



**Baseline study  
ICT and innovative partnerships-  
responding to well-known challenges for  
children in new ways**

**Conducted by:  
Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID)**

**Supported by:  
Save the Children**

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As NCTF researchers we got scope to learn a lot by interacting with SMC members, teachers and students of different classes. The study gave us opportunity to learn techniques of conducting FGD using different innovative participatory tools with game and fun.

Last but not least, we are grateful to Save the Children for organizing the study and creating scope for the NCTF researchers to be involved in such an important study which will create avenues for the children to enter in to challenging and innovative partnership with civil society organizations and other partners.

**Enamul Huda**

Study Team leader

On behalf of the team

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## Abbreviations

CSID	Center for Services and Information on Disability
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
ICT	Information Communication Technology
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MMC	Mass-line Media Centre
MPO	Monthly Pay Order
NCTF	National Children's Task Force
PEDP2	Second primary education Development Program
PTA	Parents Teachers Associations
SC/ SCiBD	Save the Children/ Save the Children International Bangladesh
SLIP	School Level Improvement Plan
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
USEO	Upazila Secondary Education Officer
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
VERC	Village Education Resource Center
WASH	Water Sanitation Hygiene

## Executive summary

Save the Children (SC) has developed a project title **ICT and innovative partnerships- responding to well-known challenges for children in new ways** to test solutions for addressing the WASH situation. Aim of the project is to improve WASH situation in the targeted schools through use of ICT and innovative partnerships with children, youth and their organizations. Selection of three important indicators i.e. poor WASH situation, school governance and children empowerment are closely interrelated. The project has been designed to be implemented by the National Children's Task Force (NCTF) in partnership with three civil society organizations VERC, CSID, MMC and a social enterprise ICT company mPower. SC will play the role of coordinator and mentor to guide NCTF at upazila and higher levels. The key underlying assumption of this project is that children are the primary owner of the project. They will take lead in all phases of the project including any research, design and data collection. The overall purpose of this consultancy was to support the partner organizations in conducting a comprehensive baseline study against indicators set out in the project document and further elaboration in the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) plan of the project. Thirty high schools have been identified in Savar upazila to conduct the study which will be covered by the project as well.

Detail methodology was developed for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data based on outcome and output indicators set in results framework. Questionnaire was developed to gather quantitative and some qualitative data. Children friendly innovative participatory tools were selected to gather qualitative data. Ten NCTF volunteers having some skills in conducting FGD were oriented and engaged in the study with an objective to involve them at the beginning of the project implementation process. The study faced some limitations and challenges. December was the closing month for all education institutions after the annual and public exams were over. So it was extremely difficult for the study team to make interlocutors available. On the other hand school managements were not briefed about the project beforehand. So it was sometime difficult for the team to conduct sessions by explaining purpose and objectives of the project. NCTF researchers were too young to dig out in-depth information through inquisitive questions.

### Major findings

Out of 30 schools 26 (87%) had formed School Managing Committee (SMC) and 4 (13%) had Ad-hoc committee headed by UNO with three other members under section 39 of government circular (No.Sim/sha:11/13 (IDA)-3/ 2003(part)/608; dated: 08/06/2009) on formation and roles of SMC. A power relations exists and functioning in all SMCs. In most cases Head Teacher dominates the committee in decision making if he/she is local and influential person. When Chairperson is local, political person and rich then he controls the committee. Almost all SMC claimed that they organize monthly/ bi-monthly meeting, do annual plan and budget but in most cases reality was different. Inclusion of poorly literate (either totally illiterate or completed primary school) parent's as elected parent's representative is one of the barriers for the development and management of the schools, as experienced by the teachers. Accountability as defined by the SMC members and teachers refer only inform parents about exam results of their children or report to the education office. School authorities do not feel obliged to be accountable to the students in offering quality education under favourable learning environment. Government policy does not allow students to take part in decision making process. On the other hand students also do not feel confident to raise their voices to influence decision making process as no such culture and practice developed yet in any of these schools.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) was found as the most neglected part of the school infrastructures. Students of all schools expressed their highest level of dissatisfaction on WASH facilities. No separate budget allocation was made for WASH in any of these schools rather it was

always remains under development head with low priority. About 93% was using deep tube well water lifted by pump and supplied from the overhead tank through pipeline. Though head teachers of all schools claimed that the water of their schools are safe for drinking but they do not drink that water by themselves. Most of the students mentioned that they carry water bottle from home for drinking. Toilet facilities were found worse than other WASH components. All 30 schools have brick made *pucca* sanitary toilets within or attached to the building. Average ratios of toilets in all 30 schools were found for boys 1:80; for girls it was 1:99; for teachers it was 1:8 and for other staff 1:9. Most of the student's toilets are not usable. About 77% schools have mentioned that they have appointed staff (Sweeper) for cleaning toilets. But in reality none of the schools had simply clean (not hygienic) toilets good for use. In 23% schools Aya (women support staff) were assigned to clean the toilets. No soaps were provided for hand washing in any of the schools. Scope for menstrual hygiene practice by the girls was found absent in all 30 schools including one girl's high school. No waste disposal system exists in the schools except some schools have occasionally used basket in the classrooms. Information collected from the students and teachers indicates that no separate hygiene class organized by the schools and no teachers appointed for this purpose, which is vital to make the students aware about proper hygiene practice in the school and at family level.

All schools had regular electricity supply. However, 33% schools had alternative power supply through IPS (30%); generator (13%) and Solar power (3%). Rest 54% had no alternative sources of power. Introduction of computer has become common in almost all schools. About 93% (28 schools) schools had desktop computers and 20% (6 schools) had laptops. About 93% schools had internet connections. About 73% use modem; 3% use broadband and 17% use both modem and broadband. About 7% schools had no internet connections as they do not have computers. About 47% schools had computer lab with necessary equipment but all students were not allowed to use computer in the lab except those study ICT. Students of all 30 schools were found familiar with mobile phones. About 40% students had mobile phones of which majority were boys. Most of the students were familiar with desktop computers and some of them with laptop and other accessories e.g. modem, UPS, broadband internet connections. However, majority of them did not get scope to use computer because they did not have it at home or cannot use it in the school. Students of class nine and ten studying ICT subject got some scope in the school to use computer for limited time under the supervision of teacher. But due to inadequate number of computers in the school and restriction of use by the teachers they did not get chance of using computer for long time. Using of internet in the school was restricted, so students of all 30 schools did not get scope to browse internet at school.

In terms of children empowerment, no such culture and practice developed yet in any of the 30 schools to include students in the decision making process even if it is about student's issue. A gap prevails between teachers and students. SMC is not reachable by the students. Student's had no linkages with SMC in any form.

The baseline study has brought forward some key issues for advocacy considering the current situation at school and community level. Some important advocacies issues are WASH infrastructure develop and allocation of regular budget for WASH, student's participation in management and decision making process and inclusion of hygiene practice in curriculum.

Innovative partnership with children's organization will be a new and challenging idea for SC and partners. Clear guideline and strategies will be needed to develop partnership approach.

A motivational attempt is required to bring all actors in the same platform to decide about their course of action and way forward utilizing the potentials of students.

- **Conceptual clarity for common understanding:** All partners and schools must be clear about the objectives, expected outcome and their roles in the innovative partnership project. Organize briefing session for all SMC/ school authorities about the purpose, objectives and activities of the project. Also to explain why it is a challenging initiative and how schools will be benefitted.
- **NCTF member's orientation:** Newly formed NCTF members should be properly oriented on objectives of the project and their role to make SMC accountable for improvement of WASH facilities.
- **Partnership strategy:** Project shall have to develop a clear cut partnership strategy involving all partners and NCTF district and national committees.
- **Capacity building:** Organize awareness development sessions for all SMC and teachers on importance of inclusion of students in the decision making process. All partners should jointly organize the sessions and give their inputs. Develop school level plan of action to engage children in the decision making process. Orient students on formation and activities of Children's organization and NCTF (*VERC can do*). Orient joint meeting of partners and children organization to develop a joint action plan explaining roles and responsibilities (*all partners including SC*). Organize orientation and training on ICT (use of mobile phone and computers) for computer teachers and children's organization members (*mPower can support and contribute*) to show how ICT will be used for improvement of WASH facilities.
- **Process documentation and Learning sharing:** Document the whole process for sharing with other organizations and government. Organize information sharing and dissemination session at upazila level through Press conference and media so that all schools can participate and can learn from each other. (*MMC can contribute*)
- **Advocacy:** Identify issues for advocacy and organize advocacy workshops at national level to place outcome of the upazila level issues for policy influence. Follow up actions taken by the government to make suggested changes in the policy.
- **Scaling up:** SC can take lead in scaling up the approach with other organizations and government. Before that the outcome of this project must be assessed carefully including lessons learned.

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## Introduction and Background

Government of Bangladesh has taken large steps towards ensuring education for all children around the country and as a result government has heavily invested in school infrastructure development and distribution of free books to all students at school level. This initiative has motivated and encouraged children and their parents to send children to school. However, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) situation is not up to the mark in almost all schools of Bangladesh. Students attending schools suffers from different waterborne diseases due to lack of proper WASH facilities. As a result development process in education sector is hampered seriously. Government of Bangladesh in collaboration with development partners and NGOs are trying to improve the situation. Some progresses have been made but there is still far way to go. With this background Save the Children (SC) has developed a project title **Information Communication Technology (ICT) and innovative partnerships- responding to well-known challenges for children in new ways** to test solutions for addressing the situation. Aim of the project is to improve WASH situation in the targeted schools through use of ICT and innovative partnerships with children, youth and their organizations.

The project has three distinct outcomes: 1) strengthened accountability structures of school authorities at local, district and national level supported by children and youth's use of ICT; 2) Children and youth at targeted schools and National Children Task Force (NCTF)<sup>1</sup> monitor and document the WASH situation by use of ICT and feel an increased sense of empowerment; and 3) Improved practices in Save the Children in relation to partnering with children's organizations and use of ICT as a tool to empower children. The project has been designed to be implemented by the NCTF in partnership with three civil society organizations VERC, CSID, MMC and a social enterprise ICT company mPower. SC will coordinate and mentor youth volunteers to guide NCTF at upazila level. The key underlying assumption of this project is that children are the primary owner of the project. They will take lead in all phases of the project including any research, design and data collection.

Though the project components are interrelated but they are very distinct. Thus each partner organization will require baseline data separately to understand the underlying groundsituation. However, they required an external consultant to lead and coordinate this data collection process to ensure the coherence of the baseline data and need for the information to be collected and analyzed in one report as well as to explore feasibility and appropriateness to include children and youth in the process of data collection design, data collection and analysis.

## Purpose of the study

The overall purpose of this consultancy was to support the partner organizations in conducting a comprehensive baseline study against indicators set out in the project document and further elaboration in the Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) plan of the project. In addition, the consultant will identify the policy gaps and opportunities regarding establish accountability in governance, participatory management and allocate budget for adequate WASH facilities and identify key advocacy issues on improving WASH service and establish participatory management system in secondary schools.

Scope of work included review indicators target, Means of Verification (MoV), baseline data required and propose any amendment; analyze any available relevant policy documents/ information; devise and pursue creative and innovative methods of data collection for the three project outcomes for

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<sup>1</sup> National Children's Task Force (NCTF) is a child-led organization with elected representation from 64 districts.

the baseline; support each relevant organization in actual data collection and prepare an inclusive report of the baseline data collected and analyzed.

## Inter relational link between three indicators set

- **Functional linkages between indicators**

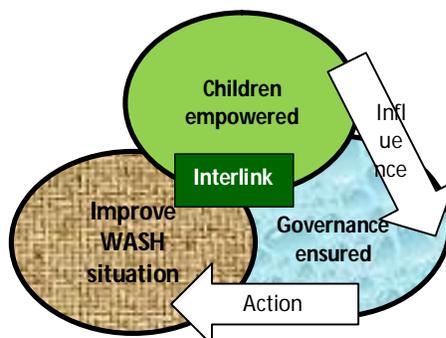
This baseline study has focused on three specific indicators which are supportive of each other i.e. children empowerment, governance and WASH situation. Safe WASH facility is vital for students to stay in the school for about 6-7 hours. Students cannot stay in the school for such a long time without using WASH facilities. On the other hand they do not feel comfort in using highly unhygienic toilets and without minimum facilities. In all schools common complain of students were about poor quality WASH facilities. Condition of girls was found even worse. They cannot attend schools during menstruation period due to lack of facilities. None of the school including girl's school has proper facilities for menstrual hygiene management practice. WASH infrastructure was found most neglected part in the schools. While teachers said that their WASH situation is good or better but students said it is not usable. In consequence, poor WASH facilities have negative impact on their health and education.

Accountability of SMC/ school authority always defined narrowly with exclusion of student's rights and access to quality education under favourable environment. SMC of all schools were found reluctant about WASH facilities. WASH issue always remains at the bottom of their meeting agenda and budget remains within development head. A good number of schools have no paid staff to keep toilets clean and hygienic. The schools also do not use any cleaning materials for keeping toilet clean and hygienic except broom and water. No separate budget allocation was found in any school for improvement of WASH facilities. Though students are suffering from using unhygienic facilities but SMC never realize its consequences on health and education of children and did not take necessary measures for the improvement of WASH facilities.

Children cannot place their problems to the teachers for fear of being punished in some way. In most of the schools teachers complained about damaging of WASH facilities by naughty students (mainly by boys). Few schools have formed user's group by the students with some external support but that is not functioning. In consequence, students try to cope with the unhygienic WASH situation. If school authority motivates and engages students to monitor activities of cleaner then it is expected that the situation will be improved. A good and fear- free communication between students and teachers will help students to realize and establish their right for an improved environment for education.

If children are empowered then they will be able to influence decision making process of SMC to ensure and improve WASH facilities in the schools.

**Diagram 1 Interlink between three indicators and its influence**



A functional linkage exists among three indicators set for the study based on expected results of the project; i.e. children empowerment governance and WASH situation. If children are empowered and get scope to participate in decision making then they will be able to influence decision making process of SMC for improvement of WASH situation. It is expected that to address the demand of the students SMC will give proper attention on WASH facilities which is crucial for ensuring hygienic environment for education and gradually overall school governance will be improved.

## **Prevailing situation- School governance and WASH**

Documents related to school governance and children empowerment, WASH situation and use of ICT by the children and school were collected and reviewed. Detail list of documents reviewed presented in the reference list. Outcome of the review is presented below.

- **Review current school situation, identify policy gaps**

Three issues were considered to review documents and secondary data/ information i.e. education policy and governance, children empowerment and school WASH situation including ICT status. Documents available from government departments and development partners on these three issues were reviewed.

### **National education policy 2010**

National education policy 2010 did not mention anything about governance system and student's participation in decision making in secondary education at high schools<sup>2</sup>. While discussing with senior officials of education ministry they also admitted that during approval of high school for government registration they pay visit to the site and look at the plan. But there is no written pre-condition about allocation of space for water, sanitation and hygiene practice. Also government has no policy to include students in the SMC. No bindings have made by the government for mandatory allocation of budget for WASH.

### **Government circular on formation of SMC and its roles**

Government circular on formation of School management Committee<sup>3</sup> mentioned about number of members and formation process including roles of the committee. This order did not mention about inclusion of students in the SMC in any form.

### **UNICEF documents on decentralized school management**

UNICEF provided support to the government for decentralized school management through creation of School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) under Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP2)<sup>4</sup>. Decentralisation has been facilitated through the creation of School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) and Upazila (sub-district) Primary Education Plan (UPEP) templates and implementation guidelines. These plans provide resources to School Management Committees (SMCs) and Upazila Education Offices that assist them in identifying priority areas for the improvement of education services. But no such initiative took place for secondary high schools.

