Mallik Akram Hossain

PARTNERSHIP IN SANITARY SERVICES IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A CASE OF BANGLADESH CITIES

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Abstract

In recent decades, the practices of public – private partnership (PPP) has been prevalent in all sectors and sub-sectors including municipal services in developing regions along with South Asia. This paper intends to theorise partnership and illustrates practices of partnership. Special focus has been given on Bangladesh experiences of partnership in sanitation services. The paper is based on both secondary as well as primary data sources collected from a case study of two major cities. Drawing from the case studies example, this paper tries to find answers why partnership is necessary and how partnership can be forged in Bangladeshi city context. The paper finds that forging partnership among the urban stakeholders is the key to sustain sanitation services for the poor communities. Finally the paper wraps up with identifying the potentials and hindrances to partnership building in sanitation infrastructure.

1. Introduction

The world urban population is increasing at a very fast rate. Over the last century, the urban population has increased from 220 million to approximately 3 billion - more than 13 times. Presently, urban centres in Asia accommodate less than 40 per cent of people of the region. Despite this growth, the level of urbanisation in Asia is lowest as compared to any continent other than Africa. Projections estimate that approximately half of the Asian people will be living in urban areas by 2030.[1] However, the fast growing urban population in developing

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[1] United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision*, New York: United Nations, 2003, also, G.W. Jones, "Urbanization Trends in Asia: The Conceptual and Definitional Challenges", pp.113-131, in T. Champion and G. Hugo (eds.), *New Forms of Urbanization: Beyond the Urban–Rural Dichotomy*, Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate.

nations has posed an unprecedented pressure on the existing urban infrastructure. Thus finding a new approach in addressing, among others, sanitation issues specially for the urban poor has been the key agenda for the third world cities.

The development of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in developing urban infrastructure is not new. Since the concept of partnership is derived from the Western countries, there has been widespread use of their revised version in the Third World countries. At the initial stage, the proliferation of partnership approaches in the Western nations has been limited to few areas such as urban regeneration and economic development. In the later stage, this approach has spread to many other fields for example infrastructure and public service provision, environmental management, health and social services and so on. With the application of partnership models in solving local urban problems, a question comes up: why is partnership necessary and how do they work? With the emergence of a range of actors in urban governance[2] where partnerships have had to be forged, the robustness of urban local governments comes up as an important issue. For example the pervasive weakness and lack of capacity of municipal institutions are major obstacles to fostering sustainable partnerships.

This research is based on both primary and secondary data sources. Structured questionnaire, field observations, focus group discussions and above all informal meetings with the key informants during the field survey over a span of six months from July to December in 2004 and August 2005 provided primary sources of information. Secondary sources were also used to understand the broader context of the situation and analyse partnerships. These include books, journal articles, census data, census report, newspaper reports, project documents, project evaluation report, published and unpublished reports, etc.

For this study, urban poor included those who were the beneficiaries of the UNICEF project such as Support for Basic Services in Urban Areas Project (SBSUAP)[3]. Slum women having household income of 3500 taka per month

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[2] The concept of urban governance which can be seen as a relationship between diverse actors goes beyond the urban local government. For details, see, M. A. Hossain, *Partnerships in Sanitary Services Delivery for the Urban Poor in Bangladesh Cities: Governance and Capacity Building*, An Unpublished PhD Thesis, The University of Hong Kong, 2007.

[3] Urban Basic Services Delivery Project (UBSDP), a revised model of Slum Improvement Project (SIP), introduced in 1996 became operational in four City Corporations and 21 Municipalities (CUS, 1999). Support for Basic Services in Urban Areas Project (SBSUAP), continuation of the previous project was launched in 2001 and ended in 2006. The first phase of the project (SIP and UBSDP) included the hardware component while the second phase (2001-2005) focused on software component. Only two community toilets were found in the studied slums of Rajshahi city and three in Khulna. These toilets are constructed by LGED with the UNICEF funding and technical

(US$1 equivalent to 65 taka in 2004) were the beneficiaries of the project. Primary data using structured questionnaire were collected through simple random sampling. The sample for this study was drawn from the slums of two cities: five slums from Rajshahi and three slums from Khulna. The total sample size was 430 consisting of 216 (total beneficiaries 703) from Rajshahi slum and 214 (total beneficiaries 703) from Khulna slum. Samples were drawn in such a way that the sample size (30 per cent) would represent the total population. According to the rules of thumb, for small population (under 1000), the sampling ratio would be 30 per cent.

The paper is structured into six sections. The introduction of the paper is provided in the first section. Second section illustrates the concepts and theories of partnership through a review of the existing literature of partnership. Third section deals with the existing sanitation condition and experiences of partnerships in sanitation services in the third world context. In the fourth section, example of partnership experiences from two metropolitan cities of Bangladesh is presented. Fifth section presents some policy implications while the sixth section concludes the paper.

2. Defining and Theorising Partnership

Making partnership between the government and non government sectors in delivering public services is nothing new. The practice of partnership has been continuing for long time in developed countries[4]. In the United Kingdom (UK), before the introduction of the welfare state, government at local level introduced one kind of partnership with voluntary organisation to deliver welfare services to its dwellers. In the terminal period of 1960s, the partnership approach was transformed into new form in which inter-agency working and community participation gained its solid foundation by addressing distressed localities through government led programmes and projects[5]. After the UK, partnership also developed in the United States (US) one decade or so later. In this way, this approach gained popularity in both developed and developing countries. Thus partnership approach has spread across the world.

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support from the City Corporation. Pit toilet including twin pit were also provided to the slum people.

[4] G. Payne, "Public-Private Partnerships in Urban Land Development", in S. Romaya and C. Rakodi (eds.), *Building Sustainable Urban Settlements: Approaches and Case Studies in the Developing World,* London: ITDG, 2002, pp. 238-251; also, A. Mohr, *Governance through "Public Private Partnerships": Gaining Efficiency at the Cost of Public Accountability?*, International Summer Academy on Technology Studies: Urban Infrastructure in Transition, UK, available at www.ifz.tugraz.at/index_en.php/ filemanager/download/311/Mohr_SA%202004, accessed on 08 July, 2004.

