Though non-government organizations were giving training on organic fertilizer, a very insignificant number of households took interest in it as rice farming failed to give them year-round support. Rather participants preferred earning cash by doing other alternative activities. One of the female CDWs of Keyabunia, aged 41, stated,

My backyard gets inundated by seawater twice daily; I can't grow anything. Therefore, training on organic fertilizer did not help me in any way.

One male participant of Kalabati, aged 67, said,

In the last year, my son tried to grow some vegetables by applying a special type of fertilizer in the backyard but production failed

due to high soil salinity. He is no more interested to take training unsuitable for this ecological context.

Project on livestock farming also did not bring any positive outcome due to lack of grazing lands in these villages, one of the key informants of Keyabunia, aged 38, mentioned. Moreover, the land areas of these villages were gradually getting squeezed due to the poor condition of the embankments and large-scale river erosion. The adaptive capacity of the people of this union was highly challenged by the special ecological characteristics and the consequent stressors that put detrimental pressure on the community by minimizing the positive outcome of any training or project.

Inappropriate training without examining the local context was responsible for producing lassitude among the CDWs and community people in receiving any training-

-A key informant of Kalabati village, aged 34

Institutional arrangements

Sociopolitical aspects

Most of the coastal people were landless. Many of them were forced to sell their lands to both local and urban elites who used to grab poor people's land for profitable shrimp farming. All the key informants said:

The elites grow shrimps covering a large area without considering the societal and environmental impact of shrimp culture on the local communities. For growing shrimp, they force poor farmers to sell their land to them.

According to all participants of FGDs, these elites most often allowed seawater to enter into the villages illegally by digging canals and caused artificial inundation of agricultural lands of poor farmers. The artificial inundation seized the fertility of those lands and poor farmers, as a consequence of that, became bound to sell their lands to the elite people. Participants of all the FGDs said:

Elites especially the urban elites do not think about the adverse environmental impact of shrimp farming as they are the non-residents of this locality.

Besides, many lost their lands due to river erosion. Consequently, any training related to agriculture was inappropriate for landless people. A community development worker of Kalabati, who was one of the participants, stated,

Most of the people of Kalabati village were landless even not having access to khas land and thereby their training on preparing organic fertilizer went in vain.

Government *khas*¹ lands were mostly under the control of local elite people and also under private companies who were using these lands for commercial purposes. The feeling of landlessness gave rise to a feeling of temporary residents of that locality among the community people who became involved in diversified income-generating activities and focused on earning cash. For their multiple involvements, they were in the greatest challenge to spare time for receiving training and to disseminate their knowledge to the rest. Moreover, due to enduring land conflict between landless farmers and the so-called local elites, marginal or poor vulnerable community people were not allowed by them (elites) to take any leadership role, community people stated. Consequently, CDWs sometimes felt non-existence in the rural power structure and execution of any activity under their leadership, they (CDWs) thought, was always defied by the powerful people in that socio-political context.

Socioeconomic conditions

A kind of dependence on credit, aid, or grants was highly noticeable among the participants of FGDs. One of the participants stated,

We cannot grow rice, so we need to purchase. Where can we get money to buy rice?

Due to the pressure of buying every household item, they all became dependent on cash, credit or grants.

According to a KII of Kanainagar aged 46

These people were trapped into the poverty cycle and debt. They consider us as a financial supporter. But patience and time are required to get back the positive outcome of any training.

As there is no arrangement for sanctioning rewards or external monetary incentives (EMI) for the community development workers, almost all the participants found this work worthless. Besides, a person needed the basic cost of providing training to his/her community which most of the time NGO workers did not pay. One participant of Keyabunia said,

If I want to teach my neighbors how to prepare organic fertilizer, I need to buy a special type of snail from the market and I must

¹ *Khas* land is the state-owned land over which an individual does not have any private ownership.

have a cow for cow dung which I do not have. Managing these kinds of stuff costs much and is time consuming too.

A female CDW of Kanainagar, aged 45, mentioned a similar experience:
I took training on flower making. If I want to teach other women of my community, I need raw materials which NGO workers don't provide us.

All the KIIs agreed and shared one such experience which is as follows:

We gave training on pickle making to the most vulnerable and abandoned women of a village and told them to teach their neighbors. The project failed as they did not have the money for the demo.

Another key informant of Kanainagar Guchagram, aged 38, stated the same thing by giving an example which is as follows:

Suppose we give training on how to catch fish but if we do not provide them fishhooks, how these poor people will get the benefit of training?

In response to the question- “why NGOs do not provide the necessary capital for getting the initial benefit?”, she replied,

We informed the project managers but they had not taken any step in this regard. Project managers think that providing training is their only responsibility but they do not realize that these poor people need initial capital and technical know-how for market access.