### **Bangladesh National Hygiene Baseline Survey 2014**

Recent survey on hygiene practice gave a clear picture of WASH situation at school level. Bangladesh National Hygiene baseline survey<sup>5</sup> conducted in 2014 stated that preventing diseases transmission in

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<sup>2</sup> National Education Policy 2010, pages 12-14 on Secondary education

<sup>3</sup> Government circular No.Sim/sha:11/13(IDA)-3/2003(part)/608; dated : 08/06/2009 on formation and roles of SMC

<sup>4</sup> Factsheet of UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office; February 2014

<sup>5</sup> Bangladesh National Hygiene Baseline Survey, June 2014 conducted by icddr,b and WaterAid

schools can have an impact on school attendance, school grades, and child cognitive development with longer term consequences. In 35% of schools a hand washing location with both water and soap was found, around one-third of students' hands appeared to be clean and 28% washed both hands with soap during hand washing demonstration. A critical issue for schools was limited toilets access for students. Overall there were 187 students per toilet; the majority of schools (84%) had a functional improved toilet for students however, in only 45% of schools were these unlocked. Approximately one-third of all schools had water and soap available inside or near (<30 feet) the improved toilet accessed by students and a quarter of toilets were clean. An improved functional drinking water sources was found in 80% of schools, and 41% appeared clean. Menstrual hygiene management remains a challenge, especially in schools. Among menstruating girls and women, old cloth was the predominant menstruation management materials (82-86%) among which 12% of school girls, 23% girls at home and 27% of women washed cloth appropriately. Forty percent of surveyed girls reported that they miss school during menstruation for a median of 3 days a month. School facilities may contribute to absence during menstruation.

### **National Sanitation Strategy 2005**

Bangladesh National Sanitation Strategy talked about goal and objectives to achieve 100% sanitation by 2010. Baseline data was collected in 2003. Data was collected from households with different categories of people living in different socio-economic conditions. Referring to all previous strategies developed by the government on water and sanitation in cooperation with development partners and NGOs the document mentioned about "Creating effective demand through Health education and hygiene promotion"<sup>6</sup>. Under 8.2 in page 29 Ensuring individual and community actions the document mentioned, "Schools, both primary and secondary, will be a major community focal point for sanitation development and health and hygiene promotion. All schools must have hygienic latrines and hand washing facilities and the use of these facilities must be linked to lessons on health and personal hygiene". Unfortunately the strategy development process did not include school authority/ children while preparing the strategy, which is vital to promote sanitation through children at schools and their family members as the multiple actions.

### **A qualitative comparative analysis of well-managed school sanitation in Bangladesh<sup>7</sup>**

Results of the research findings on qualitative comparative analysis of well-managed school situation identified three distinct pathways sufficient to support well-managed services, providing multiple options for how well-managed school sanitation could be encouraged. Two of these are applicable to both government and non-government schools: (1) quality construction, financial community support and a champion, and (2) quality construction, financial government support, a maintenance plan and school management committee involvement. On-going financial support for operation and maintenance was identified as a necessary condition for continued service management, which was absent from many schools with poorly managed services. However, financial support was insufficient alone and other conditions are needed in conjunction, including quality construction and incentivizing conditions, such as school management committee involvement in sanitation specifically, a sanitation champion and/ or one teacher clearly responsible for toilet maintenance. Surprisingly the number of students per toilets (ranging from 18-95 students) and toilet age (ranging from 8-32 months) had no significant effects on sanitation conditions.

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<sup>6</sup> National Sanitation Strategy 2005: page-27

<sup>7</sup> Research article "A qualitative comparative analysis of well-managed school sanitation in Bangladesh" published by Bio Medical Center (BMC) Public Health, 2014; Christie Chatterley, Amy Javernick –Will, Karl G Linden, Kawser Alam, Laure Bottinelli and Mohini Venkatesh

- **Participatory management and budget allocation for school WASH**

**Education for All: National Plan of Action II (2003-2015)<sup>8</sup>**

National Plan of Action II has mentioned about transparency and accountability (5B 14; page-31) and Children's participation and representation (5B 15; page-31). It has stated under transparency and accountability that the school should be transparent and accountable in all dealing managerial, recruitment/transfer and promotion, enrollment and attendance (both learners and teachers), classroom transaction, assessment of learning achievements, and supervision from national to local school level and procurement of services and goods. Under Children's participation and representation the NPA stated that Children will be represented in the SMC and CMC and be involved in the management of all affairs of the school and learning centers and in relating to the surrounding community for undertaking practical learning projects, and in the organizations of delivery of various services (health, sanitation etc.). Unfortunately children's participation was not included in the government circular of SMC formation/ structure and member's responsibility.

**School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE), India<sup>9</sup>**

School sanitation and hygiene education (SSHE) is an essential component of the Total Sanitation Campaign, which includes provision of toilet infrastructure and hand washing facilities in schools and hygiene education, to promote behavioural change amongst children. SSHE recognizes the role of children as the best change agents in absorbing and popularizing new ideas and concepts of sanitation not only in their schools but in their families and neighborhood. Schools are learning laboratories where habits of good sanitation practices, personal health and hygiene by children can go a long way in inculcating these habits when they become adults. Besides, presence of school toilets, safe drinking water, clean surroundings and basic information on hygiene improves the learning abilities of children, improves health, and improves attendance, especially of the girl child, with far reaching consequence on the health of the community. The combination of adequate facilities, correct behavioural practices and education is meant to have a positive impact on the health and hygiene conditions of the community as a whole, both now and in the future. SSHE emphasized both hardware and software components. Hardware includes construction of toilets for boys and girls, drainage system, construction of garbage pit, soakage pit and provision of other materials in the toilets (Bucket, mug, soap case, cleaning brush and drum/ water filter for drinking water).

Software includes health and hygiene activities, WASH related demonstration activity, curriculum development, formation of school health club, School awareness/IEC about school water, sanitation and hygiene and seeking participation, training and orientation of SMC on protection and maintenance of school WASH facilities which include resource mobilization and roster of responsibilities among students. Software also includes involve children for cleaning latrines, cleaning water point area, fill water reservoir, checking for leaks, cleaning compound etc. Other activities under SSHE include monitoring and evaluation of WASH facilities by students; follow up and surveillance through periodical visits by education officers; documentation of the experience of school sanitation program for sharing with others and for future expansion.

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<sup>8</sup> Education for All: National Plan of Action II, Fourth draft, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education; Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh May 2003

<sup>9</sup> School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE), Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India, April 2012

## **Analysis of government Master plan for information and communication technology in education (2012- 2021)**

Bangladesh Master Plan for Information and Communication Technology in education (2012-2021) has spelled out six specific sub-sectors to organize ICT plan of which general education for secondary level is one. Aim of this sub-sector is to improve the quality education with the creation of ICT that will enable teaching-learning environment and building up the learners at the secondary and higher secondary as the skilled human resources for the knowledge oriented society that is responsive to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Overall objective of the use of ICT is improvement of teaching-learning activities in the classroom with the use of ICT. Four specific objectives under the overall objective are:

1. Educating the learners at the secondary and higher secondary levels in modern and appropriate ICT education.
2. Development of professional skills of teachers through ICT
3. Developing teaching-learning materials through ICT
4. Create an education friendly environment through infrastructural development of ICT

Fourth objective of the above mentioned master plan sub-sector will create scope for this project to include WASH infrastructure for improvement in parallel with development of overall ICT infrastructure. Activities mentioned under this objective (4.6- 4.17)<sup>10</sup> will help all secondary and higher secondary education institutions to improve their overall ICT infrastructure (4.6, 4.7), establishment of ICT lab (4.8) and develop skills of managing committee to formulate policies and plan for supply, use and maintenance of ICT materials. Newly formed NCTF in the targeted schools will get scope to bring forward their long pending problems of poor WASH situation to the SMC and take necessary measure for improvement.

### **Policy analysis**

- **School governance**

Government circular on formation of managing committee<sup>11</sup> in secondary schools under section 3 mentioned about portfolios and selection/election process. Provision has been kept for four male parent's representatives and one woman parent's representatives to be elected through casting direct vote of all parents. However, the circular did not mention about minimum qualification required to be a member of the managing committee. In consequence, many illiterate parents elected as member of the SMC cannot play their role effectively. Also no provision has been kept in the circular to orient newly elected members on their roles and responsibilities by education officers. As a result most of the SMC could not describe their roles and responsibilities clearly.

No provision has been kept in the policy or circular to keep some space for the students to participate in the decision making process or to place their need to the decision maker in some form (which was described in NPA II). Accountability of the SMC not mentioned in the above mentioned circular. Therefore, none of the SMC member could say clearly to whom they will be accountable and for what.

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<sup>10</sup> Master Plan for information and communication technology in education (2012-2021); page 9-13

<sup>11</sup> Government circular on formation of managing committee; circular no. SIM/Sha11/13(IDA)-3/2003(part)/608; dated 08/06/2009

- **School WASH situation improvement**

Government education policy 2010 mentioned about goal objectives and strategy for secondary education.<sup>12</sup> However, the policy did not say anything to ensure proper WASH facilities, which is vital for students, teachers and staffs. No pre condition has been set to appoint cleaner/ sweeper for the institution. Section 41 /point- Uma (E)/(1) of the above mentioned circular mentioned about construction and development of infrastructure but nothing about WASH/ Sanitation infrastructure. Sections 44 mentioned about organizing budget meeting and prepare annual report but nothing to keep WASH facilities usable for students, teachers and staff.

Participation of students in decision making was not mentioned in the policy.

### **Accountability of the SMC**

Government circular on formation of governing body and managing committee (SMC) contains the following:

- Election of governing body and managing committee
- Duration of GB and SMC
- Conduct meeting and take decisions
- Power/ roles of SMC
- Financial and administrative activities
- Ensure quality education and extra curriculum activities
- Disciplinary activities
- Development and maintenance of infrastructure
- Budget meeting and annual report
- Role of member secretary
- Audit

However, it did not mention anything about accountability of SMC. As a result officials of education department, teachers and other SMC members define accountability according to their own perceptions.

### **Government monitoring on the school system:**

Upazila education officer is responsible for regular/ periodical monitoring of all education institutions under his/her jurisdictions. While discussing with the concern Upazila Secondary Education Officer (USEO) at Savar he mentioned that there are about 40 secondary schools and some with colleges. He is responsible for monitoring of all those institutions. But it is almost impossible for him to monitor all schools in every month after accomplishing other important activities. On the other hand private secondary schools get very little amount as partial salary of teachers from the government. As a result they do not feel oblige to inform all their activities to the education department. USEO could not create any pressure to the SMC to set priority and proper allocation of budget for WASH facilities as government did not issue any instruction on this and no mention about accountability of SMC in any government guideline and circular. No uniform monitoring format available in the education department for monitoring of schools.

District Education Officer (DEO) rarely visits any school because of his/her other important responsibilities. DEO is mostly dependent on USEO for getting any information about any specific school unless they are any occurrence happened or unusual things reported.

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<sup>12</sup> Government education policy 2010; chapter-4 Secondary education; page- 12-14

### **Government agency responsible at national level for coordination**

Government agency responsible at national level for coordination did not take any attempt to improve school education environment including WASH facilities. Ministry of Education; Ministry of Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) and Ministry of Science and Information & Communication Technology have the scope to coordinate for improvement of school WASH infrastructure and ICT facilities.

### **The role of line ministry and their role in school**

Line ministry is supposed to get an overview of the situation prevailing in the secondary schools through department of secondary education. However, there is almost no regular contact with the department unless any policy related issues raised. Department of Secondary education sends periodical report to the ministry on a regular basis which is the only means of linkages. Government is providing salaries of six teachers under MPO, which is the only support to private secondary schools. So, ministry has limited control over the school authority.

### **Policy of Bangladesh and UN and national mandates on WaSH**

Coverage and WASH related health statistics the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets and coverage figures for access to improved water and sanitation in Bangladesh are difficult to interpret due to inconsistent application of definitions and national goals. Based on the goal to halve the percentage of people without access in 1990, the 2015 MDG targets are for 89% and 70% of the population to have access to water and sanitation respectively. The government's national targets are for 100% of the population to have access to safe water by 2011 and to sanitation by 2013. The government uses the national target to report against the MDG targets. While the government reported dramatic improvements in water access to 98% of the population in 2006, the identification of arsenic contamination led to estimated coverage being lowered to 78%.

In July 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, which "recognized the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights" ([GA res 64/292](#)). Subsequently, the Human Rights Council, in September 2010, affirmed this recognition and clarified that the right is derived from the right to an adequate standard of living ([HRC res 15/9](#)). Taking into account these developments, the Human Rights Council, in March 2011, extended the mandate on water and sanitation, and changed its title to Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation ([HRC res 16/2](#)).

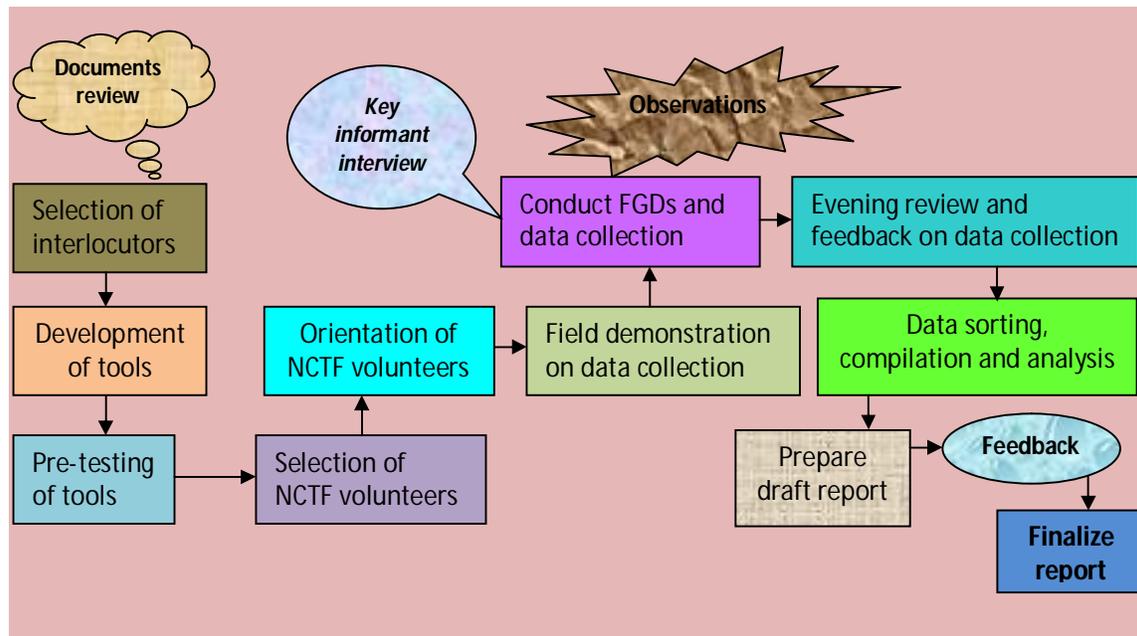
## **Methodology**

Detail methodology was developed for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data based on outcome and output indicators set in results framework<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Results framework developed by the project

**Diagram-2 Process flow chart of the study**



### **Field study schedule**

VERC project staffs contacted with Head teachers of all 30 schools to set date and time for the study as all schools were closed after final exam and winter vacation. Detailed field study plan was developed considering date and time proposed by the Head teachers of all schools (*Annex-1*). One school regretted to give time during study period.