[5] S. Balloch, and M. Taylor (eds.), *Partnership Working: Policy and Practice*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2001.

The term "partnership" was used as a vehicle to restructure the boundaries of the public and private sectors in urban regeneration in Britain particularly in the period of the conservative regime.[6] Actually, the term partnership goes beyond that. The introduction of partnership approach has blurred the distinction between public and private sectors. The application of this approach has actually become diversified as it is now being practiced widely not only in many areas including urban regeneration, business, transport, health, environmental management and social services but also in policy areas. For instance in the Habitat II context "the term has been used very broadly as an umbrella covering networks of such diverse actors as people from businesses, foundations, labour unions, academic research institutes and non-governmental organizations"[7]. In addition, partnership has been accepted as an appropriate strategy in the regional policy approach in the European context. However, partnership is now being used increasingly as an approach that is suitable for solving numerous kinds of problems faced by governments or others.

When we talk about partnership, it comes to our mind that it is an association of more than one partner in which both risks and profits are shared in any kind of deal. Partnership differs in concepts and practices based on the context[8]. Introducing a universal definition of partnership is undoubtedly a challenging task. There are different conceptual lenses through which partnership can be looked at. Some view partnership as a new and unique entity while others including Peters [9] see partnership as institutions and instruments of governance. Over the decades the way of conceptualising partnerships has changed. The following definitions of partnership will help us understand partnership well.

- A dynamic relationship where roles and responsibilities (in terms of activities and resource allocations) are decided upon collectively and delegated to each member of the partnerships, with the recognition that each is dependent on, and accountable to the other members.[10]

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[6] I. Elander and M. Blanc, "Partnerships and Democracy: A Happy Couple in Urban Governance", in H. T. Anderson and R. V. Kempen (eds.), *Governing European Cities: Social Fragmentation, Social Exclusion and Urban Governance*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001. pp. 93-124; also, I. Elander, "Partnerships and Urban Governance*", International Social Science Journal,* Vol. 54, No. 172, 2002, pp. 191-204.

[7] I. Elander, *op.cit.*

[8] R. W. Mc Quaid, "The Theory of Partnerships: Why Have Partnerships"?, in S. P. Osborne (ed.), *Public-Private Partnerships: Theory and Practices in International Perspective, London and New York*: Routledge, 2000, pp. 9-35.

[9] B. G. Peters, "With a Little Help from Our Friends: Public-Private Partnerships as Institutions and Instruments", in J. Pierre (ed.), *Partnerships in Urban Governance: European and American Experience, London*: Macmilan Press Ltd., 1998, pp.11-33.

[10] C. Kilalo, and D. Johnson, "Mission Impossible? Creating Partnerships among NGOs, Governments, and Donors", *Development in Practice*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 1999, pp. 456-461.

- A working arrangements based on a mutual commitment (over and above that implied in any contract) between a public organisation with any organisation outside of the public sector.[11]

Since the concept of partnership is contextually embedded, it is not possible to derive an acceptable definition of partnership. In spite of the anomalies in the definitions, the commonality is that partnership involving multiple actors is a dynamic collaboration between actors to reach a shared objective in which each partner has some contribution. Inter-dependency among the partners is another characteristic feature of partnership. However, the definitional debate of this term could be continued for long. So it would be wiser to introduce a set of characteristics of partnership by which we can differentiate it from other collaboration. Following characteristics are commonly found in most partnership arrangements:[12]

Firstly, there is no hard and fast rule in the numbers of partnership formation. Yet, they may involve two or more actors, at least one of which would be public. Of course, partnership is neither necessarily confined to the public sector, nor to the private sector. Rather, they involve public, private and even community actors. Secondly, in partnership arrangements, each partner has a principal role in bargaining power. Thirdly, sustainable collaborations among the actors are very much present in partnership. In partnership arrangements, the parameters of partnership are negotiated among the actors from the initial stage. Fourthly, it is assumed that each of the partners should have some contributions. Among others, this contribution could be in the form of resources. Finally, partnership might have some common agenda and some responsibilities for different kinds of activities.

Partnership formation differs from context to context and also from author to author. As Newman and Verpraet,[13] argue that there are some underlying factors, which underpin partnership arrangements including national, political, institutional, cultural and socio-economic factors. However, various authors measure partnership with a number of different dimensions, with the assessment of partnership based on contractual, political, legal, financial, socio-cultural and technical dimensions. These dimensions are considered to be the main factors that influence partnership delivery.[14]

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[11] T. Bovaird, "Public-Private Partnerships: From Contested Concepts to Prevalent Practice", *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 70, No. 2, 2004, pp. 199-215.

[12] B. G. Peters, *op.cit.*

[13] P. Newman and G. Verpraet, "The Impacts of Partnership on Urban Governance: Conclusions from Recent European Research", *Regional Studies*, Vol.33, Issue. 5, 1999, pp. 487-491.

[14] K. B. Nyarko, S.A. Oduro-Kwarteng and P. Owusu-Antwi, "Local authorities, community and Private Operators Partnerships in small towns water service delivery in

Recent studies on partnership identify some enabling conditions or factors which are essential for successful partnership.[15] These conditions include common visions amongst the actors; mutual trust among the partners; social capital; potential stakeholders; flexibility with resource sharing and key functions; a sense of ownership among the actors; transparent allocation of roles in the partnerships; leadership for the overall partnerships; scope of community participation and availability of resources.

2.1 *Theories on Partnership Development*

The elaboration of the evolution, definitional debate and features of partnerships in the preceding sections is an effort to enrich understanding on partnership. To have a clear picture, contemporary theories on the development of partnership may add some value. These include growth coalition theory, enforced cooperation theory, game theory, institutional thickness and urban regime theories which are mostly built on the experiences gathered through partnership practices in the field of urban regeneration and economic development. Despite some limitations, these theories would help contribute to the understanding about how partnerships are formed.