Therefore, local people, who used to earn 400 taka per day by working on some development projects, were not interested in receiving training. Thereby, all the key informants felt that EMI (Emergency Monetary Incentives) might encourage CDWs to render their services properly.

Besides the financial problem, the social tension of survival made it very difficult to convince CDWs to spare time for giving voluntary services. The most common complaint brought forward by the community development workers is that it is a time-consuming service. They stated,

Community people tended to demand services from us on an urgent basis. If we fail to respond immediately, they lose trust in us. In most cases, our services are not acknowledged by our neighbors.

One male participant, who took training on livestock farming stated that the problem was acute in the case of livestock if the information was not supplied in time. When diseases were visible and animals showed significant symptoms, they needed immediate remedy. Sometimes community development workers, busy with earning their livelihood, were too late to respond. One of the female participants of Kanainagar, aged 45, said,

My goose was quite fine. The next morning, I found, it was not walking. I could not contact CDW because he had gone to Sundarban for several days. Then I contacted NGO workers who were supposed to come with medicines the next day. But Alas! it died by evening.

Thus, the lack of availability of CDWs during the emergency period worked as an impediment to the trust-building process that indirectly affected the services of CDWs.

Sociocultural characteristics

Coastal women were more vulnerable as compared to men. Two divorcee women of Keyabunia stated that they did not take any training because they did not think themselves fit for that. Regular experience of beating by their husbands and their husbands' second marriage resulted in a loss of self-confidence. One of them, aged 52, said,

I could make beautiful hand-stitched katha¹, But after my eye operation, I lost that skill. Now I work as a domestic worker. And I do not think I am fit for taking any training.

Another abandoned woman of Keyabunia, aged 36, said,

I avoid NGO workers as I failed to refund the credit I took last year.

Moreover, women of all the villages were busy with their household chores. Though most of the NGO members were women in the coastal areas, usually they were not available for receiving any training and give voluntary services for the triple-burden of the households, the key informant of Kanainagar Gucchagram, aged 38, mentioned. He also stated that most of the people of Gucchagram were

¹A type of lightweight quilt made by rural women of Bangladesh with the help of a needle.

Muslims and women of that village were not allowed to keep contact with NGO workers due to the *purdah*¹ system.

Besides traditional patriarchy and religious obligations, coastal people had behavioral barriers that restrained them from believing in any positive change of their localities due to unsafe geographic position. These people were reactive in nature and became habituated in their day-to-day life.

According to all the key informants, many pieces of training were given by the foreign people who could not speak in Bangla properly. Thus, basic education was a prerequisite to be selected as a CDW for receiving any training. Though projects usually targeted the most vulnerable people for training, in most cases those people lacked basic communication skills. Besides, most of the poor people did not have leadership or managerial skill. These people were also not encultured into a sense of sharing responsibilities. Thus, a CDW with all these qualities was rarely found. Moreover, the person with a good combination of all required qualities used to migrate to other places rather than contributing to building capacity of his/her neighbors, all the KIIs mentioned.

7. Discussion

Based on the findings of the study, it was found that the action situation of CDWs of the study areas is complex that eventually slowed down the development process of coastal communities. The special biophysical environment made those areas highly disaster-prone. Due to the low-lying condition of their locality, community people were trapped into severe vulnerability which was multiplied by several stressors like salinity, cyclone, storm surge, water stagnation, river erosion, and so on. Because of these ecological characteristics, people of the study areas used to experience regular stress which made them reactive. Thereby, motivating community people as well as building trust within or among themselves about any positive change of their livelihood was one of the greatest challenges for CDWs. Lack of motivation and commitment was identified as one of the major reasons for community-based project failure by Norman (2012). Thus, in addition to the training, motivational sessions, which would produce trust and confidence within community people themselves, are needed to be conducted.

The primary institutional arrangements such as landholding social structure and lack of access to *khas* land were found as few major factors influencing CDWs performance in their community. Without ensuring community people's access to communal resources like *khas* land, training on rice farming or livestock farming seemed inappropriate to that social context. Guerin et al. (2015) found that training on tailoring to *Dalit*² women suffered from strong competition from manufactured products. The poor among the local populations wanted to buy modern clothes like blue jeans, nylon sarees rather than Dhotis or cotton blouses. Even the *non-Dalits* did not want to touch the clothes produced by *Dalits*. Thus, context analysis is very

¹ A religious and social practice of female seclusion from public observation prevalent among Muslim communities.

² Dalit is a name for people who used to belong to the lowest caste in India.

important during any project design and implementation (Asamoah et al., 2015; Guerin et al, 2015; Rondinelli, 1976).