### **Data collection process**

- **Development of creative and innovative tools for data collection**

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to get a clear picture of the prevailing situation of the schools. Questionnaire was developed for collecting quantitative data. Head Teachers of the schools were considered as the main respondents. However, the questionnaire covered both qualitative and quantitative aspects of data (*Annex-2*). Four participatory visual tools were selected for gathering qualitative data i.e. Matrix with mood meter, ladder game, ICT picture game and Venn diagram. First three tools were used to gather data from the students and last tool was used for SMC members. Later on ladder game tool was dropped as it was found time consuming.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) was considered as the main technique to collect qualitative data and information from three different categories of respondents i.e. students, teachers and SMC members. FGD sessions were organized with these three categories to collect information as well as to cross check and validate data gathered through questionnaire. Detail FGD checklists were developed for all different types of FGDs (*Annex-3*). Questionnaire and checklists were developed in Bangla for better understanding by the interviewer and FGD facilitators (study team members). Based on the level of understanding of NCTF researchers FGD checklists were reviewed three times by the consultant to make it easy for collection of in-depth data by generating more probing questions.

### **Pre testing of study tools and team orientation**

Questionnaire and qualitative tools/ techniques developed were pre-tested before conducting the field study. Necessary adjustments were made to fit the tools in the real field situation.

**Table-1 Tools used in the FGD for gathering qualitative data**

Tools	Participants	Purpose of use	Remarks
Matrix with mood meter game	Students	To get their impression about school WASH situation	Menstrual hygiene part was used separately for girls only
Ladder game	Students	To validate data collected from the previous tool	This tool was dropped because it took more time than expected
ICT Picture game	Students	To collect on the availability and use of ICT by students	Pictures of different ICT tools were used
Venn diagram	SMC members	To understand power relation and influence of SMC members	Used multi colour circular paper to represent different members

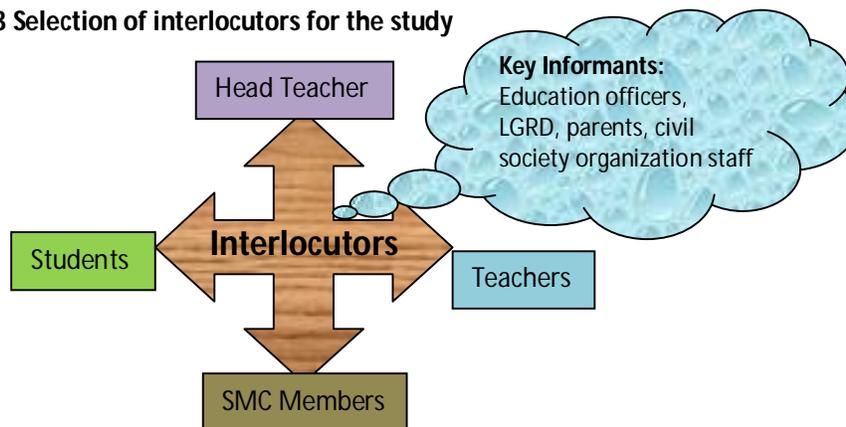
• **Study team selection and orientation**

Ten (6 boys and 4 girls) National Children Task Force (NCTF) graduate researchers were selected by Save the Children to take part in the study. They were provided one day in-house orientation on application of participatory tools and techniques to be applied in the FGD for collecting data and information. One day practical demonstration was organized on conducting FGDs with different levels and groups. Detail list of NCTF graduate researchers attached in the annex ([Annexure-4](#)).

• **Respondent selection**

Interlocutors and participants were selected based on the sources of and availability of information with different categories of people. Considering the overall situation and time frame major respondents for data collection were divided in to four. Head teacher, who is the ex-officio of School Management Committee (SMC) was given first preference for collecting quantitative and qualitative data of the schools. Other interlocutors were SMC members, teachers and students. In addition, key informant were identified and interviewed to gather their opinion about current situation of the schools and its management.

**Diagram-3 Selection of interlocutors for the study**



• **Data collection, quality control and analysis**

Data were collected from the schools and interlocutors as per schedule. In each school Head teacher was interviewed to collect quantitative and qualitative data on school. Focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with three categories of participants (Students-boys and girls; teachers excluding head teacher and available SMC members). One school regretted to provide data until last day of the field study but they provided quantitative data on 5 January 2015, six days after the study was completed. In total 30 interviews of Head Teachers and 87 FGDs were conducted with all categories of participants. Key Informants were interviewed. Observation and informal discussions methods were used to cross check and validate collected data. All collected data were cross checked,

validated and analysed after completion of field work. Outcome of exercises done by the FGD participants using visual tools were also compiled and documented by the team members.

- ***Afternoon review of team performance***

Every afternoon the team reviewed the collected data and prepared field notes. Data collected by the NCTF volunteers through FGD were shared in the sessions and cross checked with the interview outcome. Consultant provided necessary feedback on the collected data and gave tips to collect data with more in-depth analysis by asking analytical questions.

## **Involvement and views of NCTF researchers**

- ***Nature of involvement of NCTF researchers***

NCTF researchers conducted FGDs with three different categories of people i.e. Students, teachers and SMC members. The researchers were divided into 2/3 sub groups depending on the number of schools covered per day to conduct FGD with different categories of people. In each group at least two members were involved to facilitate the sessions (as facilitator) and document the discussions outcome (as note taker). All researchers participated in a two day orientation with practical demonstration in the school before field study under the guidance of the consultant. Though some of them gained experiences earlier in conducting FGDs before but most of them engaged in such a detail baseline study for the first time. As a result all members got the scope to learn about the facilitation process and application of new participatory tools in FGDs. All researchers participated in the afternoon review sessions to present FGD outcome and share experiences including problem faced. Outcomes of FGDs were documented properly by the NCTF researchers and handed over to the consultant for preparing report.

- ***Experience gained and value addition***

For many of us (NCTF researchers) this was an interesting experience and for some it was a thrilling. Most of us had past experience in conducting FGDs with students and youth groups. This time we did FGDs with adult people like teachers and SMC members. We sometime hesitated to ask lots of questions to the adult participants or asking some probing questions. However, we have enjoyed the field work because it gave us a new idea of using tools with game and fun with students and SMC members. Sometime it was very difficult for us to do in-depth analysis of findings by the participants. We have learned a lot by involving with this study such as how to facilitate sessions with adult people, how to break ice and create a congenial environment for discussions, how to do in-depth analysis of data by the participants, how to document FGD findings. This study will carry additional value in our practical experience which we will be able to apply in our future activities.

We also hope that potential NCTF members of these schools will gain knowledge through orientation by the partner organizations and be able to interact with the teachers and influence SMC members in decision making and improve WASH facilities.

## NCTF Capacity assessment

Detail discussion was held with NCTF central committee members, members of Dhaka district committee and media group on their activities and skills in establishing rights of the children.

NCTF committees at central and district levels have gained skills in awareness building and motivating children living under poverty (slums, street children) and distress situation to establish their rights and access to basic services i.e. health, education, shelters. They organize sessions with the targeted children and make them aware about their rights. NCTF organize discussion sessions with journalists, educationists, teachers and community people to share their experiences of working with distress children and advocate at national level by organizing press conference, publishing articles and features. They also voice out and protests against any sorts of discriminations and violence against children. NCTF consider social problems related to children like early marriage, gender discrimination between boys and girls as issues to work on.

NCTF media group has more than 100 children working on four different technical issues of media i.e. Print media/ newspaper publishing; video and video editing; Photography and Media monitoring. They publish "*Amader Khobor*" (Our news) a bi-monthly newspaper of children and publish news from all over the country. Video group make video films on different events and facts related to children. Photography group make photographs related to child rights and their sufferings. They also publish photo album on different issues. Media monitoring group monitor news related to children published in six national dailies. District committees send their information and materials (stories and news) to the central committee for documentation and publish in the media.

However, none of the NCTF committee members and media group has any experience in working with school and SMC. Only few members informed about their personal experience with schools. One mentioned about complain to teachers on poor sanitation situation and lack of prayer facilities in the school. Another one mentioned about their protest against a teacher who beat a girl student. An NCTF member proposed school teacher to introduce canteen facilities at school for the students. In all cases they got positive response from the teachers. But none of them had any experience of working with school management committee to establish rights of the children and to ensure proper education environment in the school. They mentioned that this project will create scope for the NCTF to work with the schools and establish rights for education of the children.

## Photo voice

Study team members have collected more than 1,700 pictures of all schools on different issues e.g. water and sanitation situation and facilities, infrastructure, waste management, ICT and lab facilities. All those pictures were handed over to project partner (MMC) through SC to develop photo voice for the project.

## Basic information on selected schools

- **School characteristics/types**

This study covered all 30 schools targeted under this project. Among the schools 37% are within municipality area and enjoying all urban facilities; 17% are in between urban and rural (peri-urban) area and 50% schools in the rural area. Out of 30 schools 25 had co-education (boys and girls), 1 was girl's school and four were schools with college (higher secondary level). Out of 30 schools 29 have been included under MPO.

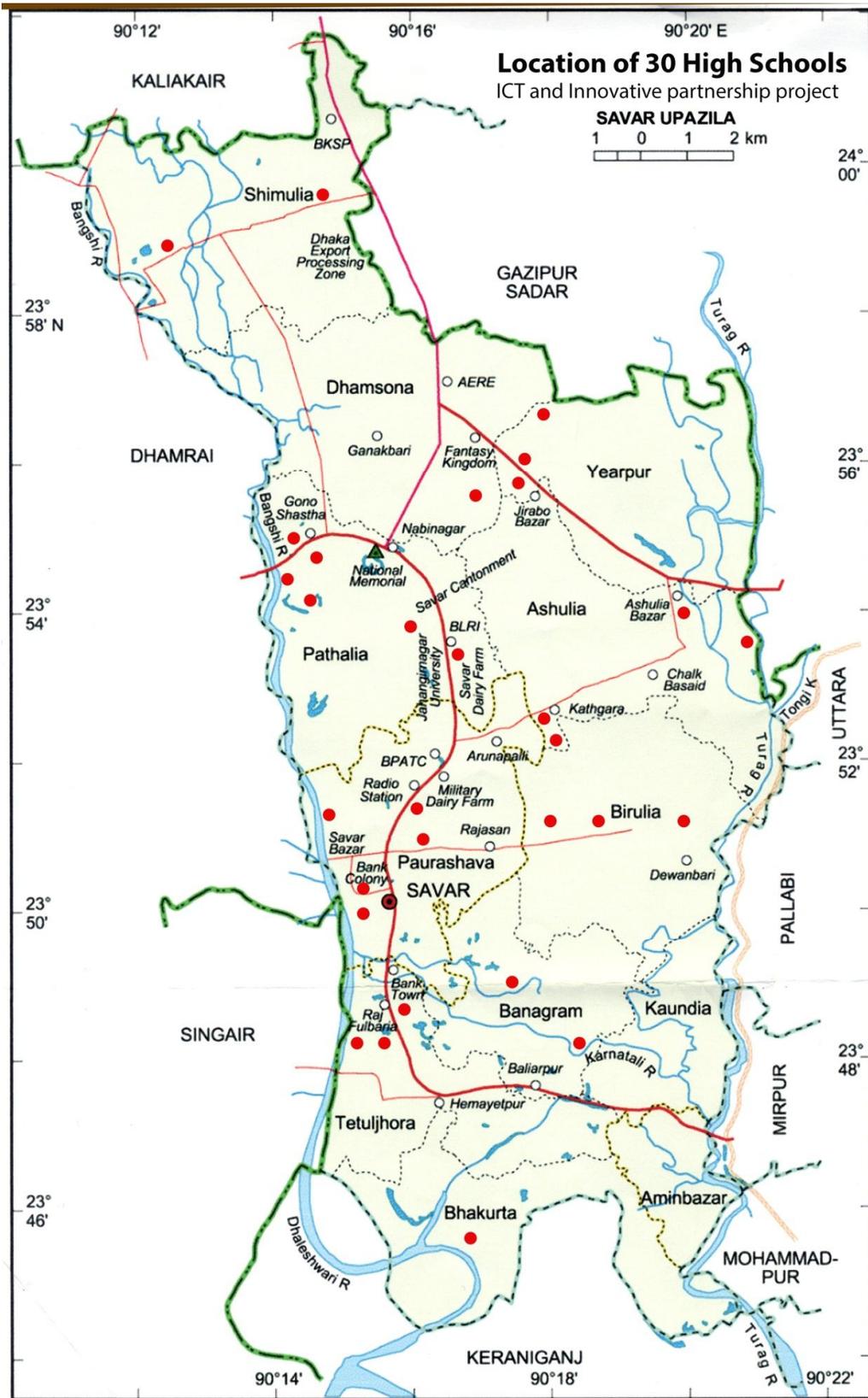
- **Infrastructure**

About 50% schools had two-three buildings; 40% had four-six buildings and 10% had more than six building. None of the schools had citizen charter displayed in the campus. As a result parents and students did not know about school management system and government initiative to make the school management transparent and accountable for all.

- **Students and teachers**

Total number of students of all 30 schools were 21,193 (excluding students of college sections of 4 schools with colleges). Number of boys 9,869 (47%) and girls were 11,324 (53%). Teacher student ratio varied from maximum 59 students per teacher to minimum 11.

Diagram-4 Location map of 30 selected high schools in Savar upazila



## Limitations and challenges

This study faced both limitations and challenges during field work. The main limitation was setting time for study. December was the closing month of all education institutions after final exam and teachers become busy for publishing results, distribute books and prepare for the next year. So December was not the right month to conduct baseline study with schools.

Because of sudden change of project area from Dhamrai to Savar upazila VERC could not organize any briefing session for the school authorities beforehand. As a result most of schools had no idea on what is going to happen in the FGD and they were not clear why they should provide us information. Although VERC staff had somehow managed the situation but sometime it was difficult for the team to brief interlocutors about the project and collect detail information in such a short time.

Because of closing of schools at the end of the year just after final exam was over it was really difficult to collect FGD participants. No students were available around schools; teachers were extremely busy in preparing result sheets and SMC members were not interested to give more than few minutes time for discussion. VERC staff had to struggle to collect minimum number of participants for each FGD. Sometime FGD turned into one or two member interview because of absence of requisite number of participants. On average only 2 hours time was available in each school for conducting three FGDs and one interview by a three member study team which was extremely difficult for gathering detail analytical data/ information.

One big challenge for the consultant was to keep NCTF researchers in track in collecting information from the FGD participants. The researchers were confined on the specific point of the checklist by asking direct questions and writing reply (same as question and answer approach). In fact, they were too young to explore more in-depth information by asking investigative and probing questions. It was also difficult for them to use tools more critically for gathering in-depth analytical information after receiving one day orientation and one day field practice. The consultant had to change the checklist three times to make them capable in collecting detail analytical information. As a result some gaps in data collection were observed during compilation and analysis. In consequence this report could not provide adequate analytical data and information which might be helpful for the project partners to understand the ground situation.

## RESULTS

### Part A: School Governance and Student's participation

- **Formation Process and structure of School Management Committee (SMC)**

Out of 100% (30) schools, 87% (26) had formed School Managing Committee (SMC) and 13% (4) had Ad-hoc committee headed by UNO with three other members following section 39 of government circular. Again out of the 26 SMCs, 24 were formed following section-7 of government circular issued by the Ministry of Education<sup>14</sup>. Other 2 schools run by the government departments (Radio Colony and Savar Dairy Farm) followed section-49 of the same circular to form SMC. Although all 24 schools had SMC claimed that the school conducted election as per government circular for the formation of SMC where all parents casted their votes to nominate 5 parent's representatives (4 male and 1 women) but in reality it was very difficult to ascertain how many of them had direct elections and how many had influenced by external powers to nominate members. Only 1 school claimed that they conducted election following government rules and procedure. The study team learned from

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<sup>14</sup> Circular of Ministry of Education on the formation of SMC as per memo no. Sim/sha11/13(IDA)-3/2003(part)/608 dated: 08/06/2009

local people that in most of the cases local influential people and politicians selected parents of the students known to them and those will not create any problem or challenge or interfere SMC Chairperson and Head Teacher in their management system.