2.1.1 *Growth Coalition Theory*

This theory is built upon the experiences of the American cities. The main focus of this theory lies in the aspiration of economic growth of the US cities to address unemployment problems encountered in the localities. Commentators like Molotch (1976)[16], Logan and Molotch (1987)[17] and Lord and Price (1992)[18]

Ghana", *Physics and Chemistry of the Earth*, Parts A/B/C, Vol. 36, Issues 14-15, 2011, pp. 1078–1084.

[15] B. G. Peters, *op.cit.*, also, J. Hughes and P. Carmichael, "Building Partnerships in Urban Regeneration: A Case Study from Belfast", *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 1998, pp. 205-225; C. Michael, "Urban Partnerships, Governance and the Regeneration of Britain's Cities", *International Planning Studies*, Vol. 5, Issue. 3, 2000, pp. 273-297; R. W. Mc Quaid, *op.cit.*; C. Huxham and S. Vangen, "What Makes Partnerships Work"?, in S. P. Osborne (ed.), *Public-Private Partnerships: Theory and Practices in International Perspective, London and New York*: Routledge, 2000, pp. 293-310; L. Winayanti and H.C. Lang, "Provision of Urban Services in an Informal Settlement: A Case Study of Kampung Penas Tanggul, Jakarta", *Habitat International*, Vol. 28, Issue. 1, 2004, pp. 41-65; Nyarko, K. B et.al., *op.cit.*, pp. 1078–1084.

[16] H. Molotch, "The City as Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 82, 1976, pp. 309-332.

[17] J. R. Logan and H. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987.

[18] G. F. Lord and A. C. Price, "Growth Ideology in a Period of Decline: Deindustrialization and Restructuring", Flint Style, *Social Problems*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 1992, pp. 155-169.

pointed out that to expedite economic development making an alliance through urban renewal has been a common phenomenon in the US. The main theme of the growth coalition theory is economic development through the process of renewal in the localities of the US cities. This development has been driven by private-sector which is composed mainly of business-led property owners and developers. Evidences show that the coalition between these diverse sectors has contributed to improvement of the livelihood of the local people. However, one of the big advantages of these private sector regimes is that they enjoy overwhelming support from the communities. In this way, the private-sector-led alliances have been able to dominate the local policy agenda in the US cities.[19] Interestingly, this kind of private sector-led coalition is very much present in the developing countries in different sector including water and sanitation. Of course, criticisms as well as resistance to growth coalition ideology have also arisen because of the negative impact on the environment and on the local community.

2.1.2 *Enforced Cooperation Theory*

The main thrust of the enforced cooperation theory lies in the cooperation among actors which is driven by the threat of the central authority and premised on the shared objectives. Cooperation emerges as a strategy to boost the economy at the local level. As McQuaid argues, "in local economic development, cooperation can be forced on the public or government funded agency through legislation or control of financial resources by central or local government and increasingly the European Union."[20] In upgrading the overall wellbeing of the society, cooperation between different bodies, be it social, private and public organisations is essential. Cooperation exists where people share common values. In practice, a number of internal and external factors may thwart such cooperation. In forging cooperation, some actors may have gained more advantages as "free riders" than others which might cause conflicts among the beneficiaries. For this reason the central control is required to ensure an equitable distribution of benefits among the actors.

2.1.3 *Game Theory*

The theory of cooperation which forms the basis of the game theory actually derives from the experiment of Prisoners' Dilemma.[21] The basic tenet of the game theory is that cooperation between the partners is premised on the reciprocity and benefit yielded for each of them. The cooperation among the

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[19] D. Adams and E.M. Hastings, "Assessing Institutional Relations in Development Partnerships: The Land Development Corporation and the Hong Kong Government Prior to 1997", *Urban Studies,* Vol. 38, No. 9, pp. 1473-1492.

[20] R. W. Mc Quaid, *op.cit.*

[21] R. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Co-operation,* New York: Basic Books, 1984.

actors, as Axelrod contends, develops through the mutual interaction among the actors over a period of time. Although, a huge amount of literature exists on the game theory, there is still a lot of controversy in its interpretations and how evidence is presented[22]. Despite its limitations, game theory offers a cogent explanation of the cooperation through which partnership evolves.

2.1.4 *Institutional Thickness Theory*

The concept of institutional thickness was originally developed by Amin and Thrift.[23] The notion of this theory is that the social and cultural factors which lay foundation of the institutional thickness have a profound influence on local economic development. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes institutional thickness appears to be a hurdle in changing cultures in social, political and economic institutions for economic growth. Nonetheless, this barrier could be overcome by policy changes. As Shields[24] argues, dramatic policies related to the economy might transform the local cultures in adjusting new changes with a view to embrace the economic prosperity. Again commentators including Hudson *et.al.*[25] have warned against this kind of policy interventions contending that this does not necessarily change local cultures in a short period of time. Local institutional thickness affects the development of partnerships. Therefore, in replicating the partnership model from any context, consideration should be given to the contextual factors such as socio-economic, cultural and political factors.

2.1.5 *Urban Regime Theory*

The concept of partnership has much in common with the urban regime approach. Originally developed by Stone,[26] this theory assumes that the mutual

[22] D. Kreps, P. Milgrom, J. Roberts and R. Wilson, "Rational Cooperation in Finitely Repeated Prisoner's Dilemma", *Journal of Economic Theory*, Vol. 11, 1982, pp. 245-52, also, R. Axelrod and D. Dion, "The Further Evolution of Co-operation", *Science*, Vol. 242, No. 4884, 1984, pp. 1385-1390, also, Zupan, M. A. (1990), "Why Nice Guys Finish Last: A Comment on Robert Axelord's The Evolution of Co-operation", *Public Choice*, Vol. 65, Issue, 3, pp. 291-293, C. Bicchieri, *Rationality and Coordination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

[23] A. Amin and N. Thrift, "Globalization, Institutional Thickness and the Local Economy", in P. Healey, S. Cameron, S. Davoudi et.al. (eds.), *Managing Cities: The New Urban Context,* London: John Wiley and Son, 1995, pp. 91-108

[24] R. Shields, "Culture and the Economy of Cities", *European Urban and Regional Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1999, pp. 303-311.

