Engaging project beneficiaries: a comparative analysis of government and NGO practices in the development context of Bangladesh

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Abstract

This thesis provides a comparative analysis of the practices of government (GOs) and non-government organisations (NGOs) in engaging project beneficiaries in the development context of Bangladesh. The research investigation considers the concept of integrating people into development, in which the engagement of project beneficiaries is embedded in the policies and practices in a given country and carried out by both state and non-state actors. However, development literature is yet to generate any evidence-based comparison between GOs and NGOs in terms of their strategies, roles and practices of engaging beneficiaries specific to any country context. With this gap in development discussions, it is relevant to compare the existing practices that GOs and NGOs adopt to engage project beneficiaries in a development context specific to Bangladesh. The research investigation uses interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to gather data. It analyses findings from 42 interviews involving government and NGO officials, field workers, project staff and development partners and three FGDs with GO-NGO officials and beneficiaries. The data collection also involves secondary sources that triangulate the information obtained through the primary sources. Through an analysis of the findings, this study argues that the integration of beneficiaries into development does exist and it is practiced by both GOs and NGOs within the project management cycle though varies in individual service sectors. The study reveals that both GOs and NGOs equally experience advantages, challenges and limitations in engaging beneficiaries. Thus none of these organisations can ensure the integration of beneficiaries without mutually coordinated and dependent relationships not only between service sectors and NGOs but also between local government and NGOs at the grass roots level. This thesis also makes a significant contribution to identifying emerging opportunities in the development field of Bangladesh that determines GO-NGO partnership to integrate people and to accept roles of both GOs and NGOs in engaging beneficiaries relevant to the country's development aspirations.

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List of acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda on Actions
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADP	Annual Development Programme
ASA	Association of Social Advancement
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCS	Bangladesh Civil Service
BGL	Business, Government & Law
BPATC	Bangladesh public Administration Training Centre
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BTRC	Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission
CDRF	Capacity Development Results Framework
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAE	Department of Agriculture Extension
DMB	Disaster Management Bureau
DP	Development Partner
DPP	Development Project Proforma
DWA	Directorate of Women Affairs
ERD	Economic Relations Division
ESDO	Eco Social Development Organization
FDI	Foreign Development Index
FGDs	Focus Groups Discussions
FWVs	Family Welfare Volunteers
FY	Financial Year
FYPs	Financial Year Plans
GED	General Economic Division
GDP	Gross National Product
GOs	Government Organizations
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GSS	*Gono Shahajjo Sangstha*

HDI	Human Development Index
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technology for Development
IMED	Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Division
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
LGRD	Local Government and Rural Development
LGIs	Local Government Institutions
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MISC	Miscellaneous group of respondents
MLAA	Madaripur Legal Aid Association
MO	Medical Officer
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHFW	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
MoWCA	Ministry of Women & Children Affairs
NAPD	National Academy for Planning and Development
NGOAB	NGO Affairs Bureau
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NILG	National Institute for Local Government
NPD	National Project Director
NPL	National Poverty Line
NPM	New Public Management
NTCC	National Technical Co-ordination Committee
PB	Project Beneficiary
PDC	*Para* Development Committee
PKSF	*Palli Karma-Sahayak* Foundation
PMS	Project Management Staff
PMUs	Project Management Units
PPRC	Power and Participation Research Centre
RDA	Rural Development Academy
RDRS	Rangpur-Dinajpur Rural Service

RMG	Readymade Garments Sector
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TA	Technical Assistance
TAPP	Technical Assistance Project Proforma
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
UAO	Union Agriculture Officer
UCEP	Underprivileged Children Education Program
UISC	Union Information Service Centre
UH&FPO	UPZ Health and Family Planning officer
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNO	UPZ *Nirbahi* (Executive) Officer
UP	Union *Parishad* (Council)
UPZ	*Upazila* (sub-districts)
VAT	Value Added Tax
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
WB	World Bank
WBG	World Bank Group
WID	Women in Development
WWII	World War II

Chapter 1. Introduction

It is difficult to find any development literature that does not discuss people, given that the concept is, in itself, about people and participation. Government in any given country routinely undertake development initiatives that are designed for and delivered to its citizens. In turn, they are expected to be involved in conveying their needs appropriately, take part in implementing developmental activities, provide feedback on how they benefit from development, and continue on with the benefits they receive from these initiatives. This broad understanding of development is narrowed by projects at a micro level, where participation of target beneficiaries in individual ventures seems an integral part of project management. Discussions on development also argue that governments wish not to pursue development alone, but instead partner with non-government organisations (NGOs) to ensure its intended services reach the right people. Project-management practitioners in both sectors are likewise encouraged to dedicate inexorable efforts to ensure that developmental decisions are derived from people who are engaged in project management and, thus, are able to contribute to the process at both local and national levels.

Sixteen years of professional experience taught me this. Working in the public sector at the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS), in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bangladesh country office in conjunction with years of studying development literature has enabled me to experience exactly how the government machineries function. I became equally familiar with government functions from a distance working at the UNDP from 2005 to 2012, managing governance programs and clusters. At the same time, I had an opportunity to work with NGOs contracted to implement projects owned by government ministries and departments, as well as local governments funded by development partners.

However, one question remains unanswered. How are people engaged in the development process, and what roles, experiences and strategies do both government organisations (GOs) and NGOs hold in pursuit of involving individuals in development? Within the context of Bangladesh, it proved additionally important to identify the factors that stimulate or influence these organisations to ensure that people are engaged in the process of managing development initiatives. Specific queries that instigated this research related to Bangladesh regarded factors of influence from government policy and/or development partners; whether only NGOs can ensure people's involvement in the development process, or whether the GOs are equally responsible; and gauging the understanding (if any) between government and NGO entities working to bring people closer to development.

1.1. Research context and problem statement

Steady and continuous improvement in economic growth, as well as involving local government in effecting development programs and opening up policies to include non-State actors contributing towards development targets are now the reality of modern-day Bangladesh. According to statistic and economic reports, the country is growing as shown in Table 1.1. Development planning and policies are now focused on delivering services to people, undertaking rural and infrastructural development, integrating women in national expansion, and achieving the United Nations' (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and very recently sustaining the development achievements. In the background paper for the World Bank (WB) report on Bangladesh Poverty Assessment, Giménez, Jolliffe and Sharif (2013) mentioned that Bangladesh has experienced a steady decline in poverty rates which demonstrated 'impressive and steady improvement'.

Table 1.1. The research context—Bangladesh

Political context
• Emerged as the People's Republic of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971 following its victory against Pakistan after a 9-month long liberation war • Change from Parliamentary to Presidential form of Government in 1973 • Long term Military regime from 1975 to 1990 • Mass movement against military regime in 1990 • General election in 1991 and return to democracy with the Parliamentary form of government • Change of government through general elections and continuing to democracy from 1991 to date
Geographic context

• Area 147,570 sq. km
• Generally plain land with hilly terrains in a couple of districts in Sylhet and Chittagong divisions
• Boarder:
  o North: India
  o West: India
  o South: Bay of Bengal
  o East: India and Myanmar

Development context
• Experienced severance of war in 1971, natural disaster, and famine immediately after independence • Steady economic growth of GDP from (-)13.97 % in 1972 and 5.6 % in 1990 to 7.28% in 2017 • Population living below the NPL stands at 23.6% in 2016 • MDG achievements in poverty reduction, girl child education, reducing child mortality rate and ensuring child and maternity health • Declining aid dependence from 9.7% of GDP in 1970s to 2.75 % of GDP in 2000s • Increase of private sector investment (23.01% of total investment of GDP in FY 2016-17) • Increase of export contribution to GDP from 8.25% in 1970s to 24.16% in 2000s • Increase of remittance contribution to GDP from 1.02% in 1970s to 6.99% in 2000s • FDI from US$ 793m in 2006 to US$ 2333m in 2016 • Development priorities: agriculture and rural development, industry, energy, transport, HRD, population planning, education & training, health and sanitation, nutrition and food safety, ICT and telecommunication
People context
• Total population 160.8 m (as of 2016), urban population 44.1m and rural population 112.7m (as of 2014) • Literacy rate is 75.7% of population (BBS 2018, p. 13) • Bengali is spoken all over the country
Administrative units
• 8 Divisions • 64 Districts • 544 *Upazilas* (UPZ) • 4554 Union *Parishads* (Ups) • 32.17m households

Source: Asian Development Bank (ADB 2017), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, 2018), ERD Annual Reports, GED (2014), MoF (online), Raihan (2012), Statistical Pocket Book of BBS (2017), WB (n. d.).

Apart from all these economic development indicators, Bangladesh has also earned its reputation in disaster management, food security and its integration with global economy which was hardly predicted as Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC 2016) report identified. Also noted was the country's transformation from 'disaster victim' to 'disaster manager', from a food-deficit nation of 70 million people to a 'nearly self-sufficient' country of 160 million people, bringing 'abroad' home through exports and expats, and connecting 'isolated villages' to a 'national economy' (PPRC 2016). Along with the public sector, which is responsible for policy formulation and implementation, the key players contributing to the country's development include private sectors, NGOs and development partners. Projects in different government ministries resourced either by government funds or through foreign aid (in the form of loans and grants) play instrumental roles in achieving development targets. At the same time, NGOs implement a significant number of programs that contribute to the nation's achievements in fulfilling the development goals. Bangladesh is likewise renowned for its various microfinancing models led by the Grameen Bank, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), the Association of Social Advancements (ASA) and other leading NGOs working in various sectors. The private sector is equally responsible for contributing to the country's gradual development.

Bangladesh's development planning over five financial year (FY) forecasts growth relative to how its budget is allocated to the State's Annual Development Program (ADP). Along with the government's allowance for the ADP, Bangladesh also receives project aid both in the form of grants and loans (Economic Relations Division [ERD] 2012). Project aid is integral to the country, as it finances ADPs related to human resource development (HRD); social, health, educational and family welfare; as well as infrastructural development (Raihan 2012, p. 250). Although the total foreign aid decreased following gradual economic improvement, government statistics show that project aid is increasing.

Raihan (2012) provided a decade-wise analysis of foreign aid flow to Bangladesh that comprises food aid, commodity aid and project aid. Though food and commodity aid declined significantly since 1970s, the project aid increased from 23.47% to 91.70% from 1970s to 2000s (ERD 2010, cited in Raihan 2012, p. 251). Since independence, the government of Bangladesh (GOB) received the highest disbursement of project support between 2011 and 2012; total number of foreign-aided projects stood at 354, of which both technical assistance (TA) projects and investment projects comprised 183 and 171 respectively (ERD n. d., pp. 14-15). The total disbursement of foreign aid in terms of grants and loan stands at USD$3,591.92 million during 2015-2016 (ERD n. d.).

The GOB is responsible for undertaking development programs. However, NGOs also manage development projects in various service sectors, either as implementing partners to the government or as independent providers of services, skills and advocacy as approved by the concerned government authority. Government line ministries, departments and field administration are further held accountable for undertaking development initiatives and delivering services to people. NGOs generally implement development projects, receiving funds from development partners and GOB, and operate within legal and administrative policy frameworks. Naturally, each has financial and administrative accountability to their respective authorities, including line ministries, departments and the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB), as applicable within the national context.

Despite steady economic growth, continual achievement of MDGs, as well as ongoing development (together with an increasing flow of project aid) discussions in Bangladesh on the role of NGOs include a number of shortcomings. Of note, there is lacking accountability to development beneficiaries, preference for donors to provide foreign aid directly to NGOs and NGO agreements to donor conditionality. Conversely, inadequate coordination between GOB

and NGOs in implementing development programs, top-down decision-making in the public sector and governmental control over NGO activities put the bureaucratic practices, commonly attributed to GOs. However, none of these issues have yet led any critical discussions on how GOs and NGOs are addressing beneficiary engagement in the country's development process. The extent to which policies of these organisations are inclusive of its people remains unclear and the leverage holds within their partnership, geared to ensure engaging people in development, is yet to receive critical attention. To define their respective roles in the development process, it is equally important to understand how GOs and NGOs function in Bangladesh that enable or affect beneficiary engagement in development projects. These gaps certainly create an opportunity to examine development issues at a local level.

1.2. Aims and objectives of the research

Within the research context of Bangladesh, this study primarily aims to:

- generate knowledge on the roles, practices and functions of GOs and NGOs to ensure the inclusion of people in development
- provide a comparative analysis of GO and NGO experiences, policies and practices in engaging project beneficiaries.

With this, the objectives of this research study are to:

- identify enabling factors for GOs and NGOs to engage project beneficiaries
- examine processes and scopes through which beneficiaries are engaged in both government and NGO project settings
- compare the advantages and limitations that GOs and NGOs experience in engaging project beneficiaries

- explore existing strategies and opportunities of the GO–NGO partnership in relation to beneficiary engagement.

To achieve these objectives, the scope of this study includes a thorough investigation of both government and NGO practices on engaging beneficiaries in managing development projects.

1.3. Research questions

This study seeks answers to the following research questions. In fulfilling the expected aims and objectives outlined in Section 1.2, four main queries will be addressed:

1. What is the scope of development planning and policies that GOs and NGOs consider supportive of engaging development beneficiaries?
2. How do GOs and NGOs address beneficiary engagement in managing development initiatives?
3. What are the comparative advantages and limitations that GOs and NGOs experience in beneficiary engagement?
4. What are the opportunities and challenges of GO-NGO partnership to enhance beneficiary engagement in development practices?

These basic research questions will be associated with several other related questions during the process of data collection. This will help in gathering thorough information to support the research investigation.

1.4. Justification of the research study

Justification of the research study is embedded in two main areas of development discourse: first, the conceptual framework and organisational roles of State and non-State actors that are expected to involve people in national development initiatives; and second, the process of

beneficiary integration in the development process. Development concepts have been evolving since 1940s focusing on economic development, poverty reduction, decentralisation, participation of non-State actors and people to ensure inclusive, participatory, and people-centred development. The concept of engaging beneficiaries is less evident in these concepts of development and instead development literature has progressed so far with the concept of people's participation in development, its problems and challenges. The concept of engagement in development is still at the peripheries even though the concept of participation has made a lot of progress and continues to be challenged (Cook and Kothari 2001, Hickey and Mohan 2004). Though people-centred literature generates discussions on the concept of 'engagement', the discussion resides in the concept of citizen engagement in policy making that links citizens more to government institutions (Stoker 2004; Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker 2006; Lukensmeyer and Torres 2006). However, a systematic and empirical study is required at the micro level to explore how these concepts have evolved in practices that agencies in the State undertake to engage development beneficiaries. In this sense, the study offers a practical relevance to the research context by unpacking the existing strategies, practices, enabling factors, opportunities and constraints that GOs and NGOs experience in this process towards maximising citizens' potential to participate in the nation's prospective development.