Most of the teachers and head teachers expressed their dissatisfaction about the qualification of parent's representatives. Almost 95% of the parent's representatives of most of the schools studied up to primary level. Even some of them never attended school. On the other hand about 95% parent's representatives were businessmen and almost 100% women parent's representatives were found housewife by occupation. These members have no idea about management system of the schools. Membership in the SMC gives them social status and power to influence school management. They come to school only after the annual exam to request teachers to pass some failed students and to allocate stipend to some students who were not eligible. Sometime they claimed illegal financial benefit from the head teachers. Sometime they misbehave with the teachers and threat them of terminating from the job.

*"We are frustrated and disappointed with the involvement of illiterate people in the SMC. They do not know how to behave with a qualified teacher. Sometime they insult us in presence of students and threat us of losing job. Government must give a pre condition of qualification (minimum HSC) for parent's representatives to be elected or selected as SMC members".*

-Teacher of one high school

- **Functioning of SMC- Power structure**

A power relation exists and functioning in all SMCs. SMCs formed by election are functioning well and decisions are taken collectively but SMCs formed with the blessings of political persons are controlled and dictated by the concern persons and his party people. In most cases head teacher dominates the committee if he/she is local and influential. When Chairperson is local, political person and rich then he controls the committee. Some clever head teachers are taking advantage of power game and earning personal benefit maintaining good relationship with the chairperson. Teacher representatives were found less powerful than any other members. Most of the women teacher representatives had no role in decision making of the committee. Male parent representatives were not found influential as most of them were businessmen or service holders by occupation and do not give time for committee meeting. Women parent representatives were found as the most neglected member in the committee as most of them were housewife and generally do not attend meeting. Co-opt members were mostly selected by the Chairperson who are generally his/her own loyal person and sometime politically influential.

SMC of 7% (2) schools run by the government departments are fully dependent on the decisions of the Chairperson, who is also head of that government department. In these schools head teachers keep formal relation with the SMC Chairperson for school management and other members do not play any role.

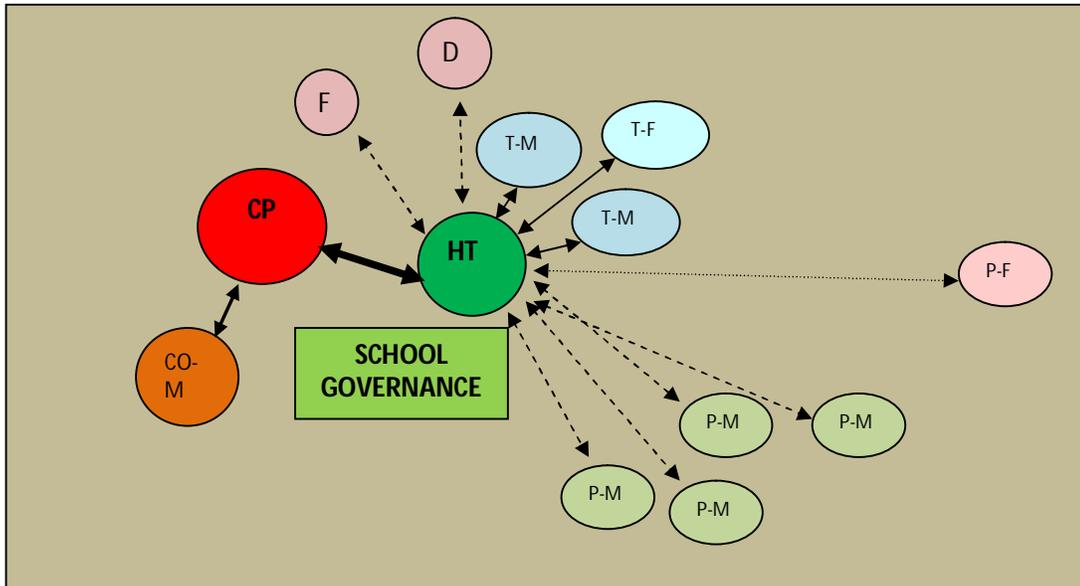
However, all these information were not available in the FGDs and interview. Team had to dig out those through informal discussions with different people e.g. night guard of the schools, aya, street vendors selling snacks in front of the school gate, parents of students, book shops, cyber café, parent's representatives in the SMC, people living beside school .

*In one school Head teacher involved in conflict with the Chairperson. Chairperson was most influential political person and holding very high position in ruling political party. Head teacher was suspended by the Chairperson for financial misappropriation. But head teacher somehow managed the department with the blessing of minister and wiped out his suspension order. Observing the*

whole situation Chairperson resigned from her position and cancelled a remarkable allotment of the school.

– Information provided by one SMC member of the school

Diagram-5 Power relation in the SMC (an example)- outcome of exercise with SMC members



**Legend:** HT- Head teacher; CP-Chairperson; T-M Teacher male; T-F Teacher Female; P-M Parent representative male; P-F Parent representative female; CO-M Co-opt member; F-Founder; D-donor

• **Meetings and decision making process**

About 87% (26) schools mentioned that SMC meets regularly (monthly or bi-monthly) and 7% mentioned about irregular meeting and rest 6% did not organize any meeting yet. However, there was little evidence about holding regular meeting of most of the SMCs. Quorum and participation of all SMC members in the meeting was not ascertained due to closing of schools. Common agenda of the meeting as stated by the head teacher were infrastructure development, financial issues and education quality/ public exam results. WASH issue did not get priority in any SMC meeting agenda.

Although 87% schools mentioned that they take decisions collectively and the rest 13% by the Chairmen but in reality it was identified through discussions that in most of the schools SMC meetings decisions were taken by the Head Teacher in consultation with the Chairmen. In 13% (2) schools run by the government departments SMC decisions were taken by the Chairmen. In another 13% (2) schools SMCs having Chairmen as most powerful political leaders/ Parliament member decisions were taken by the chairmen alone.

• **Priority setting in annual plan, budget and budget allocation for WASH**

**Annual plan**

About 73% (22) schools claimed that they did annual plan because they had to submit annual plan to the education office. About 10% did plan irregularly (as per need of the school) and 17% did not prepare any plan considering it less important. Setting priority on activities depend on the need of school management. Preparation for public exam, enrollment of students, collection of fund and salary of teachers got top priorities in the annual plan of most of the schools.

### **Annual budget and budget allocation for WASH**

About 77% (23) schools do annual budget based on their income from different sources (tuition fees, exam fees and annual development fees charges from the students and government contribution under MPO). But **none of the schools allocate separate budget for WASH activities**. WASH issue always got low priority in all school budgets. About 60% mentioned that priority in budget was set by all members through collective decisions. In other 40% schools priority was set by the Head teacher in consultation with Chairperson. Only in 3% school priority was set by the MP, who is the well wisher and guide of the SMC.

*"We keep WASH issue under development head, not as separate head considering as low priority activity. We spend money for any construction and maintenance of WASH from this head as and when required".*

–Head teacher of one school

- **Understanding accountability and students to influence decision making**

Accountability as defined by the SMC members and teachers refer only inform parents about exam results of their children or report to the education office on school performance. **None of the School authorities feel obliged to be accountable to the students in offering quality education under favourable learning environment.**

Almost all interlocutors defined accountability in their own way as they perceive. Majority of the interview respondents defined accountability as briefing parents on the exam results of their children during publishing of annual exam results. About 27% respondents mentioned that they organize Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) meeting for sharing exam results of their children. Another 27% respondents mentioned that they organize parent's meeting to inform about progress of their children and give them some advice to monitor children's study and other activities at home. They organize 3-4 PTA meeting in a year. About 7% respondents mentioned that they are accountable to the education department for the performance of the schools. Rest 39% mentioned that they are responsible to parents, community people and government education department for their overall performance. None mentioned their accountability to students who are the direct beneficiaries of the schools. None of the FGD participants (SMC members and teachers) felt that they need to strengthen accountability. **They do not feel that students can play a part influencing decision making and holding authorities accountable for standards in schools.**

*"We are teaching students and they are in the school only for learning. How they can make us accountable? They can only ask for help in the study". – Head teacher of one school*

- **Awareness of school authorities about poor management of WASH** – consequences of poor WASH facilities on boys and girls

School authorities of all schools were found reluctant about current WASH situation of their schools. Even some teachers feel proud about their costly toilets with tiles and commode though none of those were found clean and hygienic. While discussing about consequence of poor WASH facilities on students especially on girls students, most of the participants expressed their ignorance. On the contrary, some teachers commented that school toilets are much better than toilets used by the student at family level. SMC members found unaware about status of student's WASH facilities in the schools as they use toilets of Head teachers which were always maintained properly by the staff. Almost all SMC members participated in the FGD were **found unaware about consequences** of poor WASH facilities on the boys and girls. On the contrary some SMC participants commented that majority of the students are from middle or poor class families who are habituated in using poorly maintained toilets in their family. So it is not a problem for them.

- **Inclusion of students in decision making**

Students had no scope to participate in the decision making process of SMC as they were not member of SMC. Both SMC members and teachers were found **not in favour** of inclusion of students in decision making. On the other hand both teachers and SMC felt it was risky to involve students in the decision making process. No schools had ever involved any students in the SMC decisions making process. Very few schools (10%) gave responsibilities to the senior students for organizing annual sports or religious function(*Miladmahfil*). Teachers said that they listen to student’s problem if students express it to them.

*"We cannot invite students in the meeting and in the decision making process. They will not respect and obey us once we allow them to sit beside us and participate in the discussions. They will be unruly".*

- SMC member of one school

## Part B: WASH facilities

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) was found as the **most neglected component** of all schools. Students of the schools expressed their highest level of dissatisfaction on WASH facilities (Table-2). Students participated in the FGD did exercise on WASH facilities available at schools using mood meter matrix method, which was compiled and presented below (Diagram-5).

**Table-2 Student’s comments and reaction on school WASH facilities**

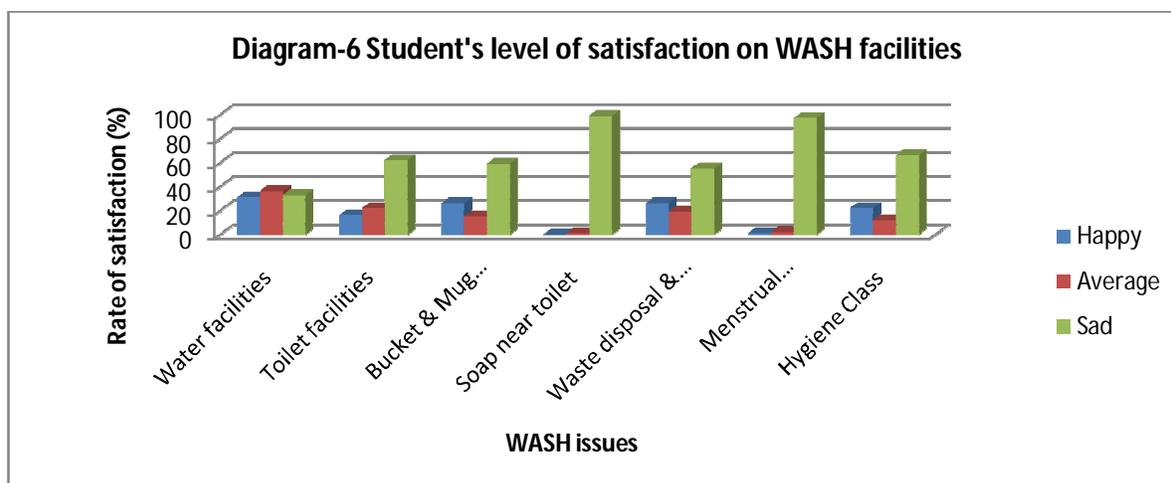
Outcome of mood meter exercise with boys and girls (n=29)	BOYS(100 score)			GIRLS(100 score)		
	😊	😐	😞	😊	😐	😞
	Happy	Average	Sad	Happy	Average	Sad
Water facilities	32	31	37	31	36	33
Toilet facilities	21	18	61	16	21	63
Bucket & Mug facilities in the toilet	25	15	60	26	15	59
Soap near toilet	0	0	100	0	1	99
Waste disposal & Mgt. in the school	27	15	58	26	19	55
Hygiene Class organize by school	25	8	67	22	12	66
Scope for menstrual hygiene practice	Not applicable			1	2	97

**Note:** No FGDs were conducted in one school. 100 scores were allocated for each issue

Water was available only for washing purposes, not for drink. Toilets of all schools were found dirty and not in usable conditions. No schools have facilities for using soap by the students after using toilets. In one school few girls are allowed to use toilets of teachers where they get soap. No scope for menstrual hygiene practice by the girls during menstruation except two schools where they can buy sanitary towel from women staff.

### **Role of students in WASH management**

Students were **not involved in WASH management** in any schools. Only 7% schools claimed that they engage students for keeping toilet clean with water (but not to keep it hygienic) which was not proved during FGD. Parents of the students also did not like to engage their children in cleaning toilet or maintaining water point. As a result WASH facilities always remained a health risk for all.



## Water facilities

- **Sources of water and availability**

About 93% was using deep tube well water lifted by pump and supplied from the overhead tank through pipeline. Only 7% schools run by two government departments have pipeline supply water from their own departmental campus. Though head teachers of all schools claimed that the water of their schools was safe for drinking but they did not drink that water by themselves. They collect water from outside sources and put in water filter. Most of the students mentioned that they carry water bottle from home for drinking. They also said that the overhead water tank was not made clean for about a year. Most of the water taps in student's water point and toilets were found broken or disappeared. Surroundings of the water point found dirty in almost all schools. There was no sign of keeping it clean regularly. No schools were found with no water facilities.

*"While we say water is safe, it is safe for washing and cleaning but not for drinking. Our teachers will be angry on us if we say you that water is not safe". – Student of a school*

*"Boys are naughty. They always break down the water taps and throw away the drinking glasses. That is why I put off the water tape". – Head teacher of a school*

- **Alternative water sources**

About 43% (13) schools had alternative sources of water. Out of these 13 schools, 2 run by government departments (Dairy farm high school and Radio Colony high school) used supply water from own departmental campus. Hand pump was the only alternative sources of water in the remaining 11 schools.

- **Management of water facilities**

In 90% (27) schools Head teachers monitored and gave decisions on water facilities and its management. About 3% (1) schools it was monitored by the SMC. About 7% (2) schools informed that both Head Teacher (HT) and SMC jointly monitored water facilities. Head teacher was claimed as the main decision giver for maintenance and repairing of water point and facilities in all schools. However, HT was not made accountable to anyone for poor maintenance. None of the schools keep separate budget provision for water facilities in their annual budget unless they need big amount for new installation. They generally spent fund from development head for the infrastructure maintenance.

- **Student's participation in water facilities management**

None of the 30 schools had any scope for students to participate in water facilities management. Both SMC members and teachers did not show any interest to include students in the management.

- **Gender discrimination in using water facilities**

No gender discrimination was observed in any school on use of water facilities. However, in almost all schools boys were deprived from using water facilities because taps of boy's toilet and washing basins were either not working or disappeared.