[25] R. Hudson, M. Dunford, D. Hamilton and R. Kotter, "Developing Regional Strategies for Economic Success: Lessons from Europe's Economically Successful Regions"?, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, Vol. 4, 1997, pp. 365-373.

[26] C. N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*, Lawrence K. S.: University Press of Kansas, 1989.

relations between NGOs and state are a necessity for the efficient and effective functioning of the local government.[27] In the post-fordist period, the functions of local governments have increased and become more complex and diverse than ever before. Thus, the cities do not have any other option to govern other than entering into coalition with other actors such as private organisations, NGOs and voluntary organisations. In responding to the challenges posed by social change and conflicts within the societies, public and private actors are becoming more interested in forming regimes to facilitate action and improve the capacity among them. In this regard, Stoker has developed three typologies of the urban regimes: organic, instrumental and symbolic. He argues that a particular partnership arrangement may not conform to typologies exactly but it could be imagined that partnership may shift from one typology to another over time. The relevance of the partnership theory to the urban regime theory is that both theoretical approaches include an emphasis on cooperation among the actors at various tiers of the government.

3. Existing Sanitation Scenario in South Asia

Coverage of basic services in many parts of South Asia remains miserably poor. The sewerage situation is also similar in many cities. For example, in Karachi, only half of the households are connected to the city's sewerage system while only 30 per cent of households in Dhaka and 33 per cent in Colombo are connected to the sewerage systems[28]. Although some progress could be seen in the water and sanitation provision, sanitation coverage in South Asia is still lacking and is the lowest in the world. Between 1990 and 2004, basic sanitation coverage throughout the region has risen to 37 per cent from 17 which is more than double but initially it was so low that the region was lagging far behind in reaching its UN Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) target of 59 per cent by 2015.[29] However, the latest MDG report indicates that in South Asia 76 per cent of the rural population does not have access to improved sanitation and in urban areas the figure is 34 per cent.[30] The situation has changed not much as 64

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[27] G. Stoker, "Public-Private Partnerships and Urban Governance", in J. Pierre (ed.), *Partnerships in Urban Governance: European and American Experience*, New York: Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, Macmillan Press, 1998, pp. 34-51.

[28] Asian Development Bank, *Technical Assistance, Promoting Best Practices in Private Sector, Participation in Urban Infrastructure in South Asia*, ADB: Manila, 2006.

[29] UNICEF, *Water and Sanitation in South Asia,* available at https://www.unicef.org.uk, accessed on 23 March, 2006.

[30] United Nations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report*, New York: UN Department of Public Information.

per cent of the total population in South Asia is still denied access to proper sanitation.[31]

Nearly half of India's 1.2 billion people own no toilet, according to the country's latest census data 2011. Around 47 per cent of the 246.6 million households have toilets while about 50 per cent defecate in open spaces. The remaining 3.2 per cent depend on public toilets. In urban India almost 80 per cent of the urban households have access to sanitation, while it is nearly 30 per cent in the rural area[32]. So there is a yawning gap between the urban and rural areas. The situation in the slums is pitiful as most of the slum inhabitants in India are living with little or no access to sanitation provision. For example, a survey of slum households in Ahmedabad in 1998 found that 93 per cent household had no toilet of their own.[33] According to an estimate by WSP, 20 per cent of the residents in Bangalore live in slums with little or no access to basic services.[34] In Mumbai, more than half of the city's population lives in slums with an absence or shortage of basic civic amenities such as water, sanitation and electricity.[35] In Pakistan, according to UNICEF from the year 1990 to 2004, sanitation coverage rose from 37 to 59 per cent and in rural areas it jumped from 17 to 41 per cent.[36] In contrast, the coverage of sanitation for urban residents in Maldives and Sri Lanka has reached nearly 100 per cent, which is an impressive success. In Bangladesh, although the national coverage of sanitation has increased over the years, currently 50 per cent people are using sanitary toilet,[37] the situation in the slums still remains critical. For instance, over 70 per cent of slums in six major cities including the capital Dhaka had no access to safe and hygiene latrines.[38] The more alarming is that still 5 per cent people have no access to toilet. Thus, they

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[31] A. Sri, *South Asians in Crying Need for Safe Water, Sanitation,* available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2011-04/03/c_13811838.htm, accessed on 29 June, 2011.

[32] WASH News Asia and Pacific, India Census, *More People Have a Mobile Phone than a Household Toilet,* available at http://washasia.wordpress.com/tag/sanitation-coverage/, accessed on 28 June, 2012.

[33] F. Nunan and D. Satterthwaite, "The Influence of Governance on the Provision of Urban Environmental Infrastructure and Services for Low-income Groups", *International Planning Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 2001, pp. 409-426.

[34] WSP, *Connecting the Slums: A Utility's Pro-Poor Approach in Bangalore*, available at www.wsp.org, accessed on 16 June, 2006.

[35]B. Sundar, "Towards a Pro-poor Framework for Slum Upgrading in Mumbai, India", *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol. 17, No.1, pp. 67-88.

[36] UNICEF, *Water and sanitation in South Asia,* available at https://www.unicef.org.uk, accessed on 03 December, 2006.

[37] S. Hanchett, *Programme and Pollution: Establishing Universal Sanitation Coverage in Rural Bangladesh*, available at www. Planning alternatives.com, accessed on 12 May 2011.

[38] Centre for Urban Studies and Measure Evaluation and NIPORT, *Slums of Urban Bangladesh: Mapping and Census,* Dhaka, 2005.

have to rely on open defecation.[39] However, the definitional variation of sanitation between countries and international donors has made it difficult to estimate actual figures about how many people are living without proper sanitation in this region.

Due to lack of availability of accurate data and definitional anomalies, it is not possible to give an overall picture of sanitation situation of slums in South Asia. Despite the above illustration the sanitation coverage in urban areas is certainly much higher than those of slum average. The problem of sanitation in slums in this region seems to be very critical and complex because of overcrowding, poor urban infrastructure, shortage of space, lack of land and housing tenure and perpetuating poverty.[40] Communal toilet, twin-pit and pit latrines are commonly used by slum dwellers. This has at least provided a safe sanitation facility than practices of open defecation. Hanging toilet still exist in some slums in this region.