Government in the form of public service is considered as the key agency of national success or failure in which people oriented development is limited within the administrative structure (Campbell 1990, Gaventa 1998, Lange 2004, May, Workman and Jones 2008). Thus theory of neoliberalism and subsequent concept of New Public Management (NPM) emerged to minimize the gaps between State, non-State actors, and people for which government agencies need to be competitive, cost-efficient and client oriented to deliver services (Steger and Roy 2010, Boston 2011, Appledoorn and Overbeek 2012). In this context, this research study intends to create grounds for further discourse on whether bringing people and the communities into

the fold within specific national contexts requires more attention from GOs and NGOs in carrying out development initiatives.

In line with concepts and theories, international declarations outline strategies considered at the global context and transferred to the national and local levels through development assistance (shown in Table 2.1). Having people at the centre of development assistance, the gap in the literature makes it critical to identify whether recipients are engaged in the management of development assistance. Lukensmeyer and Torres (2006, p. 7) defined 'engaging' as 'working directly with people' that government agencies need to ensure people's active participation. Eversole (2010) identifies 'ignoring [people's] need to engage with as one of the problems of participation in development. The aim of engaging beneficiaries in decision making is to ensure their participation and its process involves complexities in different contexts and depends on willingness of communities to be engaged (Stoker 2004; Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker 2006). None of these concepts outline the practices of GOs and NGOs if that enable people to have their 'say' or how complexities are addressed in different development contexts. While the role of NGOs in connecting people is much discussed, whether GOs play any role in engaging beneficiaries in the development process is limited, especially in the context of Bangladesh. To address these gaps, this study approaches it using a new angle to extend the discussion on beneficiary engagement from organisational and beneficiary perspectives. Instead of focusing on why beneficiaries need to be engaged and what methods should be used to capture their attention, this research intends to spark conversation on GO and NGO practices for beneficiary engagement. In doing so, it will examine the scope of existing policies and practices, the advantages and limitations involved, and the level of partnership between two entities established to enhance beneficiary engagement within the developmental sphere of Bangladesh.

1.5. Expected outcomes

This research investigates the research topic from an organisational point of view, by conducting a comparative analysis of GOs and NGOs in engaging project beneficiaries. Through this, the study is expected to add value to the understanding of GO-NGO-beneficiary dynamics, which may prove to evolve around policies, practices, relations and unobserved opportunities that could be instrumental in engaging people within development. The expected outcomes of the study relate to building knowledge on the GO-NGO perspective of local involvement, and further result in understanding the extent to which both institutions connect with recipients in managing development initiatives.

Upon completion, I intend to provide a conceptual underpinning through which the basics of integrating people into development is understood and that is not only specific to GOs and NGOs, but also to the recipients concerned. The research investigation is also expected to generate discussion on both organisations' roles in beneficiary engagement. This is realised by examining the comparative practices, advantages and access each grants to those for whom development projects are designed, implemented and evaluated. I believe that the study extends the scope for further research on the need to address organisational settings necessary for engaging citizens and/or communities in planning, designing and implementing development activities in a specific development context.

Moreover, my study has focused on generating findings, analysis and literature that examines how organisations, development and engagement processes are being addressed in Bangladesh following decades of people-centred development discussion. The findings will be disseminated to GOs and NGOs nationwide through thesis publication and presentations at national and international forums. I hope it will create opportunities for future research on each sectors' respective roles in engaging project beneficiaries.

1.6. Terminologies as used in this study

As the paper progresses, reference to specific terminology will help to retain focus on the research aims and objectives. Thus, I define key terms at the outset to provide an understanding of how these concepts are addressed in the study and further clarify their relationship with the findings. These terms are commonly used in the literature on development administration, international cooperation, project design and implementation. However, defining these in relation to my research study will prove essential in elucidating their connection with the aims, objectives, research questions and analysis of findings.

1.6.1. Engaging

I have used this terminology to demonstrate how people are involved in development initiatives that GOs and/or NGOs undertake in the research context. The term includes being informed and involved in development, interaction and understanding that beneficiaries hold about development initiatives that impact their lives. This terminology is relevant to my research as I want to draw a comparison between GO-NGO practices in engaging project beneficiaries. This terminology is based on several definitions of 'engaging' I have identified in literature review (Chapter 2) and in investigating research questions.

1.6.2. Project

Herein, 'project' refers to development assistance undertaken by GOs or NGOs in the service sectors, in the community or regarding the capacity for development meant for target beneficiaries. The term 'project' helps narrow the research focus to a specific area of people's engagement in development. Combining the concepts, the focus is on 'engagement' in 'projects' conducted in service sectors including agriculture, health or education, and any other social development venture involving capacity and service delivery development within

specific communities in rural areas. The term does not refer to any infrastructural, capital investment or industrial projects, as NGOs are not involved in these endeavours in Bangladesh.

1.6.3. Beneficiaries

Development deals with beneficiaries at a micro level and citizens at a macro level, with projects residing in the former relative to development (Gaventa and Valderrama 1999). In this view, the term 'beneficiaries' refers to the recipients of development benefits in any given context, including those associated with receiving services through development projects. 'Beneficiaries' encompass both men and women at the project setting and 'people' at the wider development context.

1.6.4. Development

Frequent reference is made to 'development', the 'development context', 'development initiatives', the 'development process', 'developed' and 'developing countries'. Upon reviewing the literature to identify past discourses on beneficiaries and their involvement in projects, these terms appeared the most deeply rooted within theories and concepts on development (see Chapter 2). Instead of measuring the statistical scale of progress or financial growth, the term 'development' itself is used as a basis for projects through which GOs and NGOs undertake initiatives to improve beneficiary conditions (e.g., livelihood, education and/or social condition). In relation to the concept, Bangladesh is deemed a 'developing country' based on the categories identified by Willis (2011, pp. 16–19), and illustrated in Figure 1.1.

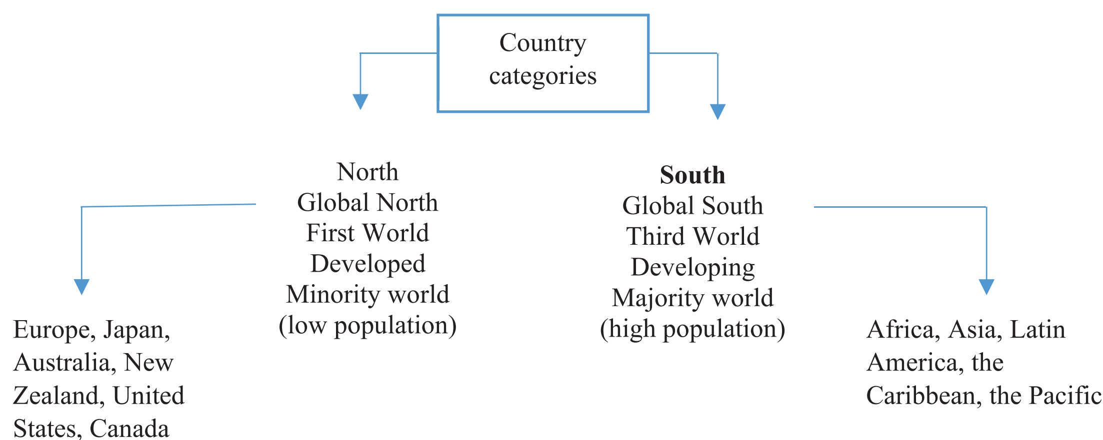


Figure 1.1. Category of developed and developing countries

1.6.5. GOs

The government of Bangladesh consists of three branches: Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. 'Government organisations' in this study refers to the Executive branch (incorporating line ministries, departments and service sectors) and field administration, comprising divisions, districts, *Upazila* (UPZ, these are sub-districts under district administration) and Union *Parishad* (UP, *Parishad* means Council). Throughout the research, the term 'GOs', thus, denotes any of these organisations and their representative respondents.

1.6.6. NGOs

The term 'non-government organisations' (NGOs) refers to registered entities that fall within the definition provided in the *Foreign Donation (Voluntary Activities) Regulations Act 2016* of Bangladesh (Appendix 2). Under this Act, NGOs are deemed as voluntary bodies registered by the Department of Social Services at the field level working within Bangladesh, local agents receiving foreign funding, and foreign voluntary organisations that are registered by the NGOAB which operates under the authority of the Prime Minister's Office. The term also includes respondents from NGOs.

1.7. Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into nine chapters, with supporting appendices. Provided is a brief description of each chapter, including a general overview of how the thesis is structured.

First, Chapter 1 outlines the context, aims, objectives and justification of the research. This chapter includes a section on terminology used in this study and is referred while investigating the research questions and analysing the data.

Chapter 2 explores the literature relevant to the research topic. Its purpose is to explain the theoretical and conceptual understanding driving the major concepts on beneficiary, people, development and organizational (GOs and NGOs) roles in engaging beneficiaries. A review of the literature is further based on the above terms that motivated the development discourse throughout previous decades. Through a comprehensive review of development literature, this chapter identifies gaps in the existing literature on engaging beneficiaries, that forms the basis for this research.

Next, Chapter 3 presents the research methodology. The first section provides a theoretical framework of the relevant methodologies adopted herein and further lists the specific research methods used for data collection. The second part of this chapter provides profiles of research participants whom I interviewed and have in the focus group discussions (FGDs). The chapter closes with a discussion on the approach used for data analysis, and experiences during field work.

Chapter 4 opens with an overview of respondents' understanding of 'engagement', followed by highlights on the key themes gathered against each of the research questions. This chapter provides a brief overview of the major themes noted throughout the research process and includes how different themes and sub-themes progressed during data collection.

Across Chapters 5 to 8, details of analysis based on the data are given according to each research question. First, Chapter 5 discusses the policies in Bangladesh that respondents believed to enable beneficiary engagement within the development process. Key arguments include how GOs and NGOs transfer these provisions of engaging in development planning into implementation of beneficiary engagement practices.

Chapter 6 includes analysis on the practices that both GOs and NGOs apply during project management to inspire public interest. This chapter argues that engagement is project focused and need based subject to service delivery and beneficiary understanding of development benefits. These are the key factors for engaging than it is for their participation in decision-making or having their 'say' in the development process.

Chapter 7 analyses the comparative advantages and limitations of GO-NGO practices, which affects beneficiary engagement in the development context of Bangladesh. The chapter concludes that both GOs and NGOs have advantages and limitations in engaging beneficiaries; one entity utilises the advantages of the other when it is required for beneficiary engagement.

Analysis in chapter 8 then reveals existing partnerships between both entities aimed at engaging project beneficiaries, as well as emergent opportunities and challenges impacting their bond and improve local involvement. Coordination between GOs and NGOs is a desired condition while complementarity of the relationship seems to be instrumental to continue partnership in enhancing beneficiary engagement as argued in this chapter.

Chapter 9 presents key findings and the contributions of this research to the existing discourse of development and organisational involvement in engaging beneficiaries. Based on key findings it makes recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2. Review of literature relevant to the research study

This chapter maps out the theoretical and conceptual advancements in research relative to the concept of engaging beneficiaries in development. This concerns the people involved in that process; various factors of engaging them; the relationship between international strategies and engagement at national and local levels; and the different organisational roles that GOs and NGOs play, which affect beneficiary engagement in the development process. Moreover, this chapter focuses on conceptual advancements in the development literature; understanding GO-NGO roles in carrying out development (while involving beneficiaries along the way); and the research relevance to the local context of Bangladesh. Figure 2.1 illustrates a gradual progress of the literature review.

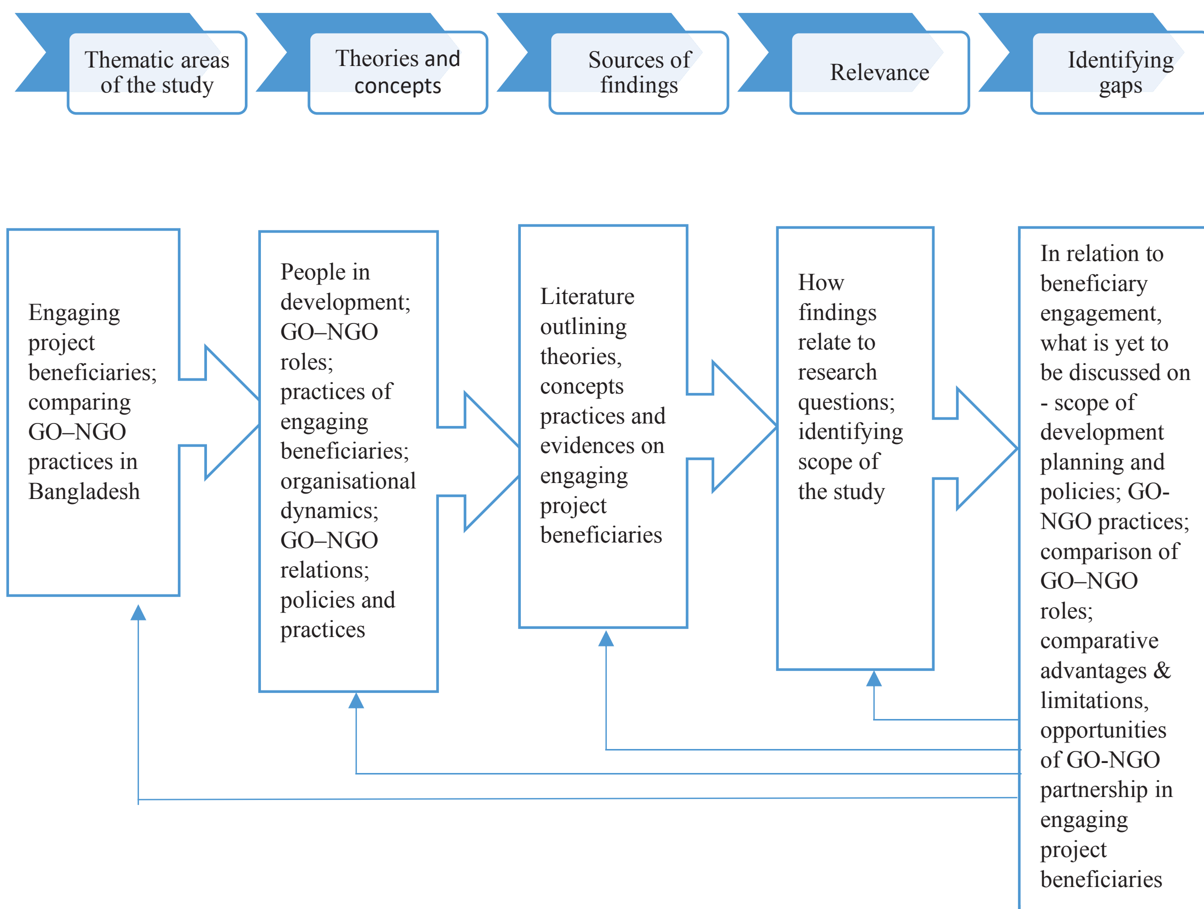


Figure 2.1. Outline of the literature review

In essence, this chapter aims to critically examine the theories and conceptual underpinnings of relevant literature on integrating people in development. This provides background for the study, identifies gaps in the research domain and demonstrates how the thesis builds on and extends existing work in the field. Understanding the concept and its relation to people and the State, while acknowledging the engagement strategies that State and non-State actors adopt at both global and national levels, together builds a coherent and effective research investigation relevant to this study. In line with the aims of this study (see Section 1.2), key literature that defines the organisational roles, strategies and functions progressed towards inclusion in development are analysed herein. This is done to establish comparative understanding of policies and practices, experiences that GOs and NGOs typically employ to address beneficiary

engagement in the development process. Overall, the research attempts to pinpoint the conditioning factors relevant to uncovering the strategies, advantages and limitations that both sectors experience when involving people in the country's development.