- **Student's level of satisfaction on water facilities**

About one-third of boys and girls students of all schools expressed their satisfaction on availability of water for washing and cleaning purpose only. Another one-third expressed their dissatisfaction on availability of water due to poor facilities e.g. no water tap, no container/ mug for drinking water, and water was not safe for drinking. Rest students did not comment on water facilities specifically. However, students did not complain to the teachers and SMC members about water facilities because they were afraid for being punished by the teachers for damaging the taps and basins.

## Sanitation facilities

- **Types of toilets**

Almost 97% schools had attached sanitary toilets within the main building with septic tank. Most of the septic tanks were found filled up with excrete. **Toilet facilities were found worse in all schools.** Most of the student's toilets are not usable at all. Most of the boy's toilets in all schools were found without any water supply though there was a pipeline for water supply but mostly without any water tap. Some comments of students and teachers will give a clear picture of present situation of the toilets.

*"We are bound to use unusable toilet in case of emergency. Teachers and SMC will never realize our problems because they always use Head teacher's toilet. They could realize our problems if they at least visit our toilet".*

– Student of a school

*"Students come from different family background. Some of them do not get scope to use hygienic toilet in their family and some use shared toilets. So they do not know how to keep toilet clean and hygienic after use".*

– Teacher of a school

*"If we shout a boy student for their poor performance or unruly activities then they become arrogant and damage tap and bucket of the toilet. That is why we put off tap and bucket from the toilets".*

- Teacher of a school

- **Facilities available in the toilets- water supply, bucket**

Number of toilets in the schools varied from minimum 2 to maximum 29. Average ratios of toilets in all 30 schools were found for boys 1:80; and for girls 1:99; for teachers 1:8 and for other staff 1:9. Ratio of toilets per student varied from school to school. Numbers of students per toilet of all schools were ranging from minimum 29 to maximum 235 (Table-3).

Most of the student's toilets have no water supply and bucket for cleaning. Marked on the wall indicates that there were pipeline water connections which does not exist now. They had to carry water from outside. In 23% schools toilets were found filled up with excrete and it was not cleaned for long time. Bad smell comes out all the time even in one FGD session everyone was feeling uneasy due to bad smell coming from the toilets.

**Table- 3 Ratio of toilets for boys and girls by schools in percentage**

Ratio of students per toilet	Number of schools in percentage	
	Boys	Girls
More than 200 students/toilet	3	7
150 to 199 students/toilet	7	23
100 to 149 students/ toilet	40	20
50 to 99 students/toilet	33	43
Up to 49 students per toilet	17	7

- **Soap for hand washing**

None of the 30 schools provided any soap in the toilets or in the washing basins. Students of all schools said that they never saw that school supplied any soap into the student's toilet or washing point. However, toilets of the teachers contained soap, toilet papers and bucket.

- **Maintenance of toilets- assigned staff, frequency of cleaning**

About 77% schools have mentioned that they have appointed staff (Sweeper) for cleaning toilets. In fact they were not regular staff, so they attended school for cleaning toilets daily(30%) or once a week (47%). In 23% schools Aya (women support staff) were assigned to clean the toilets. She cleans it by pouring water only without using any cleaning materials/ detergent. Doors of toilets of two schools were found completely broken for long time. No lights were found in any student's toilet. However, toilets of the head teachers in all schools were found in very good conditions with all necessary facilities.

- **Management of toilets- Budget, Monitoring, accountability, repairing**

Same as water facilities no separate budget provision had been made in any schools for maintenance of toilets. Head teacher generally monitor toilet situations. Decisions for repairing of the toilets mostly given by the Head teacher of the school provided he/she has good understanding with the Chairperson. Though few schools claimed about formation of user groups for monitoring and maintenance of toilets but in reality no user groups were found in any schools. Head teachers make aya and sweeper accountable for keeping toilets clean but not hygienic. In 87% schools Head teachers are responsible for repairing of toilet facilities and the rest 13% by SMC. SMC takes decisions in the meeting to repair toilets.

- **Gender discrimination in using toilet facilities**

Though conditions of boy's toilets were found worse than the girl's toilets but we did not find any major gender discrimination in using toilets. One school had only two common toilets used by teachers, boys and girls due to scarcity of toilets. In most of the schools Ayagenerally keep girl's toilet clean butno such arrangements exist for the boys.

- **Student's participation in toilet maintenance and management- process, cleaning**

No students of any school ever participated in toilet maintenance and management. Students were not interested to participate in toilet management and maintenance. They considered it as nasty job. Teacher and parents also considered it embarrassing for their children. Schools appointed sweeper for cleaning toilet also not monitored by the students.

*"I send my child to school for education, not to clean toilets. I should not allow this in any way".*

–Parent of a student

*"We cannot engage students in WASH management. This is a sensitive issue and parents will be annoyed on us".*

– Head teacher of a school

- **Student's level of satisfaction and feelings on toilet facilities and management-** complains and response of SMC and teachers

All students participated in the FGD expressed their highest level of dissatisfaction in using toilets in the school. Some said that they go outside the school to use toilets of the nearby mosque or sometime go home for using toilets. Students do not complain about poor quality toilets as they did not see any action taken, rather teachers will punish them if they complain again and again. Students also did not find any response from SMC in this regard.

*"Toilets of our school just like a grave with no electricity and water supply. We carry water from outside whenever we feel any emergency to go. I hate our school toilet".*

– Girl of one school

*"I cannot use school toilet as there is no water and bucket for cleaning".* – Boy of one school

*"In case of emergency I go out of school by crossing boundary wall to use toilet of the nearby mosque as I cannot hold it for longer period"* – Boy student of a school

- **Environmental sanitation-** toilet outlet and fecal sludge management

Most of the septic tanks of school toilets were not cleaned for more than a year. We found cover of most of septic tanks broken and fecal sludge/ excretewere coming out. Delivery pipe lines of some toilets of the schools were found broken and not repaired for long time. These sanitary toilets cannot be considered as hygienic and it was polluting the school environment. School authorities were found reluctant about the situation.

## Menstrual hygiene practice facilities

- **Facilities available for menstrual hygiene practices**

None of the 30 schools have any facilities for menstrual hygiene practices by girls. Most of the girls students go back home and do not attend schools during menstruation period. Only two schools (including the only girl's school) sell sanitary pad to the girls with Tk. 5 through Aya. Even the girl's school had no hygienic place for disposal and change of sanitary pads during menstruation.

*"I miss important classes during menstruation period. I cannot come during that period because our school does not have any place for change and disposal of sanitary pads".* – Girl's of one school

*"This is a big problem for the girl students. We tell them to go back home and do not attend school during menstruation period. Our SMC never give importance to this issue".*

- Women teacher of one school

- **Maintenance of place for menstrual hygiene practice**

Question of maintenance of place for menstrual hygiene practice does not arise as no school has such facilities. Girl students feel embarrass while menstruation starts during school hour.

- **Girl student's participation in menstrual hygiene practice-** complain and response of SMC and teachers

Girl students of all schools expressed their deep concern about non-existence of any facilities for menstrual hygiene practices. This is a big demand from the girl students. But they never raised this issue to the teachers because they know that teachers will also not take it seriously. *"It is better to go back home instead of discussing such a private issue with the teachers"*- said by girl students.

## Hygiene education and practice

- **Arrangement of hygiene classes**

None of the school had a hygiene class except classes for physical education. Though about 30% mentioned that schools organize some classes on hygiene education but they could not tell what they were taught in hygiene classes and by whom.

- **Assignment of teachers**

No teacher assigned specifically for hygiene class in any of the 30 schools. Teachers of Physical education generally cover hygiene issue. Two schools claimed that they have teachers for hygiene education but in reality they were also for physical education with some advance knowledge on hygiene education.

- **Handwash facilities and practice in the schools**

No hand wash facilities exist in any of the school. We saw very few schools with basin for washing hands attached to the toilets but none of them had water tap or water supply. All basins were found out of order for long time and extremely dirty.

## School Waste management

- **Waste disposal facilities**

About 17% respondents mentioned that they have dustbins in the school for dumping waste and disposal. Rest 83% does not have any dustbins but they preserve waste in a particular place and then dispose outside the school premises. About 80% respondents mentioned about existence of basket in the classrooms. However, the team did not find any basket inside most of the classrooms while peeping through the window. Physical observation inside the classrooms found that most of them were dirty. Lots of empty cigarette boxes with left over cigarettes ends were found around boy's toilets. In most of the schools Aya had been appointed for cleaning classrooms and outside but she cannot keep it clean as students through litter and waste things everywhere. Both teachers and students were found reluctant in monitoring waste disposal by the cleaning staff.

- **Student's participation in waste disposal and management**

No students of any of the 30 schools ever participated in waste disposal and its management.

- **Monitoring of waste disposal and accountability**

Aya or appointed cleaner clean classrooms and other rooms regularly with broom. But nobody monitors his/her activities and guides him/her.

## Part C: Information Communication Technology (ICT)

### ICT facilities in the schools

Introduction of computer had become common in almost all schools after incorporation of ICT as subject in class nine and ten. Teachers had been appointed for ICT in most of the schools. Accordingly some facilities had been created in 93% schools. Rest 7% not yet started ICT course due to lack of ICT tools (Computer and internet facilities).

- **Infrastructure facilities- Computer lab**

As all the 30 schools were closed after final exam so it was difficult for the team to enter into the school building of all schools and check all facilities. Information collected from the teachers was the basis of data collection. About 47% (14) schools mentioned that they have computer lab and the rest

do not have any infrastructure facilities. Some schools have got good number of computers from different sources. Some of the computer lab was found well equipped with multimedia, photocopy, necessary tables and power supply. However, most of the computer labs were found under used or unused due to lack of skilled teachers and technical guidance. Some computer labs were not well maintained.

- **Types of ICT tools available in the schools and it's functioning– Computers, mobile phones and tablets. Specification of ICT tools**

About 93% (28 schools) schools had desktop computers and 20% (6 schools) had laptops. Two schools had no computers. Four computers of one school had been stolen about few months ago. Another school could not manage any computer from any sources but one teacher use his personal laptop for school purposes. About 50% schools had some computers not working for last few months to few years. Korea Bangladesh Friendship Associations provided some computers to four schools with other ICT equipment (multimedia, printer and photocopier) to start ICT in the school.

**Table- 4 Number of schools with computers (desktop or laptops)**

No. of computers by schools	No. of schools (n=30)	Percentage
21+ computers	2	<b>7</b>
16-20 computers	1	<b>3</b>
11 to 15 computers	3	<b>10</b>
4-10 computers	12	<b>40</b>
1 to 3 computers	10	<b>33</b>
No computer	2	<b>7</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

None of the schools had any other ICT equipment except computer e.g. mobile phone and tablets. Head teachers use his/ her personal mobile phone only for communicating with others on school purposes and school authority pay Tk. 500-1,000 per month.

- **Internet facilities available in the schools- Modem, Broadband, Router**

About 93% schools had internet connections. About 73% use modem; 3% use broadband and 17% use both modem and broadband. About 7% schools had no internet connections as they do not have any computer.

**Table-5 Number of schools having computers with internet facilities**

Types of internet facilities in the schools	No. of schools (n= 28)	Percentage
Modem	22	<b>79</b>
Broadband	1	<b>3</b>
Both Modem & Broadband	5	<b>18</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

About 67% schools mentioned that they get regular support of internet connections and 27% face some difficulties getting regular connections of internet.

- **Power supply and alternative sources for back up support**

All 30 schools had regular electricity supply. However, 33% schools had alternative power supply through IPS (30%); generator (13%) and Solar power (3%). Rest 54% had no alternative sources of power. One school could not start computer lab due to lack of three phase electricity connections.

- **Teaching staff**- skills of teachers in ICT education

Schools with ICT subject had one teacher appointed for teaching student of class nine and ten. Most of the teachers have basic qualification on ICT/ computer science. However, some teachers expressed their need for practical training on use of all types of available ICT tools.

*"I am teacher of computer subject but I have poor knowledge on ICT. Now school has started ICT class for ninth and tenth grades. So I need training on ICT". – Computer teacher of one high school*

- **User of ICT tools**

Schools having ICT tools were used for two different purposes i.e. administrative and academic purposes. Head teachers and Office Assistants were found as the major user of computers and internet facilities for administrative purpose. They use computers mainly for preparing exam question papers and results compilation and tabulation. Internets are used for correspondence with education board and download public exam results. Office Assistant also use computer for keeping accounts and correspondence.

Students studying ICT use computers in the lab for academic purposes under the guidance of teacher. They have no access to internet and they are not allowed to bring personal mobile in the school.

- **Student's accessibility to ICT equipment at school**- Computers, internet

Students of class nine and ten get scope to use computer to learn basic office work (word, excel, photo-shop etc.) as per their curriculum. However, in most of the school students are not allowed to use computers beyond class hours. ICT is new to teachers and schools, so in most of the school students were taught computer subject as theory without any practical. In some of the schools newly established computer lab not yet made open for the students.

- **Maintenance of ICT tools**

None of the schools under the baseline study had any facilities for maintenance of ICT. In 53% (16) schools a total of 45 computers were lying as out of order from last 6 months to few years. School authorities could not repair those for lack of SMC initiatives and scarcity of funds.

- **Monitoring on the use of ICT by students**

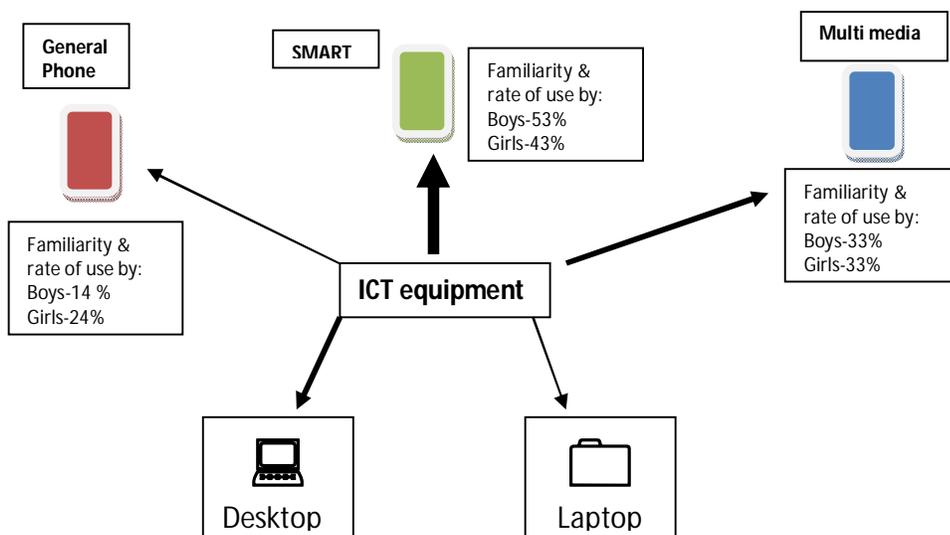
Teacher appointed or assigned for ICT course are responsible for monitoring the use of ICT by the students. In addition, Head teachers also monitor use of computer by discussing with the concerned teachers and students.

## **ICT tools use by the students beyond schools**

### **Student's familiarity and use of mobile phones**

Students of all 30 schools were found familiar with mobile phones. About 40% students have mobile phones of which majority are boys. Parents do not allow girls to buy and use mobile phones because they may be involved in affairs with boys. Most of the boys and girls use smart and multimedia phones and few use general phone.