3.1 *Partnership in Sanitation Services: Examples from South Asia*

It is widely recognised by the governments in developing countries that they cannot alone provide adequate water and sanitation services to all.[41] Thus, partnership approach for service delivery has been a recent development in policy agenda in developing countries. Examples of partnership practices towards improving the provision of urban basic services such as housing, solid waste disposal, water and sanitation are documented in the literature.[42] Among

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[39] UNICEF, Water and Sanitation: *Country Profile, Bangladesh*, available at http://www.childinfo.org/water_countryfiles.html, accessed on 23 February, 2010.

[40] WHO and UNICEF, *Meeting the MDG Drinking Water and Sanitation Target: The Urban and Rural Challenge of the Decade*, available at https://www.who.int, accessed on 12 July 2006.

[41] K. Sansom, "Government Engagement with Non-state Providers of Water and Sanitation Services", *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, 2006, pp. 207–217.

[42] J. Hughes and P. Carmichael, "Building Partnerships in Urban Regeneration: A Case Study from Belfast*", Community Development Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 1998, pp. 205-225; also, S. W. Mwangi, "Partnerships in Urban Environmental Management: An Approach to Solving Environmental Problems in Nakuru, Kenya", *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2000, pp. 77-92; J. Hobson, "Sustainable Sanitation: Experiences in Pune with a Municipal-NGO-community Partnership", *Environment and Urbanization,* Vol. 12, No. 2, 2000, pp. 53-63; V. I. Ogu, "Stakeholders' Partnership Approach to Infrastructure Provision and Management in Developing World Cites: Lessons from the Sustainable Ibadan Project", *Habitat International*, Vol. 24, 2000, pp. 517-533; M. C. Lemos, D. Austin, R. Merideth and R. G.Varady, "Public-Private Partnership as Catalysts for Community-based Water Infrastructure Development: The Border Water Works Program in Texas and New Mexico Colonias", *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, Vol. 20, Issue. 2, 2002, pp. 281-295; S. A. Ahmed and S. M. Ali, "People as Partners: Facilitating People's Participation in Public-Private

them, few examples of partnership approach to sanitation services through providing sanitary toilets in poor settlements in developing countries including South Asia can be cited.

Against the perennial financial problems faced by the central as well as urban local government across developing world, partnership approach is gaining ground in the provision of urban services. In addition, national and international efforts to redress the acute shortage of infrastructures in the third world countries have focused on forging partnerships to spur infrastructure development.[43] Forming partnership with civil society actors such as NGOs, community organisations and voluntary groups is prescribed not only to reduce the burden and responsibilities of the central government but also to make more efficient and effective service delivery to the low income settlements that are quite often unserved by the public utilities. As elsewhere in the Third World, fostering partnership by the city authorities with the civil society organisations, albeit not yet pervasive is becoming popular in South Asian countries. However, the development of partnership in sanitation has been very recent and thus they are very limited in few cities. In India, a huge number of low-income people, mostly from slums and squatters, have been living with inadequate sanitation services. Perceiving the health burden posed by the inadequacy of sanitary services and the contribution to the urban economy by the slum people, few major cities either willingly or pressed by the civil society groups have formed partnership with NGOs and community groups to help deliver sanitary services to the slum dwellers[44].

Such an initiative is in sight in Pune - a fast growing city and a major industrial hub in India - where slum dwellers have got access to sanitation through sanitary toilet blocks. With the aid of NGOs, Pune Municipal Government initiated a communal toilet construction programmes that was supposed to build over 3,000 toilets. Hobson[45] looks at this municipal - NGO-community partnership in sanitation and concludes that in fostering partnership,

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Partnerships for Solid Waste Management", *Habitat International,* No. 30, Issue. 4, 2005, pp. 781-796; U. Sengupta, "Government Intervention and Public-Private Partnerships in Housing Delivery in Kolkata", Habitat International, Vol. 30, Issue. 3, 2006, pp. 448-461; A. Mahalingam, "PPP Experiences in Indian Cities: Barriers, Enablers, and the Way Forward", *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management*, Vol. 136, Issue 4, 2010, pp. 419-429; Nyraco, Oduro-Kwarteng and Owusu-Antwi, *op. cit.*

[43] G. Gopakumar, "Developing Durable Infrastructures: Politics, Social Skill, and Sanitation Partnerships in Urban India", *Review of Policy Research*, Vol. 26, Issue 5, 2009, pp. 571-587.

[44] M. P. Van Dijk, "Public-private Partnerships in Basic Service Delivery: Impact on the Poor, Examples from the Water Sector in India", *International Journal of Water*, Vol. 4, Issue 3-4, 2008, pp. 216-234.

[45] J. Hobson, *op.cit.*

mutual cooperation among all partners and willingness to work together is very crucial. Due to their shared vision, the project on sustainable sanitation has improved the conditions of toilet provision to the poor communities in the city. NGOs such as Shelter Associates put the community people in the agenda. The project also demonstrates that the capacity of the community for the maintenance of the toilets is important. Here Shelter Associates takes the lead to build community capacity through promoting community groups in taking the responsibility of maintaining community based sanitation projects. Due to Shelter Associate's persistent attempts in the form of capacity building, slum residents are encouraged to join the programme and eventually they have not only contributed to the construction of toilet blocks but also to the maintenance of the toilets. The active involvement of the community people has been possible by placing them in the decision making board as well as involving them in the implementation process of the toilet construction programme. The pro-active role of the city authority and their flexibility in the project's terms and conditions are also crucial in building such partnership. Otherwise, partnership may prove to be ineffective.

There are few other examples of successful partnership in Indian cities where slum people have been able to have access to the sanitation through community toilets.[46] In these cases, city authorities have been instrumental in building partnership with actors such as NGOs, community people, private organisations, CBOs and external agencies in order to solve sanitation problems prevailing in the poor settlements. They provide initial funding and complementary utilities for the construction of community toilets. The role of the local community is also crucial as the community toilets are best maintained by the community people. Building community capacity is the key to sustain this kind of project. Thus, community toilet projects in India, with varying degrees of partnerships, began to change the conventional approach to service delivery, bringing communities, governments and other stakeholders closer to work in innovative ways.