I have organised the logical flow of discussion identified throughout the literature review, gradually narrowing the focus to suit the research context. The remainder of the review presents the research findings. Figure 2.2 is a graphical representation of how Chapter 2 is sequenced.

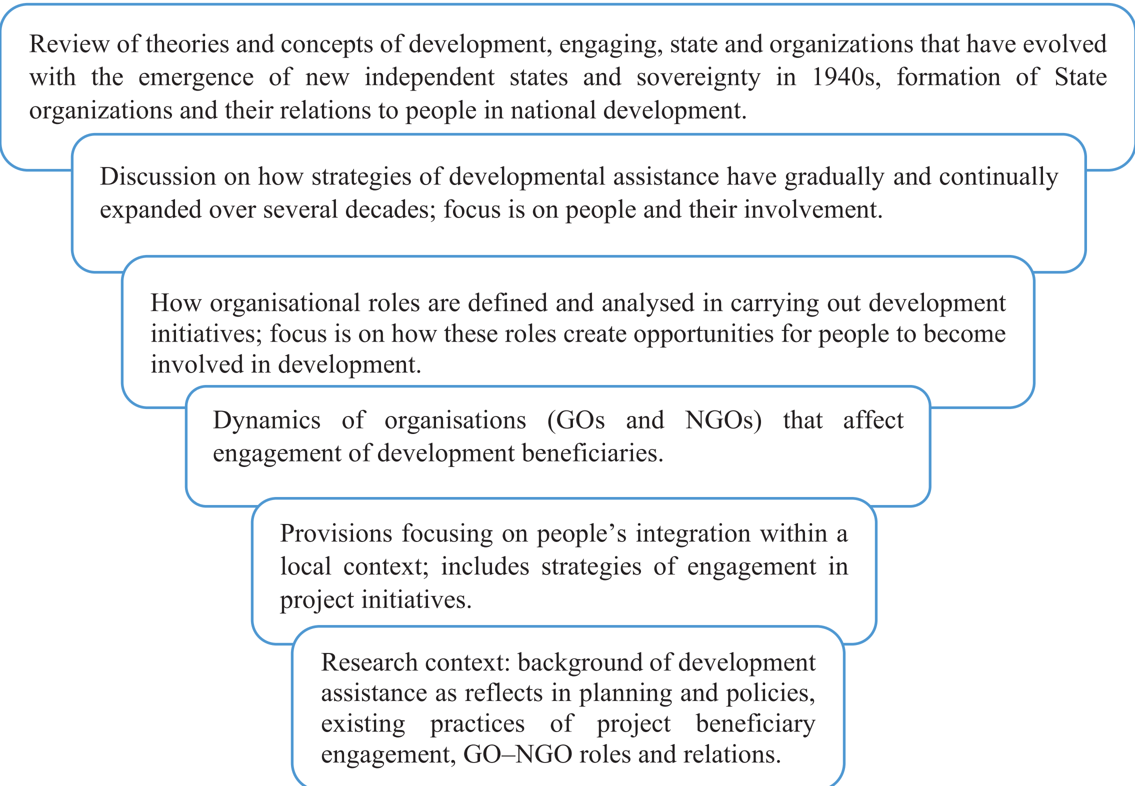


Figure 2.2. Organisation of the literature review

2.1. State, development and organisations: how each links to beneficiary engagement

This section aims to identify how people are integrated into development discussions, and their relation to the State and its agencies operating within both national boundaries and local contexts. Foremost, Kothari and Minouge (2002, p. 1) frame development as a 'paradox'. More

explicitly defined in Rist (2007), this paradox can be explained as a combination of 'undeniable success' and 'undeniable failures' set to improve a specific condition (e.g., poverty). Conversely, Spivak (1999, p. 366) argued, within the context of postcolonial development, that tradition and modernity offer a general justification for 'development' in the name of civilising (i.e., modernising and/or democratising) new imperialism. In this view, Kothari and Minogue (2002, p. 12) further defined development as 'an idea, an objective and an activity', with related questions 'for whom and whose development' (and what activities) are included. To this, Rist (2007, p. 488) suggested that development should be defined as 'actual social practices and their consequences', which anyone can identify. Using these characterisations, the purpose is to demonstrate how beneficiary engagement has evolved in development discussions and been integrated into national planning and policies. Here, too, sees where organisations like GOs and NGOs become essential actors for their assimilation in the development field.

2.1.1. Engaging and its relation to state and development

Lukensmeyer and Torres (2006, pp. 7, 9) distinguished 'citizen engagement' from 'citizen participation' and defined 'engagement' as working directly with people throughout a 'process' to understand their 'concerns and aspirations', which are 'consistently understood and considered' in institutional decision-making. They added that in whatever form people are engaged, the purpose is to 'recognize and build upon a fundamental right of all citizens to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives'. In identifying problems of participation and suggesting ways to 'remake' participation, Eversole (2010) explained participation as an attempt at engaging others in decision-making, noting its eventual management and funding subject to organisational control. Thus, 'engagement' can be viewed as a process that encourages participation, but one that requires equal facilitation from professional and resource support (Eversole 2010). In exploring citizenship, participation and accountability, Gaventa

(2002, p. 1) further argued that while individual participation and institutional accountability are considered to minimise the gap between the entities, they also question 'how citizens engage and make demands on the State'. To this, Narayanan et al. (2015, p. 618) argue that involving people is not a single activity in government or non-government sectors, but a combination of various approaches, strategies and factors to overcome different challenges, local cultures and institutional abilities responsible for total engagement. This demonstrates that the concept of beneficiary engagement is rooted in the discussion on people (citizens and beneficiaries) and the State (and its agencies responsible to provide services) they reside in.

Most development literature in the 1970s examined concepts on the emergent State, its agencies (such as bureaucracy) and the military after the end of colonisation. In Alavi's (1972) study on the 'State' in postcolonial society, both military and civil service were notably prominent in emerging regions like Pakistan and subordinating the common people. In later examining Alavi's (1972) work, Leys (1976) added that development benefits in States abandoning colonial rule were directed to government-led initiatives such as civil services and the military. Thus, the concept of involving people in State functions has not always been of primary focus in these emergent sectors, as demonstrated by the early literature. To this, Sadiq (2017) added that emergent States at that time (1940s onwards) were expected to develop functional roles to deliver social services to and improve socio-economic conditions of the marginalised and the poor (Sadiq 2017).

Conversely, developed countries (see Figure 1.1) around the world believed that withdrawal from colonial administration created a vacuum that demanded developmental assistance in the form of financial resources, reconstruction and transfer or export of knowledge on and skills for development—both to emerging States and to countries affected by WWII (Kohli 1986). The most accepted concept of development focused on economic growth after the war

(Campbell and Hoyle 1990, p. 3), but since then it has been associated with economic productivity, technological innovations, market growth, industrialisation and poverty alleviation. More specifically, development was bound to the structural adjustment programs (SAP) 'inflicted' on these newly sovereign States by the WB and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), forcing the 'Third World' to comply with organisational interests (Leal 2007, p. 540). In summary, economic growth, market-led development and aid conditionality meant that underdeveloped countries had to adopt whatever requirements were demanded of them to receive foreign aid and monetary loans.

In recounting a chronological history of developmental assistance, Führer (1996, p. 4) commented it was initiated by the colonial powers, institutions and programs designed for economic cooperation created under the auspices of the UN following WWII. International bodies, treatise and declarations have since determined the policies on developmental assistance for underdeveloped countries after the establishment of the WB and IMF. Circling back, De Long and Eichengreen (1991) noted that the Marshall Plan contributed to the reconstruction of Western Europe, which not only generated economic growth but also enhanced 'industrialised democracy'—a term used in industrial management that implies employee participation in decision-making processes. Emergence of the 'State' and its organisations, as well as the new-found focus to deliver services to people since the 1940s, encouraged scholars and researchers in the development field to pinpoint the processes, structures and interventions (including the role of non-State actors) expecting to take the benefits of development to the people.

Indeed, most of this discourse persisted throughout the following decades up to now. Gradually, it became clear that systematic processes and organisational intervention (identified among various development theories and concepts) were essential to improve socio-economic conditions in a given State (Campbell and Hoyle 1990; Hickey and Mohan 2004; Kohli 1986;

Leal 2007). Thus, State functions have not been limited to service provisions only but have expanded and enabled people to reflect on the requirements involved. This strategy further actuated individual responsibilities for one's own benefit by and through heightened involvement in the development process.

Addressing the need for improvement through systematic process and organisational interventions, the concept of an 'underdeveloped' or 'poor' country was at the centre of all development discourse, drawing the West's attention and resultant aim to provide foreign aid. The following table provides a chronology of some of these initiatives, development focus and orientation to people.

Table 2.1. Development initiatives and focus on people (1940s to date)

International initiatives	Development focus and people orientation
UN Charter 1945	Social progress for people; better standards of life, fundamental freedoms; excludes 'distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion'
Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1948	Universal protection of fundamental human rights, entitlement of rights and freedom
Economic development in 1950s	Assistance to underdeveloped countries in the South and South East Asian countries
Formation of DAG, DAC, OECD in 1960s	Consultation among donors and assistance to less developed countries; private investment in developing countries;
Common Aid Effort in 1961	Improving people's standard of life; assist less developed countries to improve economy
Establishment of ODA 1970	Economic and social development of developing countries
Development Cooperation in 1970s	Poverty reduction agenda; rural development;
Aid Coordination in 1980s	Effectiveness of aid provided to developing countries; structural adjustment; policy making in aid recipient countries; project appraisal comprising identification, selection, design, monitoring and evaluation
Development cooperation in 1990s	People's participation in the development process; democratic government, market and private sector development
Millennium Development Goals in 2000	Governments, international community, civil society and private sector working together to achieve development goals centred on people and their development.
Sustainable Development Goals in 2015	Peace and prosperity for people and the planet

Source: adapted from Führer (1996), UN and UNDP websites on MDGs and SDGs.

This chronology of development and its orientation towards people shows how the concept's advancement increasingly spotlights the State and its people, with different approaches undergoing constant experimentation to transform theory into practice. Hickey and Mohan (2004) provide a timeline of the different methods used across history to increase local participation in development. Notably, approaches to community progress cover the period between the 1940s and 1970s. Thereafter, concepts born in the 1980s hinged on empowering people to raise their voice and ensure that 'bottom-up' development activities reflected local participation and knowledge (Chambers 1984, Chambers 1987). Within the context of rural development, Chambers (1994) similarly advocated for integrating people and utilising their knowledge in planning development, rather than imposing knowledge from outside. This follows people's rights to involvement in development through increased self-help movements in the 1990s, in addition to approaches that promote partnership, decentralisation and methods of greater individual inclusion, which have continued to date (Hickey and Mohan 2004, pp. 6–8).

Before, the 1970s focused on securing basic human needs by eliminating (or at least attempting to reduce) poverty to ensure food, shelter, health, nutrition, literacy, security, safety and integrated rural development (Leal 2007). The following decade saw the rise of neoliberalism, which framed the public sector as inefficient, recognised the marketplace as promoting development, and deemed NGOs more competent in service delivery. The movement focused on promoting a sense of participatory development, which continued into the 1990s, joining factors of increased capacity development, human rights, improved governance and poverty alleviation (Leal 2007, p. 540). This gradual expansion of concepts and approaches on development relative to the people generated further discussion on whether such growth was meant for them, or whether it was merely another form of colonial influence forcing underdeveloped countries' dependence on developed nations.

2.1.2. People-centred development discourse

Reflecting on development in the West for countries below the thresholds of income, economy and development (as standardised by the UN and OECD glossary) opened up debates concerning Third World dependency on the First. This thought suggests that the former is expected to follow the latter's lead due to their comparatively overwhelming economic power and political influence. However, according to dependence theory, 'economic growth in the advanced industrialized countries did not necessarily lead to growth in the poorer countries' (Hadley 1996); rather, resources flow from underdeveloped to developed and wealthy countries in the West. Willis (2011, p. 79) imagined a structure that outlines the dependency of peripheral entities (i.e., recipients of development assistance) on core entities (i.e., providers of development assistance), signifying how citizens come to depend on national institutions such as the government for public services, which (in turn) depend on foreign donors for aid. In this way, State resources flow from peripheral, to national to international organisations (Willis 2011).

This also creates dependence on foreign markets for investment and economic growth in underdeveloped countries (Dos Santos 1970). This further creates direct dependence, which affects development and results in exploitation, structural distortion and suppression of autonomous policies (Chase-Dunn 1975, pp. 721, 722). Smith (1986, p. 28) deemed this circumstance as reflective of underdeveloped dependency on developed nations' aid, where reliance eventually manifests in policymaking and domestic rule begins to reflect foreign interests (Kentor and Boswell 2003). In brief, dependency begins with colonisation, which tends to neglect social, political and cultural difference as Javier (2010) described in the context of Latin America.

Escobar (2010, pp. 36, 39) argued that the colonisation of development instigates a decline in traditional social life (from a local context) to one wholly determined by external force (i.e., donors or international organisations)—equally blind to the colonial difference and subordination of the knowledge and cultural systems involved. Similar arguments are found in Mohanty (2003, p. 59), who notes that development under colonial rule typically defines States and citizens of occupied countries as 'incapable of self-government' and, thus, desperate for improvement to transition in social status.

These criticisms of colonisation and dependency gives rise to the concept of 'decolonised' development on the basis that difference should be taken into account and duly address local context, as well as value local actions. In this regard, 'decolonisation' is further defined as a 'self-reflexive collective practice in the transformation of the self, reconceptualization of identity and political mobilization'—all of which Mohanty (2003, p. 8) deemed necessary in spurring the process. Further noted, the concept involves engagement both with everyday issues and various social groups, as 'premised on ideas of autonomy and self-determination' [as well as] democratic practice' (Mohanty 2003, p. 254). Similar arguments were given in Sabaratnam (2017, cited in Buba 2019), who outlined a need to decolonise development assistance and engage more with the targets (i.e., the people, or beneficiaries of development) by considering the reality of their conditions.

Indeed, 'development' implies improvements in social indicators and includes the roles of people to enhance 'self-esteem', as well as the ability to make 'choices for the future'—further deemed the 'human side of development' supposedly missing from the concept of economic growth (Campbell and Hoyle 1990, pp. 6–7). The notion of 'progress-based development' that emerged in the 1960s could neither provide any solution to alleviate poverty, but instead raised disillusionment among theorists and practitioners, leading to the concept of developmental aid

for the rural poor (Shams 1990, p. 222). The International Labour Organization, UNDP and the WB played vital roles in emphasising the 'urgent and necessary' need to directly target the globe's more disadvantaged regions (Riddell 2007, p. 32). Hence, resolve to address the 'human side' of development added a new dimension to the concept, which was certainly nurtured at organisations funnelling developmental aid to underdeveloped countries. To address this 'human side', development approaches had to shift their focus towards integrating rural development that meets the 'human' needs of even the poorest of groups. This extends to providing access to social services such as health, education, nutrition, family planning and employee productivity, instead of purely economic growth (Rondinelli 1986, pp. 112–113).