**Diagram- 7 Familiarity and rate of using ICT equipment by students**



**Table-6 Types of mobile phone use by students**

Students	Types of phone use in percentage		
	SMART Phone	Multimedia phone	General phone
Boys	53	33	14
Girls	43	33	24

**Table-7 Purpose of use of mobile phones by students**

Purpose of use	Percentage of use	
	Boys	Girls
Talk	34	30
Entertainment (enjoy song, video)	30	33
SMS/MMS	13	10
Internet	12	13
Facebook	7	7
Camera	2	3
Information collection	2	4
Radio	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

***Student's familiarity and use of computer***

Most of the students are familiar with desktop computers and some of them with laptop and other accessories e.g. modem, broadband internet connections. However, majority of them do not get scope to use computer because they do not have it at home or cannot use it in the school. Students of class nine and ten studying computer subject gets some scope in the school to use computer for limited time under the supervision of teacher. However, due to inadequate number of computers in the school and restriction made by the teachers they do not get chance of using computer for long time. Students of all 30 schools do not have access to browse internet at school. Boy students of schools close to Jahangir Nagar University go to the university campus to enjoy video and other interesting program downloaded by the university students in the public library campus where free wi-fi is available. Very few students said that they have computers at home used by their parents

and elder brothers and sisters. They sometime get scope to use those but cannot get enough time to use because elder family members do not allow them. All students participated in the FGD said that they are familiar with desktop computers. About 50% students mentioned that they know laptops and 55% know modem and only 5% know router. Very few students mentioned that they go to cyber café to browse internet and enjoy mostly pornography. About 95% students mentioned that they learned computer use from their elder friends or from local computer shop/ café.

**Table-8 Purpose of using computer by students**

Purpose of use	Percentage of use	
	Boys	Girls
Entertainment (enjoy song, video)	54	55
Office	10	9
Internet	33	32
Education (getting exam results)	3	4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*"Some boys are going to cyber café for browsing internet and using face-book most with bad intension. These boys can be utilized for more innovative good work if we could motivate, aware and organize them in the school with necessary ICT training". – One teacher of a school*

- **Student's familiarity with ICT equipment** – Mobile phone, computer, Tablets

Many of the mobile phone owner mentioned that they use phone most of the time for different purposes. However, many (60%) participating students are familiar with facebook and photo-shop because they use this for communicating with friends and store pictures. Students of urban school area get more scope of using modern ICT equipment and cyber café facilities than rural area. As a result they are more advanced than other in using ICT.

- **Student's knowledge and skills in using ICT tools- training source**

None of the students of these schools received any formal training from any institute. They mentioned during discussions that they got no formal training on the use of mobile rather by using it they became expert. In case of computer some of them learned from elder friends and by using computer in the cyber café. Few students who have computer at home learned it from the elder family members i.e. brothers or sisters.

- **Frequency of use ICT tools by students and their preference- access to internet**

Use of mobile phone is common among all students. Those have mobile phones they use it during most of the free time even up to mid night for chatting with friends, download video, listen song etc. Few students become addicted in using mobile phones all the time. Use of computer by students found very much limited. They can use computers in cyber café or at home. Elder family members do not allow children to use computers frequently. So they get scope to use computer only when it is lying idle. Students can use internet in the mobile phone and in the computer at cyber café. Use of internet in the smart phone has increased tremendously- as stated by the participating students of FGDs. Girls mentioned that they have limited access to mobile phones and computer because their parents do not allow them in using mobile phone for fear of being fall in affairs with boys. Therefore, girls generally use mobile phone from their elders in case of emergency only.

- **Student's opinion of using different type of ICT tools**

All participating students mentioned that they have all the good intension of using ICT tools for good purposes. They also feel that in this modern technological era everyone should have access to ICT

tools. But they should be properly guided by the seniors and elderly people for using tools for enhancing their knowledge and information.

*"We need training at school on the use of internet and download books and other materials to enrich our knowledge on many issues. It will help us to expand our knowledge on global issues".*

– Student of a school

- **Understanding of guardians, SMC, teachers and CSO representatives engaging children in use of ICT tools-** Benefit, Key challenges and risks

#### **Comments of teachers and parents on use of ICT equipment by students**

Almost all teachers of the schools and parents (SMC members) participated in the FGD expressed their deep concern about the misuse of mobile phone and computer by school students. They feel that students are too young to use ICT equipment and they mostly use those for bad purposes. Head teacher of one school said that school students must not use mobile phone and computer. Only those studying computer subjects can use computer in the school under the guidance of teacher. Teachers also have no clear idea how they can use ICT for information collection and dissemination.

*"We are deeply concern about using of mobile phone and computer by the students. They are using it mostly for bad purposes. It kills their time for study and gradually they become addicted to it. We also request parents to monitor their children at home and passing time with friends outside. However, they can use mobile for emergency purposes in presence of teacher or parents. Students need motivation and counseling in using ICT equipment for education and gaining new knowledge. We also need training on the use of ICT tools and teach students".*

– Teachers of all schools

- **Student's perception's about using ICT tools-** Benefits, key challenges and risks

Students participated in the FGD said, "We did not receive any formal training from any sources. Nobody orient us about use of ICT tools for gaining new knowledge and information. In the schools teachers always warned us not use mobile phones. But they never helped us in using mobile phones for education/ academic purposes. We are interested to learn more on the use of mobile phones and computer to enhance our knowledge. We need support from our schools as well as from our parents.

- **Benefits and risks**

Students participated in the FGDs mentioned about the benefits and risks of using ICT equipment. ICT equipment still remained as tools for entertainment and passing time in playing game, listening song and watching videos. Though 20% students mentioned that they can use mobile phone and computer for education and gaining new knowledge and getting information on many issues but majority of them do not know how which sector they should use and what they will download. They mostly use mobile phone and computer to download public exam results.

On the other hand almost all participants of the FGD admitted that they use mobile phone and computer for entertainment and bad purposes. Many students download and watch pornography. They give more time in using mobile phone which kills their time for study. Some boys and girls use mobile phone at night for long time gossiping with their friends and cannot sleep well. As a result they cannot prepare their homework and become late in attending school. It has negative impact on their health. Though mobile phone is not allowed in the school but few students bring it and use in the classroom hiding from the teacher. They also admitted that using of mobile phone regularly spoiled their student life. Some has become addicted in using phone for bad purposes e.g. taking photos of girls and do blackmailing or threat people for money.

## Part D: Children's empowerment

No such culture has developed yet in any of the 30 schools to include students in the decision making process even if it is about student's issue. A gap prevails between teachers and students. SMC is not reachable by the students. SMC and teachers do not look after the problems of the students that they are facing in using school facilities. None of the students were found in the FGDs have courage to place their need to the teachers for fear of being punished (not physically but by giving poor score in the exam) and they will be marked as unruly.

*"We cannot beat students as before due to government order. As a result some of the students have become desperate. If we allow them to participate with us in decision making then they will be more unruly and will not respect us anymore. They will place demand for many unnecessary things. They are too young to participate in decision making process. However, students can be allowed to organize sports and cultural functions under the guidance of teachers".*

– Teachers and SMC members of different schools

Students participated in the FGD presented a picture of their situation in the school. In the school they are always afraid of shouting by teachers. They cannot express their need to the teachers. Teachers also do not allow students to voice out for their rights and access. As a result they do not like to express any problem they face in the school unless there is any emergency. While asking about their courage to talk with the teacher about their rights and demand almost all students said, *"It is not possible because teacher will punish us by giving poor score in the exam"*.

*"We will be able to talk with the teachers about our need if you (study team) are with us."*

– Students of different FGD sessions

- ***Student's defining Monitoring***

Students defined monitoring as observing progress of any ongoing activities and keep it in track as guideline received from the authority. Some defined monitoring as to look in to the progress. In case of WASH they mean monitoring was to observe condition of facilities and report to the authority for improvement. They also mentioned that they cannot do monitoring of WASH facilities because they are not allowed by the teachers. Teachers will treat it as complained against school authorities.

- ***Awareness of students to hold school authorities accountable***

None of the participating students had courage to talk with the authority and hold them accountable for improvement of WASH facilities though they feel it as important to express their problems with the SMC through teachers/ head teacher.

- ***Student's thinking about their opinion on WASH matters to teachers and SMC***

Currently there is no scope to express their opinion to the teachers or SMC. But they feel that it is important to present their problems. Also they expressed their limitation of knowledge and skills to pursue authorities.

- ***Student's thinking about their role in SMC to establish their rights to speak and make facilities available***

They strongly believe that they should play a positive role to establish their rights to speak and to make facilities available but they do not know the strategy how to proceed.

- ***Communication process of students to speak out about their views***

Currently students express their problems to the class teachers if it is important and urgent. Teacher then communicate with head teacher and head teacher gives decisions. But in most cases class

teacher do not pass this message to head teacher because head teacher may be displeased on the teacher or they do not feel it as important.

- **Ideas of NCTF members (external) to hold school authorities accountable**

Study team (consultant) had the opportunity to conduct discussion session with some NCTF members came to Dhaka to attend Child parliament. Major outcome of the discussion session are presented below.

NCTF national committee has gained long experience in running their organization with minimum technical support from other organizations. They shared their experience how they made school authority accountable:

*" We have formed NCTF committee at school level in presence of Head Teacher. Head teacher remained as Advisor of the Committee. Students raised their voices to the Head teacher and SMC about their problems. In case of girls they presented their problems to the women teachers. If the Head teacher and SMC did not listen to us or could not solve the problems then we placed our demand to higher level government authority e.g. Upazila Education Officer; UNO, DC, District Education officer through District NCTF committee. Sometime we published our news in the local news paper".*

- **Student's thinking about influence decisions made about them**

Students feel that they have to raise their own problem to the authorities. They also feel that that they will be able to influence authority if they can place problems logically with justification to the teachers and SMC members. In that case they suggested that good students of the school who is in good book of the teachers should come forward.

- **Student's confidence to express their views to teachers, Head teacher or SMC**

Students believe that they have confidence to express their views to the teachers, head teacher or SMC members. But at the same time they were also afraid that if the authority does not consider their views positively then they will be in problem of being punished. *" We need someone like you (study team members) with us to give us moral support then we will be able to express our view to the authority".*

- **Student's perception about their participation in decision making**

Students do not believe that the authority will allow them to participate in decision making process. But they felt that students can participate in different extra curriculum activities such as publishing wall magazine, organizing sports, cultural events or form debate club, health club etc.

## Observation /Discussion

### **School governance**

Policy gap in the government on school governance, no scope for children's participation and lack of accountability of SMC are the main barriers to improve school governance and child empowerment. Student's role and participation in decision making has been kept aside. Students also do not think that they can be part of decision maker for the improvement of situation at schools. No provision has been kept in the current government policies for student's participation in decision making such as SMC. On the contrary teachers and SMC members feel threat to include students in decision making process observing the activities of student's union at higher level education institutions. SMC and teachers will not accept inclusion of students in the decision making of SMC. In case of accountability, none of the FGD respondents (teacher and SMC members) ever mentioned that they

are accountable to the students for their activities. They defined accountability ignoring the expectations of students from school authority. So, project has to develop strategy to create a favourable environment in school management by engaging children in different activities e.g. monitor activities of cleaner in maintaining WASH facilities, organizing and publishing wall magazine; organizing sports and cultural events; forming debate club; health club; forming science/ICT user club; organize education and issue based program with media. All these child centered activities will gradually motivate SMC members and teachers to allow children to take part in decision making.

### **Student's empowerment**

The project has to work with two diversified directions i.e. establish children's organization as one important party in decision making at school level and influence policy level to bring some changes in school management system and for inclusion of children in the decision making. Partner organizations (e.g. VERC and CSID) can play facilitator's and mentor's role in the whole process of development.

Students, teachers and SMC members have no idea about what results the project is going to achieve. Also they are not clear about who will be benefitted most from this project and who will be at risk. Students of all selected schools have no idea of NCTF formation process, its activities and interaction with teachers and SMC. With the formation of NCTF by the students they may be overexcited to undertake activities to make teachers and SMC accountable to them. On the other hand it is not clear how and what role partner organizations will play after the project is over. NCTF district and national committees should be involved and work in collaboration with partner organizations so that they can provide all necessary support to NCTF upazila committee. Clear and transparent strategy for partnership and systematic graduation process of NCTF upazila should be developed to empower children and make NCTF upazila committee functioning effectively and efficiently.

### **WASH facilities and management**

WASH is the most neglected component in all education institutions of Bangladesh. Situation of selected schools under this study have no difference. Engaging students for proper maintenance of WASH facilities will not be wise decisions as students, parents and teachers will not accept. On the other hand as students are using the facilities so it has become their responsibilities to monitor facilities and guide assigned persons. User's group formed in few schools did not work. Newly formed NCTF can be engaged to initiate dialogue with the SMC and teachers and find out ways to improve WASH facilities usable and maintain properly.

### **ICT facilities and management**

All selected schools and students are well acquainted with ICT tools and some of their uses. Most of the schools have computers, internets facilities and uninterrupted power supply provisions. About half of the schools have computers lab but most of them are not in operation due to lack of skills of assigned teachers, lack of proper power supply and maintenance of computers and fear of teachers on misuse of ICT tools by the students. In most of the schools Computer subject is taught through theoretical class with no practical demonstration in the lab. Partner organization (mPower) should decide strategy on how to proceed based on baseline study findings. Basic orientation of computer teachers is essential to make them ready for further actions and play vital role to make students to use WASH data in the computer software. Software support will be required to make data entry on WASH. NCTF members from different neighbouring schools can make small groups to learn from the NCTF partner (i.e. mPower) and apply their knowledge in their school to preserve WASH data and other information.

### Orientation of newly formed NCTF members at Savar

Discussion was held with newly formed NCTF of one school at Savar (Dosaid AK High School) on 4 March 2015 after completion of baseline study. In total 11 students (6 girls and 5 boys) from class nine (3 students) and class ten (8 students) formed the NCTF school committee. While discussing about objective of formation of NCTF they replied that they work with the disadvantaged and destitute children of the area to establish their basic rights i.e. shelter, food, health care and education. Surprisingly none of them could mention about their empowerment to influence SMC to improve WASH situation of the school through use of ICT. It was not clear who has oriented them differently beyond objective of the project.

### Policy gaps and opportunities to establish accountability

Some of the policy gaps have been identified while reviewing available documents which are presented below with opportunities for advocacy.

Policy gaps	Opportunities for advocacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government policies did not mention about specific responsibilities of SMC to ensure governance at school level</li> <li>• Accountability of SMC not defined and reflected in any government policies</li> <li>• National Plan of Action II (2003-2015) mentioned about children's representation in the SMC and take part in decision making but it was totally dropped in the government circular related to SMC formation and management</li> <li>• No pre-condition was set in the education policy 2010 to ensure WASH facilities with proper infrastructure while approving school infrastructure</li> <li>• No instruction for specific and separate budget allocation for WASH in the annual budget of the schools</li> <li>• No instruction of appointment of sweeper/ cleaner on a regular basis in any government circular</li> <li>• No common monitoring format exists in the education department to monitor WASH facilities and give feedback to the school authority</li> <li>• Physical education subject did not give emphasis in hygiene education issue as a result no experienced teacher appointed in the school on hygiene education</li> <li>• Teachers, parents and students are reluctant to allow students to take care of WASH facilities as this is not mentioned in any government circular and instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue government to specify responsibilities of SMC to ensure governance for positive learning environment in the school</li> <li>• Influence policy level to define and include accountability of SMC in the government circular</li> <li>• Advocate at policy level to materialize government decision of children's representation in the SMC and take part in decision making</li> <li>• Advocacy at policy level to incorporate pre-condition for WASH facilities while approving school infrastructure by the education ministry</li> <li>• Advocacy for clear instruction from government to ensure specific budget allocation for WASH in annual budget of the schools and full time appointment of sweeper/ cleaner</li> <li>• Advocacy to design common monitoring format incorporating WASH facilities monitoring and feedback to the school authority after visiting of education department officials.</li> <li>• Advocate at policy level to recruit teacher skills in hygiene education. Also advocate to include WASH facilities improvement of the schools as practical part of teaching</li> <li>• Advocate at policy to introduce School health club/ School Sanitation Hygiene Education (SSHE) so that children could be motivated and engaged in WASH management.</li> </ul>

## Advocacy on governance and improving school WASH

The baseline study has brought forward some key issues for advocacy considering the current situation at school and community level.