Focusing on forging partnership to spur infrastructure development, Gopakumar[47] finds a sore lack in attempts to grasp how infrastructures implemented through partnership arrangement within complex political milieu, become sustainable. Based on the findings of two case studies of sanitation infrastructure from cities in India, the study demonstrates that the first case has failed while the second case has succeeded in acquisition of durability in sanitation infrastructure. The stories clearly illustrate the vital role of political strategy in making infrastructures long lasting.

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[46] S. Burra, S. Patel and T. Kerr, "Community-designed, Built and Managed Toilet Blocks in Indian Cities", *Environment and Urbanization,* Vol. 15, No. 2, pp.11-32; R. Nitti and S. Sarker, *Reaching the Poor through Sustainable Partnerships: The Slum Sanitation Program in Mumbai, India*, Washington DC: The World Bank, 2003.
[47] G. Gopakumar, *op.cit.*

The concept of partnership is emerging as a way of solving sanitation problems in the poor communities of the cities in Pakistan as well. The most notable NGO named Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) could be cited here as an example of partnership in service provider especially for sanitation. Established in 1980, this NGO initially began its work in an informal settlement in the city of Karachi covering over one million people. The success of the NGO in providing sanitation to the poor communities has spurred many CBOs, NGOs and even city governments to replicate OPP model in providing low-cost sanitation to the poor communities. For instance at present low-cost sanitation programmes are being implemented in Orangi and in 248 other localities in Pakistan benefiting mostly low-income people residing in informal settlements.[48] The support - social, technical and managerial - by the OPP has enabled the dwellers of informal settlements in a few cities in Pakistan to build their own toilets and to connect them to the city's sewerage network with the assistance of the city authorities. The Orangi Pilot Project has demonstrated that if the community people are provided with necessary support and are included in the decision making and implementation process of the project, they would feel a sense of ownership in the project and thus would contribute to the improvement of sanitation services in their neighbourhood using their own resources. Examples from few other cities such as Faisalabad also supports the view that community people who are organised and motivated could be important partners in successful implementation of sewerage schemes under upgrading projects.[49]

The above illustration of partnership arrangements reveals that partnership has the potential to at least improve the sanitation problems currently confronted by the poor people living in the cities of South Asia. Community participation, active involvement of the civil society groups and also the pro-active role of the city authorities have brought success to the projects on sanitation based on partnership arrangements. The participation of the community in the project has been found very effective in bringing positive changes in the provision of sanitation. The active role of the civil society organisations emerges as a potent factor in promoting community groups in the participation of this kind of project.

4. Partnership Practices in the Cities of Bangladesh

Enhancing socio-economic condition through the provision of hygienic toilet facilities to the slum dwellers was among one of the tasks of UBSDP. Another case of such initiatives for providing sanitation services is found where the Water

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[48] A. Hasan, "Orangi Pilot Project: The Expansion of the Work Beyond Orangi and the Mapping of Informal Settlements and Infrastructure", *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2006, pp. 451-480.
[49] I. Ahmad and H. Morishita, "Community Participation in Tertiary Level Sewerage Schemes of the Faisalabad Area Upgrading Project, Pakistan", *Regional Development Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2006, pp. 199-214.

Aid, an international NGO, has been supporting water, sanitation and hygiene projects in slum areas in the cities of Bangladesh since 1996. Water Aid-Bangladesh urban programme has contributed to the improvement of the living condition of many poor slum dwellers in Dhaka and Chittagong city providing better access to water and sanitation. This project shows that City Corporations and the sewerage authority that were initially unwilling to provide services in the slums have changed their mindset and have facilitated water and sanitation to the slum people through negotiation with the Water Aid.[50] Despite its limitations, the project has elicited community participation in the contribution of resources and formation of management committee for the toilet. Building a partnership with the community could be seen as a major success in sustaining sanitation infrastructure and services at the community level in the slum areas.

There is also an example of successful partnership in promoting urban infrastructure and services in the town of Faridpur, Bangladesh with the help of Practical Action, a UK based project, community people and other partners.[51] Implementation of the project has upgraded the condition of health and local environment in the town. It is partly because of ensuring better use and maintenance of water and sanitation-related infrastructure and services. Ali and Stevens claim that the Faridpur model could be used as a potential model to improve access to services in urban slums of Asia by capitalising the synergic effect of partnerships.[52]

4.1 *Examples from Two Metropolitan Cities of Bangladesh*

Results of the household survey conducted in the slums of Rajshahi and Khulna show that the communities are almost homogenous not only by socio-economic, cultural and political status but also by environmental health standards. Some dissimilarities are also visible across housing quality, household head, education and land tenancy. In Rajshahi, overwhelming majority (90 per cent) of slum dwellers are literate and more than 90 per cent households are male-headed. Khulna exhibits characteristics such as female dominated households (47 per cent), low literacy (42 per cent), poor housing and lower proportion of land tenancy. Table 1 represents the sanitation condition in the slums of Khulna and Rajshahi. In using the mode of sanitation, these two cities have varied pictures. The water supply situation is satisfactory in the slums of both cities as 100 per cent of households have access to safe drinking water.

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[50] S. Hanchett, S. Akter and M. H. Khan, "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Bangladeshi Slums: An Evaluation of the Water Aid-Bangladesh Urban Programme", *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2003, pp. 43-56.

[51] M. Ali and L. Stevens, "Integrated Approaches to Promoting Sanitation: A Case Study of Faridpur, Bangladesh*", Desalination*, Vol. 248, Issues 1-3, 2009, pp. 1-7.

[52] *Ibid*.

These similarities and variations in the profile of the residents in slum communities might have had an influence on sanitation partnership.