Thus development discourse had a shift to community participation to address the human side of development. Notably, in reviewing experiences of WB projects with community participation, Paul (1987) identified that the WB mainstreamed public engagement in 38% of its projects, with the objective of having beneficiaries influence project implementation through empowerment, capacity-building and cost-sharing. Chambers (1984, p. 12) argued in favour of 'putting people first', taking community-based development and combining professionalism with the endogenous knowledge rural people possess. Illustrating how the concept of beneficiary participation emerged and the philosophy of 'people-based' development, Oakley and Marsden (1984, pp. 11, 25, 28) maintained that organisational structures can provide rural people avenues of 'contact with and voice in development programs' necessary to mobilise and empower them to 'determine which needs, and whose needs will be met through the distribution of resources'. Overall, development discussions have long advocated for a 'people-centred' approach, significantly 'dominating development thinking in the 1970s' (Cohen and Uphoff 1980, p. 213). This concept of putting people at the centre of discourse also led to questions of whose voice counts and where the responsibility lies in bringing change—from economic growth to community participation (Holland and Blackburn 1998). In analysing community

involvement, the development literature typically prioritises locals to minimise the ‘mismatch’ between community perceptions and practices, as well as outsider policies (Gujja, Pimbert and Shah 1998, p. 60). Participation also centres on the need for change at an organisational level. Notably, this regards involvement of GOs and NGOs in facilitating the input and influence of donors to ‘stimulate’ the government to include participation in development planning (Gaventa 1998; Mascarenhas 1998; Thompson 1998).

While development has been associated with people, scholars in the field have identified the concept as a new form of control under the broader spheres of neo-colonialism (Andreason 2005; Bose 1997; Cooper 1997; Crush 1995; Spivak 1999). Across the discourse, regardless of form or extent to which it is viewed as colonial imperialism, the concept experiences institutional and conceptual influence from various development organisations, ranging from UN agencies, WB papers on participation and NGOs spanning the 1980s and 1990s (Hickey and Mohan 2004, p. 7). Spivak (1999) identified the influence of colonialism on interpreting development in all scopes of life. As found, it is through the ‘financialization of the globe’ that development concepts and terminologies keep evolving, where colonialism in the direst sense disguises new imperialist forms of exploitation as development (Spivak 1999, pp. 200, 371). Bose (1997) and Cooper (1997) held similar views, in that each perceived development interventions as a means to ‘reinvigorate’ colonialism (e.g., national development planning in India or modernising backward bureaucrats and citizens in Africa). In noting developmental failure in Africa, Andreasson (2005) further argued that the problem lies with understanding ‘development’ in the same way that colonial administrators did so the nation’s own people. Continuing with the literature, Crush’s (1995) notion on the colonial influence of development connects it closely with geography, dividing the world between developed countries bursting with resources and systems, and underdeveloped countries lacking capital and desperate for development. Evidently, development has little ‘conviction and coherence’ if it is not related to

geography and further promotes ideas about developed and underdeveloped regions of the world (Crush 1995, p. 550).

'People-oriented' development found new dimension in the work of Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen. His book *Development as Freedom* (1999) establishes connections between the development achieved and the freedom people possess as an outcome of growth. His concept of development as 'freedom' opposes 'unfreedom' in which individuals cannot have or sustain the benefits of development if, for example, they are bound by hunger, encounter child mortality, are deprived of political rights or denied access to social services. According to this understanding of development akin to freedom, various processes and opportunities must be in place for people to take part in their prospective growth which Corbridge (2002) considered the existence of 'geographical space' in linking development and 'freedom'. Essentially, this space will differ by physical location and according to different forms of government, whether authoritative or democratic in nature. The author is further critical of denoting a straightforward relationship between both forms of rule when measuring development as freedom. He found that 'true development' involves the 'active participation of informed human beings in the processes of social change' (Corbridge 2002, p. 191). This concept of linking 'informed' people to development, certainly creates an opportunity to examine the strategies available for engagement in the development process through which they are informed and capable to understand the development benefits in a specific country context.

Together, these findings suggest that people-oriented development differs by context and significantly varies in countries governed under long-term colonial rule. Moving forward, the twenty-first century has since shifted focus on 'sustainability', which advocates the value of development and its ongoing maintenance through improved representation and diversity in class, gender, community and ethnicity. In linking development with long-term sustainability,

Sudhir and Sen (2000, pp. 2030, 2031) emphasised the notion of 'ethical universalism' that demands 'impartiality' and concerns for both future and present generations. Essentially, the authors urged that we understand how merely generating revenue will not ensure 'opportunities' for people to sustainably convert 'the means of income into the ends of good and liveable lives which people have reason to value'. With this, Shiva (2006) reiterated the stake that people have in the process of development. Her concept itself and its relation to the public is based on 'earth democracy', where the global economy should be supportive of local economies and development instead of destruction. Along with the notion of a 'living democracy', Shiva (2006) upholds the power of public influence and individuals' rights to make decisions that preserve local economic activities, rather than buy off State, multinational or corporate marketing strategies. Here, the communal aspect embedded in the concept of 'earth democracy' takes a bottom-up approach. Shiva (2006) prompted further need to preserve people's natural rights to sustain resources as well as protect the world's ecosystems and individual livelihoods by accepting the diversity of nature and the public for 'common good'. Thus, integrating social actors in the development process is in no way akin to abolishing what exists. Rather, this gives people impetus to sustain and enhance what they already have.

Evidently, people have been at the centre of development discussions but their integration into the process has not yet been interpreted. Evolution of 'engagement' as a concept finds itself linked with people's integration into development, progressed over several decades—though backlashed by its connection to Western influence since 1940s to date. While criticising these influences, discussion around development theory and practice continues to ruminate on how human inclusion should (and could) be addressed in different settings and according to different organisations, processes and systems. Further review explores both the State and non-State organisations, concepts and functions most critical in the theoretically defined people-centred approach to development.

2.1.3. Government, neoliberalism, NGOs and engaging

In carrying out development activities within specific contexts, individual States require organisations to plan and implement strategies to mobilise people and address individual demands. Government is a major institution that independent States inherit from their colonial upbringing (typically in the form of public services) and has been considered one key indicator of national success or failure (Campbell 1990, p. 148). The absence of a private sector (or perhaps non-State actors) means a government can place itself in a position of 'supreme power'. Bureaucratic in nature, these administrations answer to top management for their functions (including both implementing and managing development activities) and tend to fulfil policymakers' or political leaders' demands first (Lange 2004; May, Workman and Jones 2008). These aspects make administration either rules or procedure based which is the direct inverse of people-oriented government (Jamil 2002, p. 94). In view of this, a State has its agencies to exercise centralised power and control through which it can dominate and transform its leaders' ideologies (Gortner, Nichols and Ball 2007, Kohli 1986). This demonstrates that people-oriented approach towards development are limited by government function unless policies are driven by this concept. Again, this also raises questions on whether its progression over centuries has any influence on how (or the extent to which) governments in developing or underdeveloped countries better focus on individuals, or whether the concept has the opposite effect, in that people-oriented development cannot be practiced within the rules, procedures, authority and legitimacy of government administration. Finding solutions certainly requires more country-specific investigation which this research study aims at.

Despite focusing on the rules, procedures, authority and legitimacy of government functions, dependence on administrative power has increased in the process of implementing development activities within States granted independence from colonial rule (Maheshwari 1990). Gaventa

(1998, p. 161) argued that institutions practising standardised, bureaucratic procedures often hinder flexible or innovative practices, making institutional change in that circumstance critical to ensure participation at a large scale. Given the centralised and authoritative characteristics specific to the bureaucratic nature of government, the literature often criticises how any organisation with a centralised structure can address people in its development functions. For example, emerging as a ‘nation-State’ following a long period of development under colonial rule, it is seemingly ‘apt’ for India (or many other similar States) to consider ‘extra responsibility’ for agencies of development to address nation-building and to face challenges of Statehood and development (Maheshwari 1990, p. 58). This ‘extra responsibility’ has proved critical, particularly because the public sector is so big but likewise inefficient to address the needs of a growing population. Thus, there is dire need for both competent and effective public services, capable of achieving a country’s development goals (Hoyle 1990, p. 161).

Osborne and Gaebler (1991) demonstrated how rule-based, non-responsive centralised governments in US states led to reform driven by leadership-based, customer-oriented and market-led approaches upheld in government functions. However, when it comes to involving people in development, it is important to consider the supply of public services; hence, the concept of ‘representative’ public functions emerges. Debate now turns to the need for expanding government roles to alleviate poverty, deliver basic human services and to reduce the dissatisfaction of bureaucratic methods and performance. To this, Osborne and Gaebler (1991) argued that government is not static but can be reinvented. Though their concepts of reform are based in a First World context (i.e., from a US perspective), the principles of reinvention (i.e., its catalytic role, community ownership, competitive services, missions, results, customer orientation, entrepreneurship, anticipatory approach involved, decentralisation and market orientation) have been addressed in defining government administration in developing countries as well.

Against this backdrop is the rise of New Public Management (NPM), which emerged from the shadow of neoliberalism to minimise the gaps between the State, non-State actors and people. Steger and Roy (2010, pp. 11, 21) defined neoliberalism as a manifestation of ideology, a mode of governance and a policy package, which has led a campaign against 'big government' and was reflected in the policies and programs of Western countries in the 1980s. Influenced by the notion, Boston (2011, pp. 18–19) noted that concepts of development too experienced similar shifts in the 1980s, emphasising less on government and more on markets. According to Apeldoorn and Overbeek (2012, p. 5), this concept is characterised by 'pro-market and supply-side discourses', including privatisation, competitiveness and budgetary constraints. Triggered by neoliberalism, the NPM added a new dimension to bureaucracy by shifting central control to privatisation, commercialisation and State-expenditure reduction in the 1990s. Focusing on the demands of the people, concepts of self-interest and delegating government functions to non-government sectors (as suggested by the public and stimulated by various agency theories) also contributed to the NPM (Boston 2011, p. 20). This style of management and heightened market orientation (within the scope of neoliberalism) brought change in many developed countries, where people became increasingly treated as customers (Jamil 2002). Thus, development discussions were soon composed of three key aspects, spurring what Kothari and Minogue (2002) defined as the 'development triangle'. Comprising State-led, market-led and community-led development, this concept (shown in Figure 2.3) meant that both State and non-State actors were expected to connect people to development for their involvement in the development process.

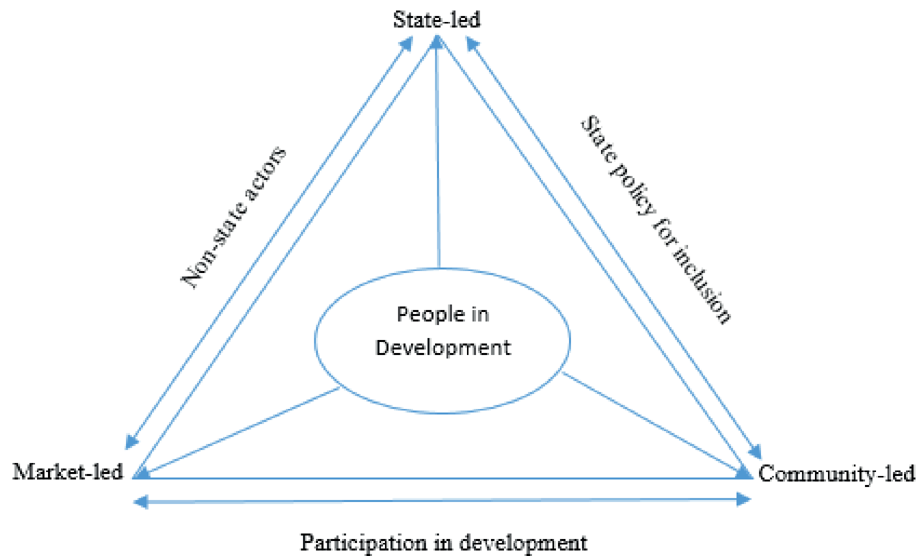


Figure 2.3. People in the 'development triangle'

Source: adapted from Kothari and Minogue (2002).

The development triangle in Figure 2.3 suggests that in transitioning from a State to market led approach to development, non-State actors such as private sectors and NGOs minimise the gap that States must fill in delivering different services *en masse*. Concurrently, the State needs to incorporate communities in its policies and practices so that participation can take place. In this triangular formation, all approaches of State-led, market-led and community-led development are interrelated and geared towards service delivery to people.

Discussions on citizen participation in public decision-making are forefront in people-centred development, as, according to NPM logic, the public sector is expected to respond to the people's demands. Roberts (2004) explored individual participation through both democratic and administrative lenses and found that while democratic theory promotes 'engagement' as an integral part of the democratic process and keeps the public institution accountable, administrative theory otherwise demonstrates 'reasons to be cautious about direct citizen participation'. According to the author, 'citizens are the clients in [the] administrative system' for whom the role of administrator includes expertise and professionalism (Roberts 2004, pp.

318, 328). The concept of NPM further advocates for 'good governance' in its neoliberal grounding. Primarily, it is expected to reduce the role of government and public organisations and aims at 'achieving a wide range of desired outcomes beyond those provided by the State' (Zafarullah and Huque 2001, p. 1380). For Osborne and Gaebler (1991, p. 24), 'governance' is also a process of making collective decisions to solve problems and to meet societal needs. For Weiss (2000, p. 795), governance is instead associated with a system of national administration, citing the Commission on Global Governance's definition, which incorporates the various ways that individuals and institutions (both public and private) manage common affairs. Evidently, whether 'good' or 'bad', governance is measured against its performance and results in practice (Rotberg 2014).

Thus, to achieve 'good' developmental governance with people at the centre, the literature on organisations and their roles in engaging individuals to partake has mostly advocated for the emergence of non-State actors such as NGOs. For this, further work on these institutions is needed but inevitably requires analysis within the context of development (see Agbola 1994; Edwards and Hulme 1996; Makuwira 2014, p. 20; Powell and Seddon 1997; Thompson 1998). Increasing popularity of public involvement within State, government and aid agencies has, in part, given rise to NGOs, which are commonly considered as 'vehicles' of democratisation, protecting human rights, ensuring communication and participation, providing training and promoting 'pluralism' (Edwards and Hulme 1996, p. 2). As shown in Figure 2.4, Makuwira (2014) referred to four theoretical bases upon which NGOs are defined.