The economic crisis did not allow CDWs to dedicate themselves to voluntary community services. Poverty elevated the social tension of survival leading towards mental stress and thereby giving voluntary services to the community without any rewards or monetary benefit was an extra burden for them. Thus, the national or international development agencies should consider the external monetary incentive (EMI) which would motivate community people to spare time for giving voluntary services to the community. WHO conducted a multi-country study to document policies on these external monetary incentives by different health programs. The study confirmed that EMI contributed to motivating volunteers and facilitating service delivery (WHO, 2008). However, the current study recommends EMI for coastal CDWs who were very poor and vulnerable.

Unavailability of CDWs during an emergency for their involvement in multiple income-generating activities proved them unreliable to the community people and thereby contributed negatively to the trust-building process between CDWs and community people. This ultimately resulted in less aggregation or community support in rendering their services as CDWs. Lack of recognition of the activities of CDWs by the community people was another demotivating factor affecting the services of CDWs.

Cultural factors such as patriarchy and women's triple burden played a significant role in restricting women's role as CDWs. Some women, due to the frequent experience of gender violence, ruthlessly lacked self-confidence which dispirited them to deliver voluntary services for the community people and to serve as a CDW. Awareness-generating programs from a right-based approach might help these vulnerable and abandoned women to rethink their lives and their rights.

Most of the development agencies picked up the most vulnerable people to equip them with training and to empower them. These vulnerable people usually lacked basic education, leadership or managerial skills, and/or a sense of shared responsibilities which were the prerequisites for being selected as a CDW. However, project managers should be more particular in selecting CDWs and their ultimate goal. Moreover, the family pressure of migration pushed many CDWs to be shifted to other places which was another major impediment in the way of any project to be successful. Thus, trainers must select a permanent dweller who had been staying for ten years or more as a CDW to minimize the chance of migration.

Market access was a big issue that could grow the interest of CDWs to receive training. Without market access, people found any training worthless and thereby developed a negative attitude towards it. Thus, project managers or trainers must keep in mind that in addition to training, knowledge related to market access and consumers' needs and desire analysis should be given to CDWs. A similar problem was identified by Guerin et al. (2015) which reported that NGOs provided training on tailoring, but those training were not long enough to provide participants with real knowledge and know-how. There was virtually no tailor in that locality and the project failed. Table 7.1 showed the factors affecting the action situation of

CDWs of coastal communities from the perspectives of three different stakeholders:

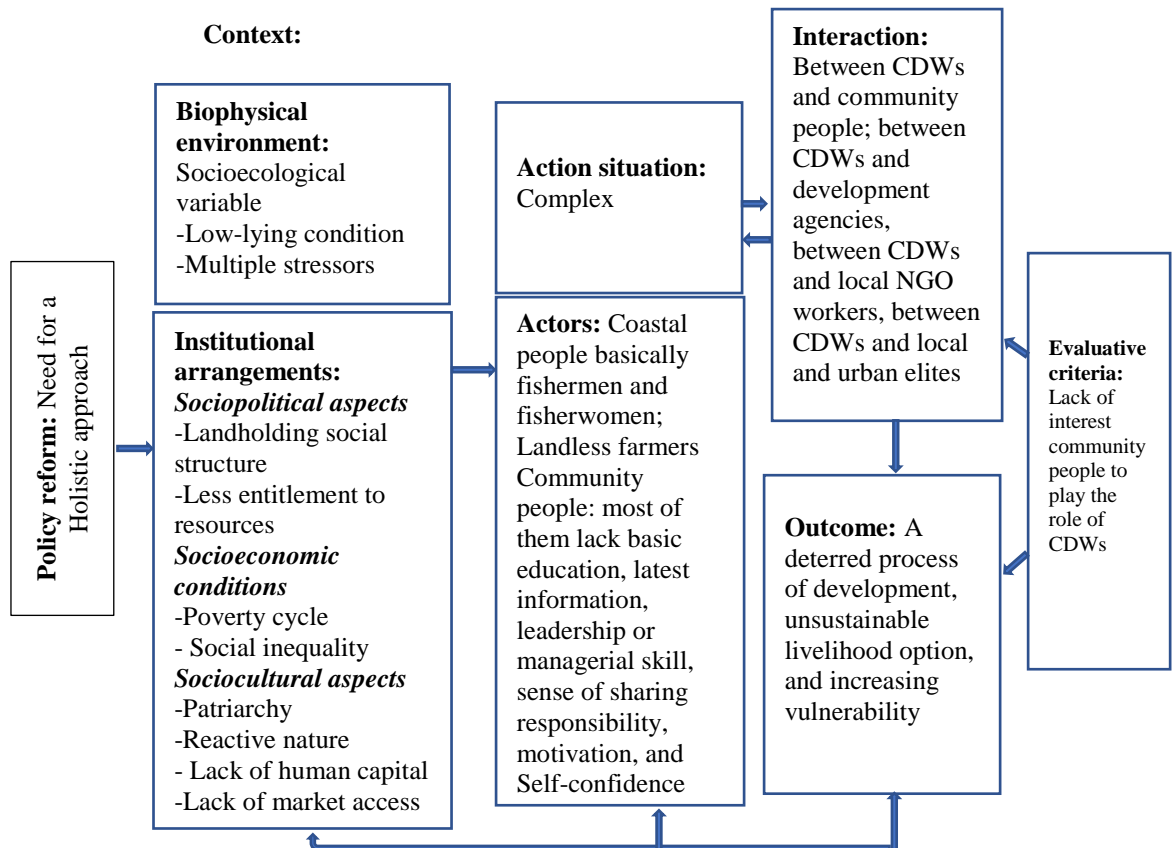
Table 7.1 Stakeholders' opinion on factors affecting the action situation of CDWs