Table 1: Sanitation Condition in the Slums of Khulna and Rajshahi

Toilet types	Frequency		Per cent	
	Khulna slum	Rajshahi slum	Khulna slum	Rajshahi slum
Community latrine	111	18	51.90	8.40
Twin-pit	49	72	22.90	33.60
Single pit	14	37	6.50	17.30
Direct pit	-	28	-	13.10
Hanging	23	2	10.70	.90
Water sealed (sanitary)	10	50	4.70	23.40
No toilet	7	7	3.20	3.3
Total	**214**	**214**	**99.90**	**100.00**

Source: Field Survey, 2004/2005.

In Bangladesh, in delivering services at the community level, partnership usually occur with government agencies, NGOs and people in the community. In all cases partnership plays a pivotal role in enhancing the human development and social empowerment. There are evidences of government, NGO and community partnerships in various sectors such as health, water, sanitation and education. Examples of partnership in the provision of urban services such as sanitation in Bangladeshi cities are scarce. However, the first of this kind of partnership is the example of UNICEF funded projects such as SIP (1985-1995), UBSDP (1996-2000) and SBSUAP (2001-2006) elaborated in introductory section.

Basic services in Bangladeshi cities are provided mainly by public organisations like Municipalities and City Corporations. Projects financed by the international donors assist in providing urban services particularly for the urban poor who have limited or no access to urban services. The primary responsibility for providing services to the dweller in metropolitan cites goes to City Corporation. Functions of all City Corporations are almost same and guided by City Corporation ordinance. The city authority provides most of the basic urban services such as water, sanitation, drainage and solid waste disposal. As per City Corporation ordinance, city authority shall provide adequate toilet facilities along with the responsibility for maintenance and penalise if any one found discharging excreta into drains or public places. In practice, city authority very often punish offender unless someone or neighbours register a complaint. Since both Rajshahi and Khulna do not have any sewerage network, every household has to take the responsibility for cleaning up septic tanks, which very often create public nuisance. From the field observation and informal interview with the officials, it

is evident that both City Corporations do not have adequate institutional arrangements for sanitation provision, let alone for the slum poor.

4.2 *Partnership in Sanitation: Exploring Potentials and Limitations*

Government departments, City Corporation, community people and UNICEF had formed one kind of partnership in solving sanitation problems in the studied slums through the introduction of UBSDP. A form of partnership in sanitation provision was found in the slum studied but with varied performance. However, the performance in sanitation partnership is determined based on some indicators measured through potentials: participation, ownership and limitations: legal and institutional, land ownership and conflicts. The following sections elaborate on this.

4.2.1 Potentials
   Participation

Participation of community people is crucial for any kind of project that generates benefits for the community. The sustainability of the project largely relies on the participation of people. People participation is also important to form partnership. UNICEF project is managed, coordinated and implemented by committees at different levels such as national, city/*pourashabha,* zonal (for Dhaka city only) and ward level. At the ward level (community level) Project Implementation Committee (PIC) offers the scope for the slum people to articulate their views regarding project implementation. Urban Development Centre (UDC)[53] consisting of 4 staffs: caretaker, health workers, 2 teachers and 1 guard provide institutional support for project implementation activities at the community level. Ward commissioners chair PIC meeting once every month. Participants from UDC, NGOs, voluntary organisations, government agencies, community people participate in the meeting and discuss the issues relating to project implementation. In Khulna city slum, PIC meeting has been irregular while in Rajshahi city it is regular. Ward commissioners in the studied slums of Khulna do not participate actively in the meeting. UDC officials also find no interest as they are denied salaries for few years. Political interference in project activities hampers smooth functioning of the project in Khulna. As a result the activities of projects have been severely disrupted. In contrast, Rajshahi slums show better performance, with regular PIC meeting attended by all stakeholders. UDC people are very enthusiastic to work with the community people. They are paid regularly and satisfied with the project activities. The survey results also indicate the satisfaction of the slum people in Rajshahi city on project activities. Yard meeting (*Uthan boithok*) is another kind of participatory mechanism to

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[53] UDC is a coordinating agencies established in the poor neighborhood provides training on environmental education and hygiene practices to the project beneficiaries especially women and children living in slums.

learn about hygiene practice, health awareness, family planning and so on. Health workers of UDC are supposed to conduct two meetings everyday in the UDC covered area. *Uthan boithok*, a forum of direct contact with UDC staff and community people, offers an opportunity to learn hygiene and environmental education. Two city slums show again varied performance in this regard. UDC staffs in Rajshahi city slums are more active than that of Khulna. Health workers and community people actively participate in these meetings while it is opposite in Khulna city where UDC staffs have lost their interests in project activities due to unpaid salaries.

Ownership

Ownership is an important component of partnership that helps improve service provision. It makes people more responsive. When people have ownership in any services they take more care of the services provided. Slum people in the cities got toilet facilities along with others services mainly by UNICEF funded projects. For the installation of pit and community toilet a small amount of money were charged from the community people. Community and pit latrines were given to the project beneficiaries. More than 30 per cent people in Rajshahi city slums still use those toilets given by the UNICEF projects. In the studied slums two community toilets were found which were managed and cleaned by the slum people. They have formed groups consisting of members from the slum. These groups clean the toilet by turn. Above 50 per cent toilets including community toilet were seen in tidy and good conditions. Whereas more than 50 per cent slum people in Khulna city were found using community toilet. Of the three community toilets, only one toilet was found in tidy condition. Other two toilets were seen in very unhygienic and bad condition as the cleaning and maintenance work were not done regularly. Of course, slum people of the two community toilet had formed a committee to oversee maintenance and cleanliness of the community toilet. Members of the committee pay regular lump sum money to the committee. This money is utilised for multipurpose use, for example helping needy people, buying bulb for light posts and paying for the toilet cleaners.

4.2.2 Limitations
Legal and Institutional

One of the major impediments to forming partnership in sanitation services in the slum settlements is the existing legal and institutional constraints that make city authorities reluctant to respond to the sanitation. Although City Corporations are supposed to ensure sanitation through providing toilet facilities to all city dwellers, they have not been successful to do this job due to lack of financial and administrative capacity. Both the city slums got access to sanitation facilities with the blessings of the projects financed mostly by the donor agencies such as UNICEF. More recently UNDP have initiated projects aiming to improve

sanitation in the poor communities in both cities. City Corporations do not have any programmes or projects on sanitation in slum settlements on its own capacity. Although City Corporations got department to install toilet, their activities are only limited to the construction of some public toilets in the city's jurisdiction. Due to fund crisis and lack of human resources, none of the City Corporation has been able to ensure sanitation services for the city dwellers, let alone for the slum people. In addition, extending sanitation services to the slum settlements are not recognised in the legal framework. This may be another reason as to why city authorities escape these settlements from service provision.