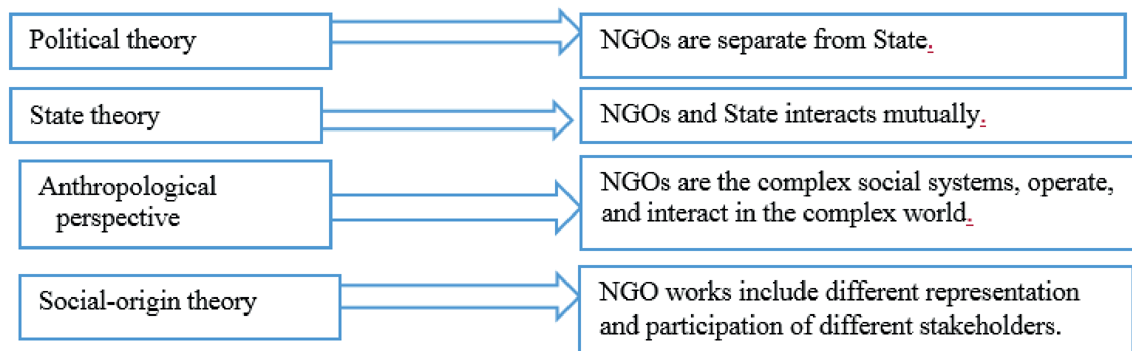


Figure 2.4. Theoretical bases for NGOs

Source: adapted from Makuwira (2014).

Makuwira (2014, p. 20) further mentioned that one cannot attempt to study non-government agents without first analysing them as organisations operating within the context of development. In identifying whether NGOs can make any difference in development interventions, Bebbington, Hickey and Mitlin (2008, pp. 5, 15) mentioned that such a focus inevitably changes their role in nation-building. The concept of contributing to policy process by civil society organizations as outlined in Pollard and Court (2008, pp. 135, 149), it can be said that NGOs do attempt to influence policy, but their involvement in national policymaking demands that they first obtain access; indeed, this depends on how the State decides to accommodate non-State actors to actively participate in policy-related processes. NGOs are generally viewed as alternative pathways to arrange development, whether by providing microfinancing opportunities, project planning and/or service-delivery options (Bebbington, Hickey and Mitlin 2008). However, as Edwards (2008) notes, their role can be affected by donor influence. Referring to findings from the Manchester Conference in 2005, the author concluded that 'NGO capacity to attract support and their legitimacy as a development actor is subject to their ability to demonstrate that they can perform effectively and are accountable for their actions' (Edwards 2008, p. 42).

The specific social and economic conditions in the 1980s created the space for NGOs to grow. Korten (1987, pp. 145–146) identified the 'persistence of poverty' and 'declining availability of fund[ing]' as the dominant drives of 1980s' development. Demanding more 'people-centred' approaches, NGOs appeared to be least burdened by institutional constraints. The most obvious reasons , included democratisation during the 1990s, a concept that embraces free markets and private initiatives and more specifically, attempts to provide welfare services and accessibility to poorer or hard-to-reach communities where the government often lacks adequate resources to ensure wide coverage (Hulme and Edwards 1997, pp. 6–7). Charlton and May (1995, pp. 237–238) identified additional grounds that led NGOs to expand their development activity throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Among them, they cited an ability to provide solutions to community development and service delivery, and the capacity to include people's voices in the development process.

The growth of NGOs in South Asian countries, in particular, were promoted as an alternative to State provision to supplement what Batley and Rose (2011, p. 232) called 'weak public services' and the 'decline of support for State-led development' during the 1980s and 1990s. In addition to efficient service delivery, which was otherwise limited within government administration, other views include poverty alleviation and economic growth through NGOs, increased preference from donors funding poverty alleviation programs in underdeveloped countries and NGOs' 'grassroots-oriented alternative' to centralised public sector and 'inefficient government' (Rahman 2006, p. 451). Evidently, non-government sectors flourished in the South at a national level and 'outnumbered' international NGOs expanded in the North (see Charlton and May 1995, p. 237; Haque 2002, p. 412).

Evidently, NGOs have emerged for national development amid conditions in which critics and theorists have long considered GOs otherwise inadequate to meet the requirements of people-

focused growth. This view also supports the progression of the NPM, developed within the concept of neoliberalism and likewise expected to deliver more efficiency than centralised and non-responsive public functions. Both NPM and NGO expansions see 'people' and 'citizens' within the State remain at the centre of conceptualising development, delivering services and involving them in development activities (see figure 2.4). However, despite these arguments in support of neoliberalism, there are counterarguments that critically examine each notion relative to the people and the development avenues specified by context.

Treating citizens as 'clients' to administration within NPM-based neoliberal rule sees developing countries with colonial pasts often struggle to overcome attitudes typically characterised by centralised and regulatory control (Hakim 1987; Jahan 2006; Jamil 2002, p. 95; Lange 2004). This form of management also needs to consider the cultural environment in which it is adopted, as it may be subject to specific organisational and sociocultural norms. To this, Verhoest (2011, p. 59) argues that in reality, the political, social and administrative frameworks of a given country will determine the adoption and subsequent function of these concepts in practice—which is particularly challenging for a not-so 'culture-neutral' concept like NPM. Since organisations neither operate in isolation, these factors are 'embedded' in a social sphere that primarily shapes the relationship between themselves and their 'clients' or citizens (Cleaver 2004, p. 271).

Development literature also questioned linking people to development in terms of the nature of national democracy and the skills and strategies that States possess to achieve the objectives of participation (Gaventa 2004, p. 25). Inviting any form of change to an existing system is also subject to context and further determined by how it is planned and applied, as well as the way in which a State responds to its citizens' needs—thus, equally demonstrating the attitude of government agencies towards people (Fowler 1997, p. 11). Against this backdrop, it is critical

to understand the extent to which both GOs and NGOs address the need to engage people in development. It is equally important to identify the local contexts that might affect their engagement (if any) in these organisational settings.

2.1.4. Factors that favour change for engagement

With the advancement of people-centred concepts (mentioned in section 2.1.3), government functions typically endeavour to transform from centralised and non-client-focused administrations to people-oriented entities that function and undertake strategies analogous to the NPM. Literature in this area has outlined key factors suggesting why government functions do not remain static. Earlier, Osborne and Gaebler (1991, pp. 23, 24) addressed centralised, non-responsive bureaucratic administrations as 'wrong government' that demands policy reform, additional practices of restructuring, and reformation of both economic and political systems to deliver more public services to people. Notably, Thompson (1998, pp. 109–110) identified four reasons that bureaucratic governments start to facilitate change. These include the need for 'good' governance to reduce poverty and enhance markets; donors' preference for public participation to distribute grants (including non-tax and non-repayable funds for NGOs or government projects); governments' inability to address region-specific demands; and the success of NGOs encouraging governments to involve people in development.

All these features create 'competitive pressure' for governments to facilitate specific needs and to deliver quality services *en masse*, inviting subsequent change within an organisation. Whether public or private, or spurred by NGOs, this pressure helps to inspire 'organizational efficiency and competitive success' (Newman 2011, pp. 350–351). Hence, Hickey and Mohan (2004, p. 13) argued that if organisational change can appropriately address the objectives of individual participation in development, this could effectively transform existing practices of development as well as organisational relations to people, while addressing any gaps in terms

of capacity. People-centred development has advanced in terms of participation, but comparatively lags in engagement. For this, discussions on participation must move beyond the State and identify whether the extent to which citizen engagement can transform development if it instead transpires within an organisation (Gaventa 2004). The concept of engagement remains at the centre because, as Shiva (2006), Sen (1999) and Sudhir and Sen (2000) argue, people must be able to value their participation and understand why they are participating. Enhancing people's understanding require their engagement and most importantly, 'citizens of a community are "engaged" when they play an effective role in decision-making' (Bassler et al. 2008, p. 3). To this extent, engaging people in development also requires organisational setting that helps people engaged with enhanced understanding of the development interventions.

2.1.5. Decentralisation, ICT and engaging beneficiaries

Conceptual advancements in public integration have generated much discussion on decentralisation, as associated with people's participation and rural development (Conyers 1983; Ingham and Kalam 1992). Conyers (1984, p. 187) provided a thorough review of the literature on decentralisation, stating that the concept broadly covers two aspects: decentralisation of government departments at the sub-national level, and decentralisation as a tool for development. Importantly, decentralisation is considered as only a 'partial solution' to many existing problems in developing countries, which 'emerged as a response to dissatisfaction with centralized planning and administrative structures' (Ingham and Kalam 1992, pp. 373, 374). Mohan and Stokke (2000) elaborated on the concept, connecting it to administration, delegation of decision-making authorities to semi-autonomous organisations, devolution of authority, and transfer of functions from central to local government or NGOs. In examining local-level decision-making and citizen participation, Devas and Grant (2003) noted

that decentralisation, service delivery, resource utilisation and involving locals in decision-making at a grassroots level remain central to engaging communities in effective development. Other benefits of decentralisation include reducing the role of government (a key argument of neoliberalism), making government functions more efficient, and minimising local conflict and political tension (Bardhan 2002, p. 185).

Local government institutions are further expected to address the needs and priorities of the people, as citizens are responsible for electing their local government representatives (Uphoff 2014). The author observed local input in association with local government and service providers at the field level in many ways, including local resource mobilisation, local knowledge, local participation in decision-making, consensus in the community and compliance due to organisational legitimacy. Providing authority to these base-level institutions for service delivery and accomplishing administrative responsibilities at the field level together determines the success of decentralisation and 'the notion of participation in state decision making' (Mohan and Stokke 2000, p. 251). However, the extent to which decentralisation is actually capable of delivering services and making decisions through participation may vary in different countries and political contexts (Conyers 1984).

Literature on decentralisation is also critical of its practical applications in ensuring public inclusion. Determinants like the extent of political commitment, institutional reform, financial management and delegation policies between central and local governments, as well as the capacity of the latter to manage their finances (among the interplay of various power structures), have significant influence on 'the outcome of decentralisation programs' (Ingham and Kalam 1992, Devas and Grant 2003, p. 308). Dillinger (1994) too framed decentralisation as a 'fortuitous phenomenon', particularly because government strategies, policies, political power

and intergovernmental relations ultimately determine the extent that institutions and service delivery are decentralised.

Uphoff (2014, p. 11) mentioned that the process of engaging communities as well as realising and communicating their needs to higher authorities requires a consultative and problem-solving approach facilitated by skilled persons. In further citing research on locally implemented development projects, Bardhan (2002, p. 189) argued that technical and administrative capacity in decentralised or local institutions are key but can significantly vary in developing countries. Mohan and Stokke (2000, p. 249) similarly found that decentralisation is not without its drawbacks. Although it is difficult to deny the fact that power relations also exist at the local level, excess emphasis on local development implies that 'local social inequalities and power relations are downplayed' (Mohan and Stokke 2000, p. 249). Engaging communities and participation in this sense too requires educative processes for local people to understand sustainable development and inter-organisational support, where government cooperation should be 'clearly articulated' in formal policy (Cuthill 2002, p. 81). This view suggests that like NGOs and both government ministries and departments at a central level, the capacity for local governments to engage public interest is equally critical.

While development discourse emphasises the need for decentralisation to reach local communities and to bridge services closer to people, recent literature has highlighted the need for information and communications technology (ICT) for development (ICT4D). Discourse inevitably turns to how the internet can be used for international development efforts (Heeks 2008; Smith, Elder and Emdon 2011). Essentially, the key objective of ICT4D is to 'open development' in relation to such concepts as democracy, participation and inclusion (Smith, Elder and Emdon 2011, p. iii). ICT is not solely focused on the internet but involves digital devices and understanding the extent to which disadvantaged people or development

beneficiaries have access to technology. Here, Heeks (2008) argued that it is more important to relate ICT4D to contexts in which people seek greater resources such as mobile phones. Thus, the concept invites people to think about what can be achieved through ‘calls and SMS’ rather than pushing more generalised forms of technology (Heeks 2008, p. 28). More specifically, in identifying the use of ICT4D in land record management in India, Prakash and De (2007, p. 263) concluded that its potential affect is subject to how different people in different places understand what development is and ‘how technology fits into their overall scheme of things’. Moreover, Harris (2016) deemed technological integration into development necessary to discover how the concept and its practical application can physically benefit disadvantaged communities. This is reflected across the literature, which finds ICT4D an essential component in connecting technology with people; however, identifying whether beneficiaries are becoming engaged through its various capabilities in specific countries, or how ICT4D is integrated into both GO and NGO practices of beneficiary engagement, together creates scope for further research.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that factors such as national context, level of local power, access to ICT and extent of service provisions are equally critical in decentralising administrative power and involving people in local development. The literature does not confirm any specific institution, condition or context to address in this setting. However, such bodies as government administration, NGOs and local government involved in different phases of development are considered responsible for including people and enhancing public engagement at the local level. Thus, the crucial factor here is to recognise the comparative contexts in which various agents leverage and influence against one other in engaging beneficiaries of development.

2.1.6. Engagement and organisational leverage: role of GOs and NGOs

According to the existing literature, both GOs and NGOs are expected to play significant roles in mainstreaming the involvement of citizens in development. Indeed, Constitutional provisions and State law guide the responsible and legitimate function of government agents (Gortner, Nichols and Ball 2007, p. 25). However, as States are equally responsible and accountable to its citizens in democratic settings, development policies and functions must remain people-oriented and less authoritative. To overcome this aspect of government, reformation is required to make GOs more 'compatible' with people-oriented administration (Mathur 1990, p. 197).

The role of government in bringing people closer to development has been perceived as an impossibility. This is because drastic change to government structure to reduce in size and to increase goal-oriented efficiency is not possible or hardly exists (Hoyle 1990; Mathur 1990). However, the role of government has since been redefined. Now, it is increasingly necessary to establish 'synergy' and 'complementarity' between both State and non-State actors and communities to better involve citizens in the development process (Evans 1997). To this, Heller (1997) identified, within the context of Kerala (India), how State interventions recognising the pressure from below (i.e., for greater inclusion) and mobilising in-need communities can establish the synergy needed to introduce structural reform and to build networks of welfare for impoverished people. Ostrom (1997) also provided examples that demonstrate the role of public officials in enhancing high-level citizens' contributions to policy implementation in Brazil. Difficulties in implementing education programs in Nigeria, where public officials instead discouraged public input, were also noted.

Further, Mendoza and Vernis (2008) argued that the role of government is changing within the concept of relational State that 'locates the relations between State, market and civil society' which the authors think missing in the concept of neo-liberalism and NPM. Within development

discourses on whether government can or cannot change to focus on people, NGO leverages to engage people has also been argued. Apart from service delivery and advocacy, NGOs are also involved in 'complex' activities such as conflict resolution, advocacy for democratic processes, protection and advocacy of human rights, and in influencing policymaking on development (Lewis and Opoku-Mensah 2006). In this sense, NGOs are considered 'vehicles' of democratisation in protecting human rights, ensuring communication and participation, providing training opportunities and in promoting 'pluralism' (Werker and Ahmed 2008). Typically, donors will involve NGOs as alternative options to governments to channel funds and, thus, perform development work (Edwards and Hulme 1996; Hulme and Edwards 1997). Their contributions to expanding policy space in developing countries (thus, making participation and human rights work basic principles of development assistance) have certainly been recognised (Edwards 2008).