| Stakeholders | Challenges/factors | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| | Male | Female |
| CDWs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biophysical environment such as the low-lying condition of the locality and effects of multiple stressors • Landholding social structure and inappropriate Training, • Survival tension and lack of time • No reward system • Poverty cycle and lack of financial capital • Conflict with local elites | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biophysical environment such as the low-lying condition of the locality and effects of multiple stressors • Lack of time • Triple burden • Lack of financial capital • Lack of market orientation • Conflict with local elites • On-call service |
| Community people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate training • Lack of time • Lack of reward system and no financial benefit • Unavailability of CDWs when needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple burden • Domestic violence • Lack of self-confidence • Purdah system |
| Local NGO workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlessness of the people • Lack of time of community people • Lack of managerial skill, leadership skill and a sense of shared responsibilities • Reactive nature of the people • The expectation of money from us • Lack of market orientation | |

Source: FGD and KII, 2019

Figure 7.1 explained how complex institutional arrangements consisting of socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and sociocultural factors and the added effects of the biophysical environment influenced the action situation of CDWs.

Figure 7.1 Application of IAD framework in identifying the factors affecting the action situation of CDWs of Chila Union



Source: Fieldwork, 2019

8. Conclusion and recommendations

The community development approach undertaken in coastal villages of Bangladesh was not holistic in nature as this approach did not address the complex local context properly. As a result, community development workers (CDWs) were in the face of greater challenges in rendering their services. Complex institutional arrangements including land holding social structure, the conflict between local elites and landless farmers, less access to resources, lack of motivation and self-confidence of the community people, social tension of survival, less community support, lack of basic education and leadership skills of the community people, poverty cycle, work overload of female CDWs, lack of time of the CDWs and community people, lack of market orientation, gender violence and dispirited self of abandoned women, the triple burden of households were identified as few of the major variables influencing CDWs in rendering their services and demotivating community people to take the role of a CDW.

In addition to all these variables, an unsafe biophysical environment of coastal villages perpetuates the vulnerability of the coastal people by their continuous exposure to multiple stressors especially salinity and river erosion. Local people lack motivation for the endless consequences of these disasters and thereby building trust among these hopeless people and encouraging them for contributing to the community development process was one of the greatest challenges for the development agencies as well as for the CDWs. Moreover, landholding social structure drove coastal people away from land-based agricultural activities and led them towards some unsustainable livelihood options which kept them busy year-round. Consequently, these landless poor people grew a feeling of detachment from their place of origin and developed a tendency to stay away from community development activities. Besides, the socioeconomic, sociocultural, and sociopolitical issues, as already mentioned above, have been extracted as the major constraining factors affecting the action situation of community development workers. Also, patriarchy and the associated issues serve as major predicaments for women in rendering these voluntary services. A combined effect of all these factors results in the deterred process of development of coastal communities.

In such a situation, facilitating community ownership and control over resources might work as an effective strategy under the community development approach. Also, trust-building activities and motivational sessions are highly recommended to make coastal people aware of a sustainable livelihood option. It is also necessary to consider the triple burden of women to keep the time of activities flexible so that female CDWs may contribute during their leisure period. Awareness development sessions from the right-based approach may bring confidence within vulnerable poor women who lack confidence severely in playing any leadership role. Development agencies should consider the reward system which would motivate community people to spare time for providing voluntary services. The community development approach must consider the complex local context so that community development strategies fit properly into the action situation where CDWs perform their role and responsibilities.

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