Land Ownership

Land ownership is a prerequisite for extending any urban services to the city dwellers. Since slum people live mostly on the public land, city authorities are not obliged to provide any service to them. Other non-government, voluntary and private organisations show also no interest in investing capital for service improvement in the slum settlements. Land tenancy is considered to be an important factor of receiving urban services. People having land tenancy feel more confident in investing capital for urban services. In Rajshahi city slums about 61 per cent people had land tenancy while in Khulna city it was only 20 per cent. The gap between two city slums in terms of sanitation services might be attributed to the land tenancy. Studies show that the concept of security of tenure has encouraged people to invest in housing and environmental improvement. For example provision in urban services in the informal settlements in Indonesia, has been mostly conducted through self-help in which the perception on security of tenure played a crucial role in investing money for infrastructure and house consolidation.[54]

Conflicts

To make a project or endeavour such as partnership successful, leadership among other factors is of paramount importance. Conflict between leaders or groups leads partnerships to an uncertainty. As Nyraco, Oduro-Kwarteng and Owusu-Antwi[55] argue that the success or failure of the partnership is linked to the degree of conflict resolution among the partners as well as external factors. In Khulna city slums, conflict among ward commissioners and between commissioners and the mayor has jeopardised the activities of the UNICEF projects. UDC staffs are denied monthly salaries for few years due to conflict between commissioners and the mayor. Unpaid salaries for years have frustrated UDC staff. PIC meeting at the ward level and Project Coordination Committee

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[54] L. Winayanti and H. C. Lang, "Provision of Urban Services in an Informal Settlement: A Case Study of Kampung Penas Tanggul, Jakarta", *Habitat International*, Vol. 28, Issue. 1, pp. 41-65, 2004.
[55] Nyraco, *et.al. op.cit.*

(PCC) at the city level has been irregular. All these factors have made the project implementation activities stalled. On the other hand, conflicts among the leaders in Rajshahi city are very minimal and thus the conducive environment made the UNICEF projects to run its activities uninterruptedly. UDC staffs are paid regularly. Project activities are going on smoothly.

The synergic effects of collaboration among city authority, enthusiastic UDC staffs and community people have placed sanitation in Rajshahi city slums comparatively in better positions than Khulna city. Table 2 summarises the sanitation partnership in two cities of Bangladesh.

Table 2: Performance in Sanitation Partnerships in Two Metropolitan Cities, Bangladesh

Indicator	City		Remarks
	Rajshahi	Khulna	
Participation	Regular	Irregular	*Rajshahi city exhibits better performance than Khulna city in terms of partnership.*
Ownership	Strong	Weak	
Legal and institutional	Strong barrier	Strong barrier	
Land ownership	Majority	Minority	
Conflicts	Minimum	Maximum	

5. Lessons Learnt and Policy Implications

Studies indicate that cities in South Asia are focusing more on partnership in the development of urban infrastructure.[56] This is because urban local bodies lack the financial resources and the capacity to develop these projects on their own. In such environment, PPPs could play a pivotal role in the development of urban infrastructure like sanitation. The case studies from countries of South Asia reveal that forging partnership could be a potential option to ensure sanitary services for the low income people living in the slums and squatters plagued by inadequacy in urban services. The study also reveals that the partnership has emerged as a result of the reciprocal cooperation and mutual trust between the private and pubic organisation. It also demonstrates that partnership arrangement can help improve the sanitation problems faced by the lower income people. Participation of the people, dynamic civil societies and also the pro-active role of the public authorities have made the projects on sanitation a success.

In the formation of partnership, initiatives should be undertaken by the policy makers to remove barriers such as distrust between the public and private sectors, a lack of political willingness to develop PPPs, the absence of an enabling institutional environment for PPPs and conflicts between the partners. This could help improve not only the quantity and but also the quality of

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[56] A. Mahalingam, *op.cit.*

infrastructure services in South Asian cities. Overhauling in the legal framework is urgently needed to accommodate slum people into formal service provision. Giving land tenancy could be an alternative way to legitimise the right of basic services such as sanitation. Capacity building for the community people, leaders and staffs are also required for the sustainability of partnership. The future of sustainable cities in South Asia depends largely on how effectively and efficiently urban government responds to the needs of basic services for the citizens and more particularly for the slum poor who constitute 40-50 per cent of the urban population.

6. Conclusion

In most cases, international donor-funded project has benefited the slum people living in the cities of South Asian region in terms of sanitation facility, but still a good number of slum people are living without proper access to sanitation, posing negative impact on environment and health. In the case of Bangladesh, urban authorities have been ineffective in providing sanitation services to the citizens including slum people. Participation of public, private and other organisations in service delivery has not been visible. The existing legal and institutional framework of the City Corporations does not play a conducive role to facilitating partnership in sanitation services for the slum dwellers. In terms of partnership formation, two city slums expose different pictures. Community people's participation and land ownership in Rajshahi city is comparatively higher than Khulna city. PIC meeting at the ward level in Rajshahi city has been regular. Although the elected representatives run both cities studied, participation of the city dwellers in decision making for projects or programmes in general and the urban poor in particular has been very minimal or non-existent. Conflict among political leaders in Khulna city has made the project activities stalled causing deterioration of sanitation environment in the neighbourhood. However, Rajshahi city shows better performance in partnership formation than Khulna, though both cities are at the beginning stage of partnership cycle.

The findings of the study are based on the analysis of the case studies of South Asian cities including two metropolitan cities of Bangladesh. The insight of the study clearly demonstrate that forging partnerships with public, private and community organisations have better chance in making successful implementation of urban infrastructure project provided that the barriers to partnerships are curtailed.