Riddell (2007, p. 32) described NGO leverages in using donor fund for advocacy, policy influence, participating in UN aid and development conferences contribute to their expansion 'well beyond traditional service sector provision' since 1970s to date. Mitlin, Hickey and Bebbington (2007) provided a conceptual underpinning of NGO expansion over several decades and demonstrated that understanding of NGO roles in development requires understanding of NGO relationship to other actors in the society as well as to State and market. The key investigation in their work is to revisit NGO roles in reality as these organizations belong to the 'battleground of development' and NGOs are not 'very powerful actor' given the rules, local and national actors, donors, being victim of violence and preferences that determine NGO access to information (Bebbington, Hickey and Mitlin 2002). Fowler (1997) suggested NGOs for striking a balance to survive and continue in this competitive environment of development.

That said, NGOs are not above criticism. There is evidence (mainly within the context of developing countries) that questions their accountability to beneficiaries, the means through which they derive power and authority from donors, and how they manage their funds and mobilise people against national policy (Haque 2002; Rahman 2006). Considering how government is often discredited for its bureaucracy, NGOs often seize power from external sources and expand networks at the grassroots level. This is because these organisations implement various development agendas, meaning that accountability often lies with the corresponding donor(s) (Haque 2002, p. 412). Hilhorst (2002) examined the perception of NGO accountability by analysing their role in providing humanitarian assistance. Essentially, the author concluded that the notion in itself is complex and includes a range of factors such as external accountability, accountability to beneficiaries in crisis situations, coordination with multiple stakeholders, access to resources, and protection for organisations and beneficiaries. Forced to deal with multiple forms of responsibility, it is clear that NGOs must face added scrutiny for their actions (Hilhorst 2002). Lewis and Opoku-Mensah (2006, p. 667) mentioned that NGOs are not seen as a mainstream of development in recent time. The authors further added that NGOs were seen as an essential entity to address innovation in poverty reduction in late 1990s though it has now been changed. Bebbington, Hickey and Mitlin (2008) note that NGO dependence on aid, constraints of getting access to policy process, moving away from social movement because of poverty reduction agenda, financial constraints and the recent thrust of war on terrorism put NGOs under pressure.

In summary, concepts of development have critiques who viewed development as neo-colonialism or new imperialism, influence of different political conditions and power relations in different countries. Decentralization, NPM and roles of government and NGOs are concepts that have been identified as means to undertake people-centred development. In drawing a comparative analysis of GO and NGO practices to engage project beneficiaries the above

discussions form the basis for progressing research investigations that I intend to do in this study and contribute to establishing thematic areas in three ways. Hence, in drawing comparison between GO and NGO based practices to engage project beneficiaries, three key themes have emerged to form the basis upon which to progress the research. First, reviewing the theoretical and conceptual expansion of people-centred development and participation encourages analysis on the relationship between people and development to see if this is reflected in development planning and policies within the research context. Second, examining engagement practices identified in the literature helps clarify the organisational roles of both State and non-State actors; basically, each respective body is responsible for transferring engagement policy into practice, and for integrating people into development initiatives. Third, noting examples and research findings in the literature on different countries creates an opportunity to relate organisational leverage, opportunities and challenges involved in beneficiary engagement to the research context.

Overall, these concepts create an opportunity for country-specific investigations that examine the respective roles of GOs and NGOs in engaging beneficiaries of developmental progress. Within the various dimensions of development and organisational discourse spanning several decades, there is impetus to conduct research on how these concepts are progressing and newly relate to people's involvement in development. Part of this means further studying the extent to which these concepts are being addressed by GOs and NGOs in Bangladesh context.

2.2. Assisting development and beneficiary engagement

This section explores whether the concepts highlighted in Section 2.1 facilitate individual-level inclusion and engagement in development practice. While the concept itself has been debated in terms of origin, expansion, intention and orientation to people, it is critical to identify the extent to which these factors stimulate one's involvement in practice. In this view, this section

includes discussions on purpose, attention and practices that address the concept of engaging in people-oriented development within global and local contexts.

2.2.1. Assisting development resides within determinants of 'good' and 'bad'

Literature on developmental assistance relative to foreign aid in underdeveloped or developing countries resides within 'good' and 'bad' determinants. Generally, the latter implies that help is ineffective, and vice versa. This form of discourse has its roots in arguments that foresee the purpose as an integral part of colonial influence. The determining factors for assisting the progression of the Third World commenced with the view that aid from industrialised (or developed) countries will solve crises in food, literacy and economic growth (Weck-Hannemann and Schneider 1988). Alesina and Dollar (2000, p. 37) further explained how aid is strategically related to the conditions of recipient countries. Essentially, they confirmed that the individual share of relief goes to those countries that experienced colonialism throughout the twentieth century. Upon receiving external aid, Third World nations have been caught up in a condition wherein they depend on another 'for some crucial inputs needed to complete' developmental activity (Caporaso 1980, p. 607).

Extensive research by Moss, Petterson and Walle (2006) on African countries demonstrates that dependence on foreign aid affects the bond between the State and its citizens, and tends to make recipient countries less accountable to its people. It has also been argued that excess flow of support to comparatively 'weak' nations hardly allows its political or government institutions to manage aid efficiently, as the State inherits 'independence' through agreements with colonial powers, rather than 'earning it by establishing effective control over [the] population' (Goldsmith 2001, p. 128). In sub-Saharan Africa, all objectivity associated with foreign aid is otherwise lost due to 'instability and conflict', 'poorly conceived projects' and policy formulation swayed by donor influence (Bourguignon and Sundberg 2007, pp. 316, 317).

Examining the effect of foreign aid on a number of African countries, Brautigam and Knack (2004) argued that institutional development to 'tackle the development demands' is limited in countries with colonial pasts; thus, problems of governance and the effect of foreign aid seem to be interrelated in recipient States. Moyo's (2009) examination on why aid is incompatible with Africa ranged from factors of geography, environment, ethnic conflict and weak public institution, to simple lack of strong political presence. One or several of these reasons may burden individual countries within the region, but all revolve around their dependence on aid (Moyo 2009, p. 35). Buba (2019) note that despite being the highest recipients of foreign relief, many African nations remain the poorest in the world. Langan (2018, cited in Buba 2019) argued that neo-colonialism still exists in Africa; however, central influence is not only limited to European or Western developed countries, but also attributed to Chinese and Turkish intervention. Indeed, providing development assistance seems a difficult task in countries like Laos where some 40 ethnic communities reside among unequal power relations. Here, aid is further controlled and accessed by more dominant ethnic groups, adding little value to the region's overall development (Ireson and Ireson 1991). In providing research findings from Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, Kampe (1997) concluded that foreign-funded education projects, which are strictly controlled by national authority, are also non-responsive to what specific ethnic populations want, and further tend to erode cultural diversity in the name of formal education.

Debate on the purpose of developmental aid includes the political and strategic interests of donor countries. Riddell (2007) pointed out that despite intentions to provide crisis support, reduce poverty and preserve human rights in recipient nations, the purpose of developmental assistance swings between upholding these duties and maintaining the political, commercial and self-interests of donor countries. Shepherd (1989) identified, in a study on Ethiopia's dependence on US food aid, how this dynamic was used as a political instrument to destabilise

its then communist government. Alesina and Dollar (2000) further noted that political and strategic considerations are the key drivers that guide the allocation of aid. Though support is provided for poverty reduction and development, Riddell (2007, p. 91) views these purposes as only an ‘incomplete picture’ and mentioned that ‘official’ aid-giving is inherently political. Another way to analyse the effectiveness of developmental assistance is through Collier and Dollar’s (2004) notion that despite channelling resources to important development projects, governmental control makes it difficult to achieve the objectives of relief. On this premise, Collier and Dollar (2004) further argued that donors need to have sufficient information on the country set to receive developmental support, as well as additional power to modify government preferences.

The Office of Development Effectiveness (2014) evaluation of Australian aid in Timor Leste is an example of transferring knowledge, policies and agricultural research, which also reflects national interests. Neves (2011, p. 1) argued that the region could not overcome its poor health care, inadequate educational opportunities, scarcity of clean water and social inequalities because of its weak public institutions, colonial legacy and failure to secure developmental assistance to deliver various national promises. Here, McGregor (2007, p. 156) drew attention to the post-development opportunities for aid in the region, noting how the concept favours suspension of hegemonic development and promotes ‘small-scale, place-specific, community-owned and controlled development initiatives’. In this sense, developmental support requires a shift from promoting donor interests to encouraging community integration, which is both context-specific and community-specific.

Despite criticism on dependence and neo-colonialism, the literature on development seems to take a justifying approach that argues underdeveloped countries cannot progress without external assistance (Smith 1986, p. 29); it can neither be said that foreign aid in this context is

'unimportant' (Caporaso 1980, p. 607). Evidenced in Botswana, improved economic policy and government initiatives to redistribute national income necessitates less dependence on aid and development, which is also nationally focused (Maipose, Somolekae and Johnston 1997). To this, Coomaraswamy (2012) analysed the importance of foreign assistance in relation to closing the gap between beneficiary countries and donors, changes in donor-recipient country relationships, and the need to identify why and when aid affects development.

Arguments have developed on investigations whether aid works or not (Cassen and Associates, 1994; Riddell 2007). Cassen and Associates (1994) examined the effectiveness of aid according to its developmental purpose and the judgement of its effect ultimately belongs to public opinion. From a recipient's point of view, such factors include commitment, capacity, ownership and governance (Riddell 2007, pp. 358–374). Indeed, development in this sense does not wholly rely on dependent relations. This is because internal forces such as institution, and varying roles, norms and behavioural patterns in policy development can be highly independent processes in aid-recipient countries (Caporaso 1980, pp. 607, 617). That said, donors need to work with governments and consider the developmental priorities of receiver countries when determining the provision of foreign aid. These may extend to economic vulnerability, promotion of security and peace in response to conflict, achieving a respective government's commitment to formulate appropriate policies, and addressing governance (Collier and Dollar 2004). In whatever ways and through whichever purposes development assistance began its expansion in 1940s, its existence formed the basis for how development assistance was and continues to be delegated today (Riddell 2007, pp. 24, 29) resulting in development in the new millennium.

2.2.2. The new millennium and people in development

The beginning of the new millennium saw a declaration to achieve the MDGs by 2015. This new comprehensive focus on development reinforced the importance of creating people-centred development goals. Creation of the Millennium Declaration 2000 soon recognised the need for a 'collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level', and further clarified the duty that world leaders (if they are donors, governments or Heads of States) have to honour the 'world's people' (UN n. d.). Indeed, this Declaration alerted attention of development organisations and practitioners to individual importance in achieving the MDGs. For Fukuda-Parr (2004, p. 396), these goals put 'human development, poverty, people and their lives' at the centre of the global development agenda, measuring 'human well-being rather than economic growth' and development adds a different dimension that is 'human'. This declaration has placed 'people and their immediate needs at the forefront' and 'reshaped decision-making in the developed and developing countries alike (Kumar, Kumar and Vivekadhish 2016, editorial).

Yet, research demonstrates that MDG achievements are not uniform in all countries and sometimes worse in more fragile nations as Fukuda-Parr (2004, p. 399) identified and said preference in measuring is only quantitative and not qualitative achievements. In this case, more timely and country-specific development strategies need to be in place (Harttgen and Klasen 2013). Further arguments against these goals include negligence of targets, questionable authenticity of data to measure progress, and lack of donor accountability within partnerships (Miller-Dawkins 2014). In addition, MDG achievements have been enhanced where funding was increased (Mann et al. 2016).

In carrying out quantitative analysis on the total health expenditure (reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health) in six countries (Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Malawi, Pakistan, Peru and

Tanzania), Mann et al. (2016) demonstrated that dependence on donor funding for health care is evident in some countries but not all. MDG achievements also varies in different geographical contexts. Research demonstrates that MDG achievements are not equal in all countries or worst in some fragile country contexts in which case timely country specific development strategies need to be in place (Harttgen and Klasen 2013). Chowdhury et al. (2011) demonstrated how national policies and strategies, donor-funded programs, involvement from both public and non-public sectors, and strong political commitment and agendas in Bangladesh proved instrumental to MDG success.

Although MDGs were designed to influence development assistance and directly affect the lives of people, the primary instruments of change began to focus more on the actual procedures involved in providing aid and implementing programs. Notably, the High-level Forum on Harmonization held in Rome in 2003, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda on Action (AAA) provide key examples of initiatives that highlighted the need for improved coordination at the national level. This extends to increased donor and partner countries' respective accountability to their nations' citizens, and efforts to translate development actions into positive change on people's lives. However, increased focus on the procedures, results and effect of developmental assistance and aid coordination meant that less attention was given to beneficiaries in terms of human rights, social justice and equity (Kelegama 2012, p. 3). Sjostedt (2013) argued that the Paris Declaration, in particular, focuses on the priorities of partner countries, results reporting and prioritising development on behalf of donors. Evidently, it seems MDG achievements are geared more towards reaching targets than on generating discussions around how people form the basis of developmental success.

The role of people in relation to development has been reiterated in the recent SDGs, adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. Kumar, Kumar and Vivekadhish (2016,

p. 2) categorised these goals into three groups covering inclusiveness, sustainability for future generations, and their function in extending the MDGs. Further adopting principles that can be translated into domestic political context, the SDGs have added potential for social mobilisation and in securing interaction between diverse stakeholders (Miller-Dawkins 2014). One UN report (2018, p. 4) on SDGs found that progress on ensuring 'no one is left behind' is not rapid enough to meet the targets by 2030 and require immediate and accelerated action by countries and stakeholders. Funding is equally critical to their success. A Reality of Aid report (2018, p. 7) already identified that 'aid resources are unfortunately and woefully insufficient and misdirected' to achieve SDGs. While literature concerns on resources, very little has been discussed about involving people to sustain development goals. In this view, this study is relevant and timely to see the extent of beneficiary engagement in attaining development agenda.

2.2.3. Assisting development for engaging in local contexts

While development aid has been criticised as a top-down movement that imposes donor perspectives into local spheres, discussion inevitably turns to formulating strategies of 'triangular cooperation' as different 'complexities' exist in different contexts. In the literature, Fordelone (2009, p. 4) defined the concept as a type of cooperative development that involves three cohorts, leading 'partnerships between DAC donors and providers of South–South Co-operation to implement development co-operation [between] programs/projects in Beneficiary Countries'. This form of collaboration, known also as 'trilateral cooperation' in Kumar, Dickerson and Tandon (2012, p. 37), is expected to bring together donors and recipient countries to work jointly on projects in developing countries. However, to forge success, stakeholders must address local realities and align their assistance to the development priorities of beneficiaries (Fordelone 2009, p. 5). While this effort is discussed or decided at the global

level, the local experience is an important part in building this cooperation, not only at an international scale, but also within institutions and people in recipient nations. Above all, it is important to consider the local reality in developmental interventions to enable people's capabilities and to minimise power between the 'top' and the 'bottom' (Hickey and Mohan 2004, p. 11).