### A. Governance and Child empowerment:

- **Guideline for specific roles and responsibilities of SMC incorporating WASH**

No specific guidelines developed by the Ministry of Education or Education Board on specific roles and responsibilities of all SMC members. Section 41 of government circular issued from education ministry on formation of SMC mentioned about power of the SMC in general. Also this section does not include monitoring in general and monitoring on maintenance of WASH facilities. Ministry of Education may be pursued to issue guideline for inclusion of monitoring and maintenance of WASH facilities as mandatory for SMC.

- **Orientation to SMC members on their roles and responsibilities incorporating WASH**

In the current practice SMC members meets only during meeting. No provision has been kept in the policy or guideline to orient newly elected SMC members on their roles and responsibilities. In consequence most of the general members show reluctance in attending meeting and not playing their role effectively. Ministry of Education should be pursued to issue circular to organize orientation sessions for the newly elected SMC members facilitated by the Upazila Education Officer. District Education Officer will monitor the status.

- **Participation of students in management system**

Participation of students in decision making is sensitive issue for SMC members and teachers. Both teachers and SMC members feel it as threat for them with a fear that students will be unruly and disobedient. No such culture developed yet in any school to include students in decision making. Considering the current situation the project may gradually approach schools to involve students in different extra curriculum activities e.g. monitoring of maintenance of WASH facilities by the assigned staff, organizing annual sports, religious function (*Miladmahfil*) or cultural program under the guidance of teachers. Based on the success of these assignments students will get scopes to involve gradually in the decision making process. SMC members and teachers will feel confidence to include students in various issues for making decisions.

### B. WASH facilities improvement:

- **Pre condition for approval of school infrastructure with WASH facilities**

Current approval system of government for new schools does not include any condition to ensure WASH facilities in the structural design. Government/ Ministry of Education/ PSU and LGED may be pursued to include a pre condition for approval of WASH facilities in school infrastructure.

Government did not put any precondition for ensuring proper WASH facilities in the school during construction of buildings. Officials from the education department visit the construction site and give some verbal advice to the school management for keeping provision of toilets only. This could be an advocacy issue that while constructing school building there should be fixed earmarked (e.g. 5% of total plinth area) specific place on compulsory basis for WASH facilities ensuring need of boys and girls separately. Otherwise school plan will not be approved or if schools do not improve WASH facilities then government allocation of fund (MPO) will not be disbursed.

- ***Include WASH design in school building***

Current WASH facilities in the schools do not match with proportionate requirement of students. Most of the schools have inadequate number of toilets and hygiene practice facilities. Also no space has been kept in the schools for girls to practice menstrual hygiene at school during menstruation. Government instruction should be made to ensure ratio of facilities for boys and girls separately. WASH design must be approved by the concern government department (PSU/ LGED).

- ***Appoint Cleaner/ Sweeper as mandatory for schools***

Majority of schools use support staff (Aya) for maintenance of sanitation facilities in the school as an additional activities. As a result none can be made accountable for hygienic maintenance of the facilities. Schools should be instructed to appoint cleaner/ sweeper as mandatory to maintain all WASH facilities regularly.

- ***Monitor WASH facilities by education officer during school visits***

Education Officers do not pay any attention on WASH facilities while visiting schools. WASH issue is not considered as most important which has direct impact on attendance of students in the school and learn hygiene practice. Visit report format of education officer should include a part on condition of school WASH facilities. This also needs to be part of periodical report format of all schools as mandatory.

- ***Regular budget allocation for WASH***

Currently no schools keep separate budget provision for WASH facilities and its management and maintenance in their annual budget. SMCs of all schools do not know or do not consider the impact of poor WASH facilities in the schools on the health and education of their students. The project can make SMC and teachers aware about the impact of poor WASH facilities and motivate them to keep budget provision for WASH facilities. Advocacy may be done with government to earmark certain amount (e.g. 5% of total) of total budget for WASH from each annual budget on compulsory basis. If any schools do not keep specific budget provision for WASH then the proposed budget will not be approved by the education board.

- ***Hygiene class mandatory for all schools***

Currently few schools organize class on hygiene issues. This is part of Physical education (*SharirikShikkha*) of different classes as per government curriculum. Menstrual hygiene practice is the most neglected topic to discuss in the classroom by the teachers. Local level initiative is required to motivate teachers to organize health class on a regular basis. Separate class should be organized for the girls' students on menstrual hygiene practice.

- ***WASH Infrastructure improvement***

None of the school authorities feel it as important to improve WASH infrastructure. They are not aware about the consequences of poor WASH conditions on boys and girls in the school. Nothing has been mentioned in the government circulars and policies about improvement of WASH facilities at school level. This project can advocate at policy level to include WASH infrastructure improvement under school management and infrastructure maintenance.

- ***Inclusion of school WASH system in curriculum***

Current curriculum of physical education does not contain much about WASH. Menstrual hygiene issue is almost invisible and even women teachers feel shy to discuss this issue with girl students. Many girls cannot attend school during menstruation period as the school cannot provide any support for hygiene practice during menstruation and they are compelled to stay at home. Advocacy can be done to give more space for WASH in the curriculum. Current topics on WASH may be reviewed and revised to give more importance on the hygiene practice at school and home.

- **Participation of students in WASH facilities management using ICT**

WASH facilities management still remains a neglected part in school management. User group as mentioned by some schools not found active. Schools may reactivate the user groups for WASH facilities management by the students under the supervision of teachers. Teachers of the schools need training on the use of ICT for documentation and information dissemination on WASH activities. In parallel selected group of students can be trained on the use of ICT for WASH. Initially the student's group will work under the supervision of teacher and gradually they will be skilled enough to run the program independently.

## Potential areas of overall project

Some highly potential areas have been identified based on existing government policies and prevailing situation in the schools. Following areas were found potential for the project:

1. **Strengthen SMC governance and accountability:** Orient SMC members to understand their roles and accountability to ensure proper learning environment in the school.
2. **Inclusion of children/ NCTF members in the SMC:** Counsel and motivate SMC to include children in the decision making process of SMC (referring government circular National Plan of Action II 2003-2015).
3. **Use of ICT for WASH facilities improvement:** SMC/ school authority could be oriented on how to ensure children's use of ICT for improvement of WASH facilities.
4. **Emphasis WASH facilities in annual plan and budget:** SMC could be oriented to give special emphasis on WASH facilities maintenance and improvement in the annual plan and budget.
5. **NCTF capacity building:** Newly formed NCTF members should be properly oriented on the objectives of the project and their roles.
6. **Advocacy at local and policy level:** The project has scope to advocate at policy levels on some emerging issues e.g. responsibilities and accountability of SMCs; Ensure WASH facilities as most important aspect during approval of school infrastructure by the education ministry.
7. **Develop effective partnership policy between partner organizations and NCTF:** SC could take initiative to develop a smooth partnership policy between partner organizations and NCTF at district and central level.

## Review Results Framework

LEVEL	Revised and suggested Indicators (please consider maximum 3 indicators for each outcome/ output)
<b>Outcome-1</b> <b>Strengthened accountability structures of school authorities at local (SMC), district (Education officer) and national level (Department and ministry) supported by children and youth's use of ICT</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of schools established/ improved accountability structure (<i>Children participation in decision making process of SMC, SMC listens to children voice and response to the children demand systematically which might affect children</i>) involving students in the SMC</li> <li>2. Monitoring format used by the Upazila Secondary Education Officer/ Other officials from district and national level contains WASH issues as special point for monitoring with scope for describing the present situation and instruction to SMC/ school authorities</li> <li>3. Number of schools are committed to increase/allocate budget to improve WASH situation</li> <li>4. Number of schools where SMCs have consulted children in planning and decision making related to improvement of overall education environment</li> </ol>
<b>Output 1.1</b> School authorities at local, district and national level	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of School authorities (SMC-members), District and National level education officer are able to explain the WASH situation and its consequences at school, particularly with adolescent girls</li> </ol>

LEVEL	Revised and suggested Indicators (please consider maximum 3 indicators for each outcome/ output)
are aware of the poor standard of school WASH facilities and the consequences hereof	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Periodical report of schools contains WASH as one important point to write in detail about WASH situation and actions taken for improvement.</li> <li>3. Number of school authorities developed and apply action plan for day to day management/ routine monitoring of WASH facilities with accountability</li> </ol>
<b>Output 1.2.</b> School authorities at local, district and national level are aware of ways of strengthening accountability structures (i.e. through including children and youth in decision making processes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of SMCs consider WASH situation as priority in agenda of their meeting and take necessary decisions to response the need of children</li> <li>2. Number of actions reflected in ICT based WASH citizen charter <b>are implemented by school authorities</b></li> <li>3. SMCs annual report reflects WASH improvement progress and further needs and is shared with community and other stakeholders</li> <li>4. Advocacy strategy addressing the Advocacy standardises reflecting the proposed solutions to strengthen WASH situations at school</li> <li>5. At least 3 findings/recommendations from ICT based monitoring mechanism on improving WASH situation is addressed by targeted schools</li> <li>6. Numbers of children's agenda placed in the SMC meeting and considered for actions</li> <li>7. Number of children's issues considered for advocacy at national levels</li> </ol>
<b>Outcome-2</b> <b>Children and youth at targeted schools and NCTF monitor and document the WASH situation by use of ICT and feel an increased sense of empowerment.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of schools where students are using ICT monitoring system for improvement of WASH situation as per need of all students</li> <li>2. ICT based Monitoring and documentation mechanism is adapted by NCTF</li> <li>3. <b>Participatory visual monitoring system</b> developed by the school authorities where all students have scope to participate and contribute</li> <li>4. Wall magazine published on WASH and other children's issues by the students</li> </ol>
<b>Output 2.1</b> NCTF and children and youth's understanding of empowerment <sup>15</sup> and ways to support it is examined, identified and tested within an ICT framework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NCTF school committee and Upazila committee formed and functioning.</li> <li>2. Percentage of school children who express an increased sense of (Understanding and realization while interact with SMC)confidence and power to influence decisions made by the SMC/teachers at the schools</li> <li>3. Percentage of children in NCTF who feel they can influence decisions made by local government or local authorities regarding the way that schools are run</li> <li>4. Number of schoolsformed/ reformed <b>User's group</b>and established ICT based monitoring system for management of WASH facilities are functioning in all schools</li> <li>5. Number of schools formed <b>Student's health club</b> by the students are functioning and influence decision making</li> </ol>
<b>Output 2.2.</b> ICT based monitoring mechanism developed and used by NCTF and learning derived from the process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of Child friendly (visual) monitoring tools developed and used by the children</li> <li>2. Child friendly ICT based monitoring mechanism is functional</li> <li>3. Learning generated from ICT based monitoring mechanism is documented and shared with key stakeholders for further advocacy measures</li> <li>4. Picture book developed by the children's organization and published for wider dissemination to all NCTF committees</li> </ol>
<b>Outcome 3</b> <b>Improved practice in Save the Children in relation to partnering with children's organizations and use of ICT as a tool to empower children</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of child and youth led organizations are taking part actively in strategic plan development/ planning using ICT and placing their agenda in SC program</li> <li>2. Number of child and youth led organizations included in SC programming and strategic development/planning</li> <li>3. NCTF activities using ICT are reflected in the SC partnering program</li> </ol>
<b>Output 3.1.</b> SC works towards a mainstreamed approach to partnering with children and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tool/ Guideline developed by SC for partnership with child and youth led organizations and mainstream its use in the SC</li> <li>2. Development of guideline for functioning of Children's organization / NCTF at school level</li> </ol>

- <sup>15</sup>give someone the authority, give someone permission; Make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights:

LEVEL	Revised and suggested Indicators (please consider maximum 3 indicators for each outcome/ output)
accountability to children, potentially by using ICT as a method	3. Project partners are aware of the guideline and act accordingly to capacitate NCTF members using ICT as a method
<b>Output 3.2.</b> Increased inclusion of child and youth led organizations in SC Global Campaign	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facilitator's guide developed/ updated and child and youth led organization's have been oriented on the guide to prepare them for SC global campaign</li> <li>2. Number of motivational campaign organized at school levels to encourage all children's of the school to participate in various programs</li> <li>3. Number of child and youth led organizations included in SC Global Campaign planning processes against practice in previous campaign.</li> <li>4. Number of child and youth led organizations developed network to participate in SC global network</li> </ol>

## Experiences of partners and Innovative partnership

### A. Experiences of Partners in working with/ for the children

Four partner organizations (VERC, CSID, MMC and mPower) of this project have some experiences in working with or working for the children.

#### Experiences of VERC in working with children/ for the children:

Village Education Resource Centre (VERC) has been emphasizing on education program since its inception to congregate the purpose to promote and fortify human potentials. The main objective of VERC program is to build up children's potentials and to mainstreaming them in education. VERC has been implementing education program in innovative ways with support from development partners in the sector. The on-going projects are ICT & Innovative partnerships, Child Rights to WASH, PROTEEVA, SHIKHON, SHIKHON Urban, ERC, SISIMPUR and a regular program operated by VERC's own fund.

PROTEEVA program is operating 480 preschools under 240 Newly nationalised Govt. Primary school (2 pre-primary classes per primary school with at least in each primary school catchment area and the other(s) off-site in a home or another community setting in 4 districts of Dhaka division with 28,798 five+ children among 6 divisions of Bangladesh and 5 implementing partners are working under the Save the Children umbrella.

VERC has been implementing SHIKHON project from 1 February 2012 with financial assistance from the European Union and with Technical Support provided by Save the Children International. SHIKHON program is providing cost effective, quality non-formal primary education.

VERC has been implementing SHIKHON URBAN project from 2013 (to continue till 2016) financed by IKEA Foundation and Technical Support provided by Save the Children International. This program is being implemented for the underprivileged children in Savar, Ashulia, Uttara, Tongi and Gazipur areas.

#### Education for Refugee Children (ERC) Project:

This is being implemented by VERC since 2012 which is financed by IKEYA Foundation & UNHCR with the Technical Support provided by Save the Children International. Program area upazilas are Ukhiya and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar district offering education facilities to the refugee children living in Kutupalong Refugee Camp (KTP) and Nayapara Refugee Camp (NYP). These children are born here or

migrated with their family from Myanmar. The main objective of this program is to give light of education especially in Burmese language.

**VERC Children Resource Center (CRC) Program:**

Since 1979, VERC is implementing own funded education program in Savar area with four ECD centres and five NFPE (Non formal Primary Education) centers with 196 students. Besides having education, these children are participating in extracurricular activities by taking part in various competitions and have been awarded for their performance.

**Protection of Children at Risk from Abuse and Exploitation and Ensure their Development Project**

Due to remarkable growth of both formal and informal industries in Savar Upazila, the number of child laborers has increased incredibly. These working children are deprived of education and many of them are abused and exploited in various manners. VERC has identified the number of informal sectors where the children need immediate support. VERC was planning to work for the children who are involve in worst form of labor and in the same time Terre des Homes Netherlands come forward to support us. From this January organization is implementing a very challenging project titled *Protection of Children at Risk from Abuse and Exploitation and ensure their Development* at Savar Upazila. It has become urgent to have interaction and dialogue with the employers for allowing these children to have basic education, develop code of conduct for improving the working conditions and stop using them in hazardous work. In many of these working places, the employers should ensure safety measures in order to prevent accidents and provide medical care when it is required. The number of child domestic workers is also very high in the area and all of them are at risk for abuse and exploitation and they are deprived of education. VERC has identified the concentration areas of slums where most of the poor and marginalized families of the child laborers.