However, enabling people to be engaged and minimising the distance between these spheres change in different country contexts and according to local situation. Crush (1995, p. 6) demonstrated that discourse on development is set within social, cultural and geopolitical relations, which cannot be ignored, as discussion is primarily generated within institutional, historical, and geographical contexts. However, the discussion also admits that there are differences in context which can also be complex. Hickey and Mohan (2004, p. 18) suggested that in the process of engaging individual, circumstance becomes primary, as it is dangerous to deem all contexts or spaces alike. According to Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker (2006), engaging individuals (citizens) requires understanding a variety of complexities to formulate policy responses that address potential difficulty. Complexities can range from institutional or individual abilities, to enabling both environmental and community willingness to participate in development (Stoker 2004, p. 4).

When facilitating input is subject to organisational concern, power relations and motivation for change are equally critical in creating an enabling environment for people to be engaged (Eversole 2010; Hickey and Mohan 2004, p. 18). For example, Boswell, Settle and Dugdale (2014) demonstrate how formalities of presentation, observance by government and outside government officials, and restrictions on interaction create an impression that participants are 'being examined rather than engaged with'. For government, beneficiary engagement is led in 'invited' space compared to 'insisted' space, which is often run by more supportive and

informal non-State actors (e.g., civil society organisations or NGOs) (Boswell, Settle and Dugdale 2014, pp. 9–11).

As the process of involvement is associated with various complexities, it is not justified to say any single model will result in successful integration of people, as it is arguably more difficult to make beneficiaries accountable in practice than as outlined in any theoretical notion (Kaul 1990). Involving people as a condition of development assistance needs to consider building relationships and engaging with people, as it has proven largely incompatible to following one 'specific protocol', and should instead address and adapt to 'challenges as they present themselves' (Lunt et al. 2018, p. 210). Bourguignon and Sundberg (2007, pp. 316–317) examine the 'causality chain' that links development assistance to 'development outcomes' and establish the connection between policy and the intentions of legislators to make 'good policies'. Shukralla (2005, p. 16) examined a model of needs-based and performance-based development-assistance allocation in a 'good policy environment'. Essentially, the author found that the former is assigned to 'bad' States, while the latter is awarded to better-performing States in terms of policy. However, wider research concluded that performance-based allocation is insufficient, as it does not address individual needs. To this, Collier and Dollar (2004, p. 244-245) suggested to focus on strategies to allocate development assistance and understand 'systematic lessons' of development programs and policies that are critical, considering the 'choice of recipient country and the style of relationship with the government'. Here, the authors assume that donors have no choice but to work with the government in the local context.

Despite its influence in development discussions, the context in which people are expected to be integrated is critical for organisations responsible for providing aid at a local level and organisations (e. g. GOs and NGOs) need to address these requirements of engaging people in the development process. Thus far, the discourse provides no clear answer regarding whether

individual-level engagement has been instrumental to sustaining goal success. The discussion also creates a scope to examine whether donor influence or development assistance create a space for public involvement relative to different national contexts. As Sen (1999) emphasised, development goals are primarily designed for people and understanding these goals should create a space for their involvement in development. Indeed, there is equal need to examine the roles of organisations, but, above all, an urgency to acknowledge public perceptions on improvement and how individuals' own understandings are being facilitated in that process. This is where the research study finds its purpose. Not only does it contribute to revealing the reality of engaging beneficiaries, it also provides country-specific data on the development discourse itself.

2.3. Project management: an approach to engaging in development assistance

Along with discussions on how development assistance encompasses local contexts and organisations within the process of engaging beneficiaries, it is important to examine how developmental provisions respond to various local factors in a given country. In practice, the concept of people-oriented development has advanced across projects through which aid is provided. Development initiatives (that involve people) 'typically' posits 'within projects and programs managed and funded by professionals in organisations' (Eversole 2010, p. 30). Abraham (2014, p. 1) defined these efforts as 'a series of activities that aim at solving problems within a given time frame with a clear set of objectives' for individual benefit. At an international level, development assistance is based on guided principles of project appraisal. This notion was officially adopted in 1988 to cover the entire process of project management, from initial project identification to preparation, appraisal, selection and design, and even subsequent monitoring and evaluation (Führer 1996, p. 50). In the development field, the key

project goals mainly encompass poverty alleviation and upgrading the livelihood of local people, for which institutional and community-level building capacity are necessary factors for success (Merino and Carmenado 2012). Various forms of assistance include those from international (foreign-aided projects), national (central government development initiatives such as health, education and agriculture) and local levels (local government institutions at the village level). Since this study focuses on beneficiary engagement in development, this section aims to reveal how the concept of involving people in the process posits the need for project management to delegate assistance. Alongside, literature will inform examinations on management and governance, institutional arrangements, implementation and ownership of development projects. For added context, literature that addresses the socio-economic and cultural factors embedded in the regions undergoing developmental activity is included, alongside discourse that promotes existing knowledge in a community and brings people closer to development projects.

2.3.1. Project purpose and ways of engaging

To illustrate people-oriented development, scholars and practitioners have generated much discussion on why (reasons for engaging) and how (projects, methods and techniques to engage) people should be engaged in development. The 'why' aspects of beneficiary engagement advocate for its importance in obtaining commitment and support of communities to back certain projects (Oakley and Marsden 1984, p. 13). Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) stressed the need to link citizens' at local and grassroots levels, as it is considered a means of 'strengthening [beneficiary] relevance, quality and sustainability' through increased representation or accountability, superior articulation of grassroots needs and priorities, and in linking development to the State.

Conversely, the 'how' part of engagement encompasses several strategies and approaches, which Oakley (1991, pp. 167–173) tied to project issues. Essentially, involving people requires systematic implementation and entails 'a sequence of activities'; regardless of whether participation is random or structured, it always relates to a given project. The provision of these efforts, their management, governance and implementation seem to ground the general basis for participation (Oakley (1991). Several factors further reason how people become involved in these initiatives. This ranges from enabling public communication about projects, creating opportunities for beneficiaries to define their needs and problems, forming groups, accommodating beneficiaries into the system of governance and development, and utilising knowledge to address problems in a mutual and beneficial partnership between organisations and communities (Arvelo 2012; Bassler et al. 2008; Helfer 2006).

In recognising the link between TA projects and grants for students with disability in some US states, Helfer (2006) identified that certain processes need to be in place to document and illustrate both school and individual-level interventions. Thus, the clients in this case (i.e., the school authorities and the students) need to be informed of the processes intended for their prospective improvement. Similarly, in analysing community engagement in the twenty-first century, Bassler et al. (2008) considers several methods and tools to engage citizens. As discovered, reaching out to a given community for inclusion proved essential, perhaps because the deciding factors involved in securing communal engagement are closely linked to the very purpose behind most development goals (Bassler et al. 2008, p. 5). In this sense, engaging beneficiaries and wider communities also requires a strong organisational basis to bring people closer to development. In Arvelo's (2012) research on community projects undertaken by higher education institutions, forming a consortium of colleges and other tertiary-level institutions became a driving force for collaboration. Essentially, this brought together

organisations and communities in a defined space so that 'engagement can happen' together (Arvelo 2012, p. 161).

Recognition of unique geographical and cultural differences forms another part of the discourse, resulting from diverse research endeavours that contribute to the development literature. It is important to consider local culture when engaging beneficiaries (Hailey 2001) because this can inspire involvement in communities that adopt more collective approaches to encouraging or restricting participation (e.g., women's participation in development, as noted in Cleaver 2001, p. 47). In this sense, engagement is not a straightforward facet in the process of development assistance through project-based work. Rather, it concerns the 'how' or 'deliberate' part of engagement—the planning aspect involved in enabling citizens to engage more actively in 'decisions that affect their lives'—which demands equal accountability of institutions responsible for ensuring total commitment (Gaventa 2002, p. 2). Overall, these findings reveal that involving beneficiaries in projects requires a combination of interconnected strategies and collaborative approaches, developed by institutions and communities alike. However, whether and how this is happening in a specific country context require further research that I intend to reveal through this study.

2.3.2. Project management and engaging

Development projects require the commitment of scarce resources to breed future benefits and its typical management cycle includes planning, formulation, implementation and evaluation—all of which needs consistent management and governance (Abraham 2014). However, managing projects in any field, whether technical or developmental, goes beyond merely arranging these traditional steps. According to Ika and Donnelli (2016), understanding the enabling factors and having 'commitment, collaboration, alignment, and adaptation' are equally necessary to achieve the objectives and targets of any given project. In evaluating SAP

implementation, Esteves and Pastor-Collado (2001, p. 1020) mentioned a number of 'strategic' or non-technical issues that prevail at the organisational level, along with other 'tactical' issues such as project staff, decision-making, communication and project formalisation, which are critical success factors for project management.

The strategic issues of project management, such as government support for service delivery, form the essential institutional and governance aspects of project management. For Nakibinge et al. (2009, p. 192), these helped to engage communities when evaluating and implementing an HIV project in Uganda. Given the nature of 'collaborative work' involved in engaging a target population within project management, proper engagement undoubtedly adds value to evaluating project achievements and assessing their effect on a community (Nakibinge et al. 2009, p. 190). Too and Weaver (2013, p. 1384) further expanded the concept of project governance to include relationships with communities, program and 'change' management, human resources capacity, financial resources and proven sustainability. Recommendations put forth at a 1998 WB conference on 'Upscaling and Mainstreaming Participation of Primary Stakeholders' further revealed that rather than enhancing participation of primary stakeholders (project beneficiaries), it is equally necessary to include 'secondary and tertiary stakeholders' such as donors and governments (Gaventa and Valderrama 1999) who are the important stakeholders in the development process. While beneficiary engagement premised on the concept of development entails its strategic, operational, organisational and cultural dimensions, it is likewise important to acknowledge how project stakeholders themselves (who represent major components of any development project) actively address engagement.

2.3.3. Engaging beneficiaries within the concept of stakeholder engagement

The theoretical basis underlying stakeholder engagement has its origins in understanding business organisations and bringing together administrative forces with clients, suppliers,

distributors, investors and communities (Freeman et al. 2017). Literature in the management field has significantly focused on project-stakeholder engagement. At its core, the concept is based on the need to address and manage multiple stakeholder demands (Freeman 1984, cited in Freeman et al. 2017). Taylor (2002, p. 123) defined beneficiaries as clients of development organisations, such as NGOs, GOs or donors who intend to improve the lives of service recipients. In the development field, beneficiaries are instead hailed as important stakeholders who, according to Freeman's (1984, cited in Freeman et al. 2017) definition, comprise any group of individual who can affect or is affected by a given project. Managing and governing such ambitious ventures, thus, require stakeholder engagement, as any single project does not only depend on its activities, but also on understanding a 'strategic fit' that builds trust, governance and approval, convincing organisations and/or clients about its needs and expected outcome(s) (Baugh 2015).

The literature mostly focuses on how stakeholder engagement should be actioned in project management. This starts with identifying stakeholders and adopts various means through which to engage project interest. Part of this involves communication, conveying clear information, stakeholder mapping, consultation, awareness, coordination, interaction and connectivity (Baugh 2015; OECD 2015). It is also important to know the project community to identify their relationship to the project under question, and to both cultural and communication dimensions. Building this relationship will prove critical to a project's success, alongside strong leadership, expectations and motivation management (Bourne 2015; OECD 2015).

Since projects are essential to providing development assistance, 'stakeholder engagement' is inextricably linked to most development practices. Citing Morgan (1990), Taylor (2002, p. 125) noted its influence on private sectors promoting managerialism in developed countries, and eventually spreading to government agencies and NGOs. According to WB (2018) report,

multi-stakeholder engagement began in the 1970s, was formalised in the 1980s and subsequently deepened throughout the 1990s through participatory approaches in various operations; in turn, this reiterated the benefit of recognising citizen input. Several approaches to engaging people in development were mentioned in the report, including consultation, collaboration, obtaining public responses, grievance-redress management for resettlement issues, citizen-led monitoring and ICT (WBG 2018, pp. 42–57). It is important to note in these findings that project beneficiaries are not the only stakeholders involved in projects, but rather one component of a whole range of stakeholders that project management must engage. Thus, the concept of beneficiary engagement seemingly relates to the process of multi-stakeholder engagement discussed in the WBG report (2018).

Yet, addressing all these strategic elements of project management may not be enough to sufficiently engage beneficiaries to participate. This process instead requires time and energy for people to lend involvement in planning, carrying out and evaluating development activities, which will (potentially) change their lives (Vincent 2004, p. 111). The concept of stakeholder engagement is also not free from criticism, mainly due to its typically lengthy nature and time-consuming processes. For example, in planning a tobacco policy for tribal communities in Oklahoma, Blanchard, Petherick and Basara (2015, p. 45) consulted target communes for 17 months. Evidenced in Hailey's (2001, p. 90) case studies on South Asian NGOs, building credibility and trust within local communities is likewise crucial, but requires regular contact with project beneficiaries, as well as strong personal ties and resources. Evidently, the process is intensive, time-consuming and can be politically charged for certain interest groups, according to one OECD report (2015, p. 70). Despite length, engaging stakeholders, which are equally inclusive of project beneficiaries in the development field, is recommended in any managerial pursuit. 'Tyranny' in this sense is not applicable, as the need to share knowledge

and negotiate power relations (despite 'overarching and fundamental' problems in project management) cannot be denied (Cooke and Kothari 2001).

2.3.4. Process of engagement and its concerns

Having all institutional and conceptual frameworks in place may neither be adequate to ensure stakeholder or beneficiary engagement in project management. Any project environment aimed at engaging beneficiaries needs to consider various conditions to identify strategies that can tackle emerging concerns. However, this entails a process to ensure beneficiary engagement, empower them to have a 'say' and transferring knowledge that are subject to sociocultural context, division between 'rich' and 'poor', and local politics (Sillitoe 2000). An 'ill-informed and de-contextualized' understanding of project and stakeholder context can also promote 'inappropriate interventions' (Sillitoe 2000, p. 6). As such, stakeholders are encouraged to possess a general understanding of a project's objectives, the collaborative working relationships involved, an ability to manage unexpected situations and to acknowledge basic project ownership within project management (Turner 2004).

Project governance also requires appropriate strategies that clarify the purpose and process needed to target beneficiaries. In evaluating a participatory health project from community perspectives in Ecuador, Moser and Sollis (2006) found that having beneficiaries involved depends on public insight and effective stakeholder presence, which affects how beneficiaries respond to a project and how far they are engaged requires answering the 'why, how, who and when' aspects of project management, which is a process that stretches far beyond a project's life cycle (Moser and Sollis 2006, p. 19) that fosters the end result as shown in Figure 2.5. In this concept, engagement of project beneficiaries resides within a process that results in participation.