**CR WASH Claiming Rights of Children to WASH in Bangladesh**

The project 'Claiming Rights of Children to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Bangladesh' is an effort to work with WaSH from a child rights perspective as a means to improve WaSH services and practices to realize children's rights to survival and development on an equitable basis. This project has been developed on the basis of the learning of a pilot project that forms a part with the joint initiative of VERC, Water Aid Bangladesh (WAB) and Save the Children aiming to advance children's access to WaSH by basing the work on various elements of child rights programming (CRP).

**ICT & Innovative Partnerships Project**

VERC) is playing leading role in ICT & Innovative partnership project as the implementing organization. The project aims to ensure children participation in decision making process of SMC and SMC listen to children voice and response to the children demand properly and systematically which will be created positive space to raise children's voice. Children realized a positive sense of empowerment due to access to ICT. Children will collect and analysis WaSH data at school level on regular basis. They will document and preserve necessary WaSH records and share with school authority and others. Children will raise their voice on governance situation in their institutions to establish their rights in different level through use of ICT as web portal, face book, e-mail, blog etc. Children of targeted schools aware of how they can influence their school authorities at a local, district and national level to ensure accountability. Children will be capable to handle both hard & soft ICT equipments and they will use and manage of social media.

**Experiences of CSID in working with/ for the children:**

The vision of CSID is "An inclusive society where all disadvantage people including parsons with disabilities are living with equal rights, opportunities, access and dignity in compression to other citizens of the country." As per the visionary statement CSID is a disability focused organization.

Most of activities of CSID are disability based. But a major portion of disable peoples are children. So child disability, child rights and overall child issues are another focused area of CSID. Along with disability based programs several programs on child issues are being implemented by CSID.

#### **The ongoing projects on child issues:**

1. **Inclusive Protection and Empowerment Project for Children with Disabilities (IPEP):** Develop awareness and building capacity on social, physical and financial protection of the disable children by organizing them and providing training is the main focus of the project.
2. **Investment in Children:** Organize national level advocacy is the responsibility of CSID. Goal of the project is "Increased visibility and transparency of budget allocations for children and quality expenditure at national and local government level by 2015.
3. **Promoting Rights and Dignity of Children with disabilities" project in Sylhet City:** Advocacy for increase accessibility in formal and life skill education for the disable children and increase accessibility in social life are the focus activities of the project. The goal of the project is, "To ensure Equal Rights and opportunities of Children with Disabilities in Sylhet City".
4. **Community Based Protection and Empowerment of Children with Disabilities:** Provide non formal education through 20 education center and 3 socialization center to main streaming the children with disabilities is the main focus of the project. The goal of the project is, "To reduce child labour among CWDs and promote an inclusive environment where Children with Disabilities will live in the society with equal rights, opportunities and dignity."
5. **Removing Cultural Barriers(RCB):** Providing physiotherapy to the disable children and advocacy with SMC to increase access in formal education are the main focus of the project. The goal of the project is, "To improve the lives of Children and Youth with Disabilities and their cares in Bangladesh."
6. **An Inclusive Approach to Empowering Working Children project:** Within the project CSID is responsible for organizing national level advocacy and campaign to reduce child labour from hazardous jobs of slam children of Dhaka city.
7. **ICT and innovative partnerships – responding to well-known challenges for children in new ways:** Within this partnership based project CSID is responsible for organizing national level advocacy to improve WaSH situation in secondary schools through promoting governance and accountability by using ICT.

These projects have diversified focus areas on child issues. The main approaches of CSID to address the issues are advocacy and campaign in both local and national level, capacity building, awareness raising and develop partnership and networking with children organizations, CBOs, GoB, CSOs and development partners.

#### **Experiences of MMC in working with/ for the children:**

Mass-line Media Centre (MMC) is a non Government media based development organization that is working in the rights centered area with special focus on women and children issues.

MMC's mentionable task started with UNICEF in 2005. The organization felt that the children are a vital part of the society whom can contribute in the arena of media. It's about to be the half of peoples are children (Under 18) and they can absolutely future builder of the nation. MMC considering these consequences and taken initiatives to introduce children issues as media item as well as children can involve themselves as media people. Last 10 years MMC worked with UNICEF,

Plan Bangladesh and still today working with Save the Children Bangladesh. The major task of MMC, UNICEF, Plan BD and Save the Children Bangladesh partnership are as –

#### **Major task of MMC and UNICEF**

- 1). Children Journalism ('ShishuProkash' a child driven news agency in BD);
- 2). Media training for child journalist;
- 3) Media advocacy for children issue
- 4). Publication for children;
- 5). ICT training for children;
- 6). Photo journalism training for children;
- 7). Organize and broadcast Radio and TV program for children;
- 8). Audio and video making program for children;
- 9). Cultural program for children;
- 10). Overall media related activities;

#### **Major task of MMC and Plan- BD**

- 1). Media training;
- 2) Media advocacy;
- 3). Media publications (News letter, School Magazine, School wall Magazine ;)

#### **Major task of MMC and Save the Children**

- 1). Capacity building of children (Ichchey Media);
- 2). Awareness building on child rights issues by arranging theaters;
- 3). Documentary making on child right issues;
- 4)' News paper publications;
- 5). Video editing;

#### **ICT-IP (SC) major task with MMC**

- 1). Training for NCTF media group;
  - a). Training of journalism ;
  - b). Training of ICT and photography;
- 2). Training of local journalists;
- 3). Publications (Photo-book);
- 4).Supplementary publication on WaSH situation in 'AmaderKhorbor'
- 5) Feature competition on WaSH;
- 6). Develop video clips on WaSH situation;

#### **Experiences of mPower in working with/ for the children:**

mPower Social Enterprises Ltd. Designs, Develops and Implements customized technology based solutions to help development organizations do better program delivery, training, monitoring, and knowledge management, thereby maximizing impact. mPower was founded by graduate students of Harvard University and MIT in 2008. Currently based in Dhaka (Bangladesh), mPower has partnered with more than 50 of the world's leading development organizations across 8 countries to fundamentally redefine the paradigm of development practice. Currently, mPower is involved in award-winning and internationally recognized models in health, agriculture & livestock, water & sanitation, education and economic empowerment. mPower provides solutions to organizations who are interested in revolutionizing their impact with the help of technology.

mPower believes in enabling development organizations to be more intelligent through optimal use of information and communication technologies, data and analytics, and optimized service processes

that can take full advantage of this radically new way to doing development. Believing in such a concept mPower has already partnered with leading organization like BRAC, Oxfam, Save the Children, UNICEF, World Bank, Population council etc. who are focusing on creating impact through innovation. For instance, Population Council with partnership with mPower has been working on delaying marriage for adolescent girls in a project titled BALIKA where mPower has been engaged to develop ICT based training materials & ICT based monitoring system for the project. Furthermore, mPower has been working closely with BRAC, Save the Children, ICDDR,B etc. to improve maternal and child health through integrating ICT innovations to track health and vaccination status.

## **B. Innovative partnership of NCTF with CSOs**

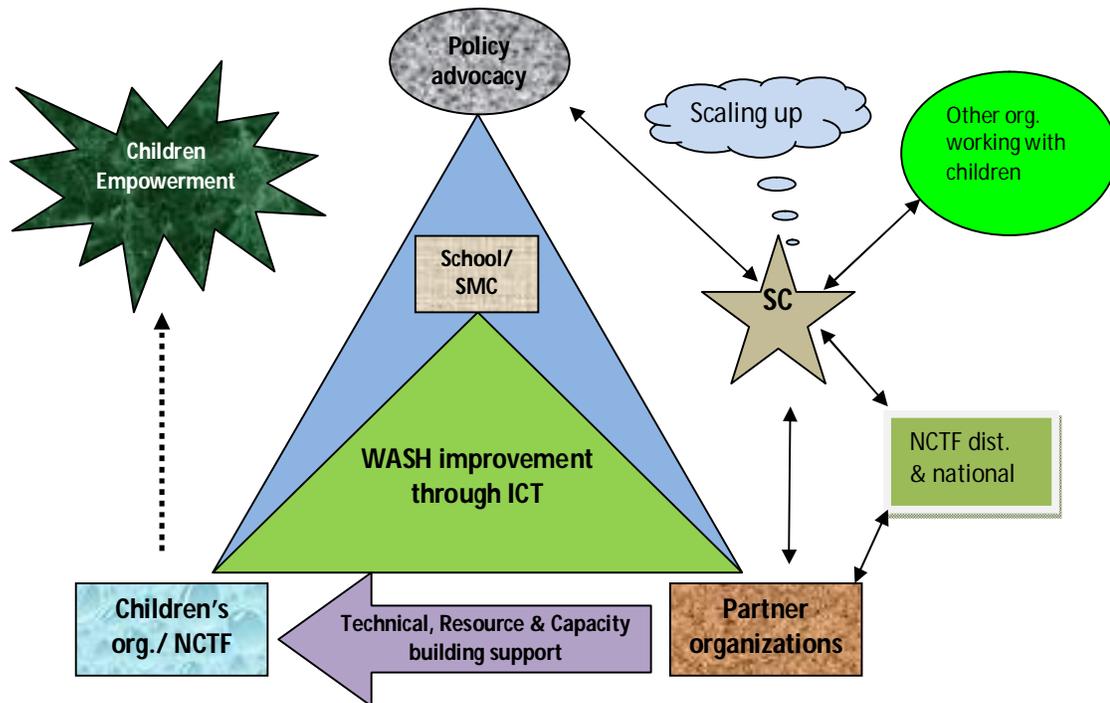
Partnership of civil society organizations and other organizations with children for empowerment is an innovative approach which none of the organizations tested yet in Bangladesh. Children's organization cannot work independently as their age will not permit to get government registration. So, they have to go for partnership. As piloting of this challenging approach organizations involved shall have to decide the modalities of partnership considering the limitations of children in parallel with study.

Some key questions will have to be addressed before setting objectives and plan for partnership:

- What will be the purpose of this partnership? What will be the rationale?
- What benefit it will bring for the children (short term and long term)?
- What will be the status and management system of Children's organization?
- What will be the role of partner organizations?
- What role the education institution will play in implementing program at school level?
- To whom children will be accountable to?
- What role NCTF central/ district committee will play?
- What role parents will play to encourage their children for involvement?
- How resources will be mobilized in the project?
- How children's organization will advocate at policy level for changes?
- How the partners will coordinate with each other and link with government (education department)?
- What will be the monitoring and self evaluation system of the project?
- What role SC will play to make the piloting successful and scale up?

A detail plan of action should be developed considering all questions stated above.

**Diagram-8 Partnership model with Children's organization(NCTF) and its impact**



***Key challenges in innovative partnership***

Key challenge of innovative partnership is to understand NCTF interaction with partner organizations and expected results. NCTF members do not have enough skills and adequate knowledge to work in partnership with formal organizations. Their way of interaction, expression of views, thinking process will be different from the experienced partner organizations. Partner organizations may have long working experience working for the children considering children as beneficiaries but in this innovative partnership they have to work with the children as partner. Therefore, in parallel with implementation of project activities partner organizations have to act as mentor, coach, guide and facilitator of NCTF. Close coordination and cooperation of all four partner organizations during implementation with regular monitoring and guidance from Save the Children will help in overcoming the challenges. In any way partner organizations should impose their organizational approach on the NCTF upazila committee.

Another challenge for the project will be to make school authorities aware, understand and motivated to keep space for the children in decision making process and advocate at the policy level for necessary change in SMC structure.

***Risks of the innovative partnership***

Newly formed NCTF upazila committee is going to be established and functioning soon. They will be very new in the development field to understand the vision, mission, goal, objectives and activities of their organization and interact with four different partner organizations. Eighteen months time is very short to establish and make upazila NCTF committee functioning. So, there is every possibility for NCTF upazila committee to turn in to a project of partner organizations fully dependent on them. Also question remains, what will be the benefit/ interest of partner organization to support NCTF upazila committee after the project period is over. To overcome this risk and to make the pilot initiative sustainable all partner organizations and NCTF upazila must keep close link with NCTF district and national committee during implementation of the project and afterwards.

### **Role of Save the Children**

Save the children will play the key role of coordination among the partners, monitor progress of partnership and children empowerment process. They will document lessons learned and share experiences with other organizations and government to influence policy level for scaling up the best practices.

- **Partnership strategy and approach with schools**

The project shall have to develop a clear cut partnership strategy involving all partners to support newly formed NCTF Upazila committee. The strategy must spell out the modalities of partnership, participatory planning, capacity building of NCTF upazila committee, proper resource mobilization, participatory monitoring and evaluation. They strategy should also explain how NCTF upazila committee will be linked with district and national committee; how partners will keep NCTF district and national committee on board so that upazila committee will develop as a grassroots tier of national NCTF.

## **Recommendations**

A motivational attempt is required to bring all actors in the same platform to decide on their course of action and way forward utilizing the potentials of students.

- **Conceptual clarity for common understanding:** All partners and schools must be clear about the objectives, expected outcome and their roles in the innovative partnership project. Organize briefing session for all SMC/ school authorities about the purpose, objectives and activities of the project. Also to explain why it is a challenging initiative and how schools will be benefitted.
- **NCTF member's orientation:** Newly formed NCTF members should be properly oriented on objectives of the project and their role to make SMC accountable for improvement of WASH facilities.
- **Partnership strategy:** Project shall have to develop a clear cut partnership strategy involving all partners and NCTF district and national committees.
- **Capacity building:** Organize awareness development sessions for all SMC and teachers on importance of inclusion of students in the decision making process. All partners should jointly organize the sessions and give their inputs. Develop school level plan of action to engage children in the decision making process. Orient students on formation and activities of Children's organization and NCTF (*VERC can do*). Orient joint meeting of partners and children organization to develop a joint action plan explaining roles and responsibilities (*all partners including SC*). Organize orientation and training on ICT (use of mobile phone and computers) for computer teachers and children's organization members (*mPower can support and contribute*) to show how ICT will be used for improvement of WASH facilities.
- **Process documentation and Learning sharing:** Document the whole process for sharing with other organizations and government. Organize information sharing and dissemination session at upazila level through Press conference and media so that all schools can participate and can learn from each other. (*MMC can contribute*)
- **Advocacy:** Identify issues for advocacy and organize advocacy workshops at national level to place outcome of the upazila level issues for policy influence. Follow up actions taken by the government to make suggested changes in the policy.

- **Scaling up:** SC can take lead in scaling up the approach with other organizations and government. Before that the outcome of this project must be assessed carefully including lessons learned.

## Conclusion

This innovative partnership project was developed based on a challenging idea of involving children's committee with CSOs. Implementation approach of this project will be completely different than other development projects. Awareness development of school authorities to include children in decision making through motivation will be also a challenging task for the project partners. Time span of this project phase is too short to undertake all challenging activities involving all parties and partners. Common understanding, Quick response, regular close monitoring, proper coordination and cooperation from all partners are essential to make the initiative successful. NCTF Upazila committee should work in close cooperation with NCTF district and national committee to establish a strong platform at the grassroots level and make upazila committee sustainable after withdrawal of project's support. It would be highly ambitious if the project tries to achieve all its expected results within this short period.

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