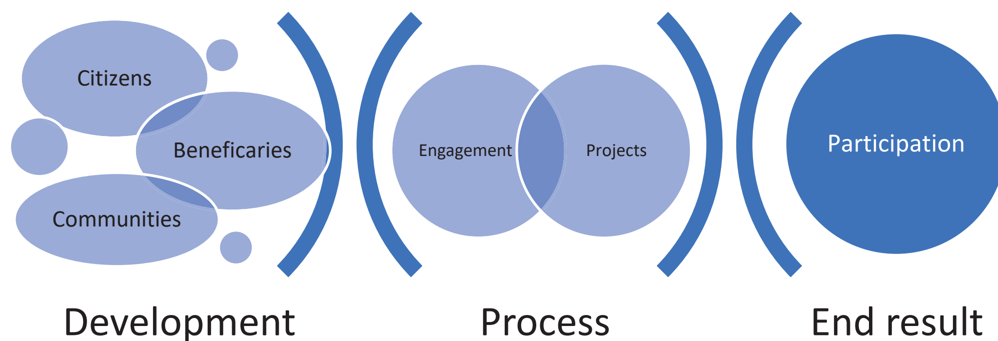


Figure 2.5. Development process and engaging for participation

Source: adapted from Oakley (1991).

The theoretical underpinning of development involves citizens, communities and beneficiaries in illustrating the need for people-centred development and people's participation. This wider perspective is narrowed down to local context where target beneficiaries are expected to be involved in projects through a process and result in participation. However, there is a vacuum in literature to elaborate the process part (GOs and NGOs project settings) of beneficiary engagement in the local context which this study intends to explore.

Findings from the literature demonstrate the extent to which organisations, strategies, community engagement activities, locational context and management are instrumental to building relations between development interventions and communities. Engaging in all these strategies of project management and forming close associations with institutional arrangements demonstrates the importance of not only building connections with communities, but also establishing links between institutions. Through this understanding of project management, the research study seeks to uncover the various strategies involved in development assistance, project planning and implementation, as well the discourse on

organisations that contribute towards building effective beneficiary engagement in Bangladesh. Hence, while any development initiative must engage its various beneficiaries in some sense, information is still needed on organisational roles that best enable this process within the context to which the research study most relates. To progress, it is now critical to observe how underlying administrative forces contribute to engagement in project management at a local level.

2.4. Engaging beneficiaries and organisational dynamics: roles of GOs and NGOs

Since beneficiary engagement works within more collaborative approaches to project management, understanding the institutional roles, interactions, partnerships and dynamics of organisational affiliation involved are critical to unpack the discourse on GO–NGO practices. This is because both agents are essential in project management (Oakley et al. 1991, p. 180). More broadly, literature in the development field generally identifies GOs and NGOs as the main drivers of development activities. As the two primary entities responsible for implementing most development programs, this notion has evolved by and through countless theories and concepts around the 'State', 'organisation' and 'development', as discussed in Section 2.1. Hence, this section builds on this notion to reveal deeper development discussions on organisational leverage; both the advantages and limitations of government and NGOs, which affect their roles in practice; and the various development strategies, functions and relations between these organisations in engaging project beneficiaries.

2.4.1. Beneficiary engagement and GO–NGO relationship

To examine the extent to which GOs and NGOs can engage project beneficiaries, one must reveal how these organisations function and the roles they play, as well as the strategies in place

to ensure beneficiary engagement. Sanyal (1991) mentioned that it is important to identify the interactive contexts in which these bodies generate partnerships and coordinate with others to engage service recipients. As their respective interests ultimately determine the extent of any collaborative effort, Sanyal (1991, p. 1368) suggested that examining the institutional contexts and relations involved in cooperation could provide another tool to assess project viability. Fowler (1997) focused on strategic alliances between organisations to achieve a common goal (thus, resulting in professional partnerships). Here, the power relation between two entities proves another dimension through which to examine how organisations, such as GOs and NGOs, continue their partnership to achieve developmental goals (Makuwira 2014). In explaining the power of development, Crush (1995, pp. 6–8) valued discourse that recognises State powers, government, aid agencies, multinational institutions (such as UN groups and the WB) and private consultants exercising power and control over people. Essentially, by 'power of development', Crush (1995) in this sense refers to power that is hegemonic—thus, generating further debate over who holds power and who dominates. Along with economic, social and developmental factors, the unique approach that any organisation brings when delivering developmental services to the masses proves yet another determinant in the GO–NGO relationship.

Hence, the unique nature of each dynamic within organisational and individual terms further complicates this link (Coston 1998, p. 359). Unable to define this partnership under one overarching feature, several country-specific research efforts have demonstrated that different contexts create different conditioning factors that govern GO–NGO relations (Howell 1997; Bosch 1997; Wanigaratne 1997; Clark 2006). Despite their differences, both these organisations share some commonalities. Notably, each tends to pursue development and project management, and has specific strategies in place to carry out national programs. Clark (1995, p. 595) attributed this bond to a necessary condition of maintaining 'healthy State–NGO

relationship[s]', where GOs possess a 'positive social agenda' and NGOs are 'effective', thus, spurring 'the potential for a strong, collaborative relationship'. Moreover, McLoughlin (2011) examined these factors and explained how their affiliation is structured in such a way to develop strategies that 'advance their positions'. The author argued that motivating factors for collaboration can be affected by organisational structures, identities, goals and opportunities to access resources within varying conditions. Again, this connection will vary in different contexts, as neither organisation is 'monolithic' (McLoughlin 2011, pp. 241, 243). Most non-government entities prefer less influence and more freedom from government to operate in development, which governments generally wish not to be 'threatened' or 'challenged' by their NGO counterparts (Clark 2006, p. 151).

Approaches to govern NGO functions by the public sector also differ by context. In China, social organisations (or NGOs) provide basic services and assist the public sector in extending amenities to target beneficiaries. The presence of non-government bodies is seen mostly in service sectors such as health, education, water, sanitation and disaster management (Howell 1997). Whiting (1991) identified that due to strong bureaucratic control, NGOs are typically viewed as essential extensions of government control. Although, growth of non-government forces in China was initially spurred by political reform for societal development. To this, Hsu (2010) demonstrated that Chinese NGOs are more interested in 'building alliances with State agencies', as these institutions need resources to survive. Hsu and Hasmath (2014, p. 516) further argued that the State is actively involved in their development, where success is, thus, determined by their relationship with local government.

Similarly, NGOs in Sri Lanka operate within comparatively more restricted environments. Emergence of the Central Council of Social Services served as an umbrella organisation for NGOs that brought them 'within the orbit of influence of the national policy makers' in Sri

Lanka (Wanigaratne 1997, p. 223). These agents soon flourished in the 1980s and 1990s, corresponding to the flow of foreign aid to the country. However, NGOs are mandated to implement programs and avoid any roles in politically sensitive areas such as human rights (Goodhand and Lewer 1999, p. 73). In addition, the question of legitimacy makes it difficult for Sri Lankan NGOs to work on peace building, despite the flow of foreign aid and interest from donor communities (Walton 2008).

Beyond Asia, NGOs in Brazil are part of the 'world of politics, activism and human rights', rather than social welfare (Bosch 1997, p. 234). However, this approach has since changed, as led by the demands of beneficiaries (or members), as well as the government's evolving aim to engage NGOs in its functions (Bosch 1997, pp. 239–240). Funding requirements have also raised question around whether NGOs are integrated at a strictly domestic level or whether their dependence on foreign aid makes these organisations accountable at a transnational scale (Koslinski and Reis 2009). Private sector and NGO presence in community politics has changed the concept of participation and the relationship between both State and NGOs agents in Brazil, as community leaders become increasingly exposed to market-oriented development (Junge 2012).

That said, the GO–NGO relationship is not always developed in an environment where the State has total control over non-government bodies. Rather, this bond can develop according to mutual dependence and joint responsibility, and on the basis of creating distinct organisational roles for external partners, which add value to this partnership (Brinkeroff 2002, p. 22). Here, Brinkeroff (2002, p. 21) provides three streams of literature on the concept of mutual trust: (i) critiques of GOs advocates to establish greater roles for NGOs in both planning and practice, as necessary for sustainable development and service delivery; (ii) build partnerships that

mitigate criticism and foster good public relations; (iii) require all agents to reach other objectives of development.

Evidently, both GOs and NGOs are primary actors in development, equally subject to individual country context and developmental strategy. However, none of the findings presented demonstrate any relationship between the two that actually consider engaging beneficiaries in the development process. Rather, their bond is mostly examined according to control, political sensitivity and foreign aid. Varying perspectives on local context regarding strategy, function and organisation instead create the scope of understanding the significance of GO–NGO relationships. Hence, the importance of their affiliation and whether it creates any opportunities for GOs and NGOs to respond to beneficiary engagement form the basis of this research study.

2.4.2. GO–NGO relationship in varying contexts

The GO–NGO relationship is not only relevant to local contexts, but also concerns the legal, financial and local authorities in which both State and non-government actors operate (see Sections 2.1.3 and 2.1.6). Gortner, Nichols and Ball (2007, pp. 64–65) explained how public-sector agents could be instrumental in developing relations with people and other agencies. From both theoretical and organisational standpoints, these entities operate in accordance with the widespread belief that the government and its agents should act lawfully. Thus the government structures its functions on the basis of given authorities within which NGOs and communities operate and behave (Gortner, Nichols and Ball, 2007).

While the legal basis of organisational authority cannot be denied, other factors including the provision of policies, service delivery to citizens and the involvement of non-State actors in implementing development activities (alongside organisational authority and power) are equally instrumental in building the GO–NGO bond necessary to respond to beneficiary engagement (Clark 1995; Hashemi 1996; Haque 2002). Makuwira (2014, p. 44) refers to the

different models of developmental partnership based on context. This includes government-dominant, NGO-dominant, dual dominance between GOs and NGOs, and collaborative partnerships. If the government is non-responsive to people's participation in development, or if NGOs prefer working in isolation and donors favour non-government-based funding, the relationship between GOs and NGOs will change (Clark 1995). Depending on the context, this bond could either be competitive or conflicting, or characterised by 'co-production'—meaning the relationship is bound by collaboration, with NGOs operating within favourable government policies and participating in policy planning—and 'collaboration' (Coston 1998). In a relationship built on 'co-production' and 'collaboration' both GOs and NGOs function as joint major actors coexisting as complementarities (the relationship based on comparative advantages and mutual benefits). Above all, this arrangement 'demonstrates a win-win agreement' (Coston 1998, pp. 371, 374).

Literature on development further examines the power of NGOs in generating foreign aid and policymaking. The growing number of NGOs, as well as the emergence of development funds such as aid, grants and contracts have together enabled NGOs to become powerful forces in world politics (McGann and Johnstone 2006). The flow of money from international communities to local or international NGOs denotes another source of power that determines donor–NGO relations (Reith 2010), rather than it enhances the GO–NGO tie. That said, NGO dependence on donor funding means that these agents become patrons of control over resources. In turn, this creates an unequal power relationship between the two, with a flow-on effect disturbing the GO–NGO partnership due to the perception of increased NGO sovereignty (Makuwira 2014, p. 38). In view of this, NGOs sourcing their power from donors may marginalise government responsibilities and minimise accountability, resulting in fragmented and overlapping development activities (Haque 2002, p. 424). Marginalising government responsibility in this sense may not be a desired outcome, as such forces ultimately control both

the legal framework and policies involved in development. Analysing NGO accountability in Bangladesh, Hashemi (1996, p. 130) further argued that regulatory structures are necessary to ensure 'legitimate sources of funding' and efficient financial management. However, extending GOs' control over NGOs to determine and manage the latter's activities can strain the relationship. Analysis on the link between GOs and NGOs and between NGOs and donors in Bangladesh determined that NGO development activities directly funded by donors generate 'contradictions between the State and NGOs and has brought the issue of NGO accountability into the political discourse'—particularly when some began planting candidates in local government elections (Hashemi 1996, p. 123). As non-government sectors operate within the boundaries of the State, their development activities demand total approval. Hence, there is no scope to undermine State legitimacy (Makuwira 2014, p. 39).

The various contexts in which GOs and NGOs operate concern not only power and authority, but also the State's approaches to development policy and service delivery. Other factors of influence include the State's control over NGOs, various partnership approaches, NGOs' involvement in implementing government policies and projects, perceptions of individual organisations, mobilisation of funding, and the interests that development partners express in backing development programs. Despite having all these in place, it is practical implementation that most affects the actual relationship between GOs and NGOs; that is, if the 'practice is weak' (Brinkeroff 2002, p. 21) and 'unsupportive', the relationship will be shrouded in mistrust (Batley 2006, p. 241).

Brinkeroff (2002) defined the GO–NGO partnership on the basis of mutuality and organisational identity. The former refers to mutual dependence such as funding and contracting between these two organisations, leading to partnership. The latter relies heavily on the logic of selecting a partner, or, in other words, why a specific partner organisation is chosen

(Brinkeroff 2002, p. 22). However, Batley and Rose (2011) argued that the bond between these groups is not always guided by 'mutuality' and 'organisational identity'. Other factors affecting GO–NGO relations include one's 'distinctive views' on public service, the manner in which these services should be delivered, and the capacity to influence one another's strategies to serve the interests of their partnership (Batley and Rose 2011, p. 231). Indeed, this bond can also be affected by one's perception of the other, where differences in opinion can wholly undermine a relationship (Alam 2011).

That said, literature on development also examines the underpinning factors through which GO–NGO relationships exist and subsequently persist. Despite differences in attributes to and opinions on these organisations, GO–NGO relations are 'increasingly being accepted as inevitable' (Coston 1998, p. 358). Although each may hold opposing views of the other, they will inevitably work together to serve greater purposes of individual identity, lack of alternative and the need to generate mutual benefits (Sanyal 1991, pp. 1374–1375)—this is otherwise rationalised as 'antagonistic cooperation'. Sansom (2011) viewed their cooperation as collaboration through common goals. In this circumstance, if beneficiary engagement can prove productive in improving relations between them and the government is subject to further research that this study intends to fill in.

2.4.3. Factors that influence continuing relations

Certain factors influence the continuation of developmental relationships, despite institutional and regulatory controls. Shared interests and mutual dependence are considered positive forces of GO–NGO influence, which singularly sustain this bond on the basis of comparative advantage (White 1999; see Brinkeroff 2002; Lewis and Opoku-Mensah 2006; McLoughlin 2011). For example, Brinkeroff (2002, p. 25) analysed through a health project for children in Brazil that their partnership endures on mutually recognised 'shared objectives'. In this case,

the affiliation between GOs and NGOs is premised on fulfilling the needs of target beneficiaries who are primary school children. Similarly, Lewis and Opoku-Mensah (2006) demonstrated how budget support and channelling donor funds to GOs complicates NGOs' lone survival in development without governmental aid.

As such, NGO dependence on government power in different contexts can be categorised as of 'high, low or medium' importance. This depends on the volume of government authority, the extent to which development resources invite governmental power, and whether NGOs themselves either hold individual relations with GOs or have established networks with other NGOs (Batley 2011, p. 309). Essentially, the common goal of most development programs is to enhance the partnership between government and non-government agents, despite any obstacles NGOs (in particular) may experience in working with State powers. In that case, NGOs scale up their strategies and develop sustainable solutions through interactions and coordination to foster a meaningful relationship with administration (Mawer 1997, pp. 251–252). Here, the functional domain of development provides yet another dimension in the GO–NGO relationship. To Haque (2004), this bond persists according to their joint ability to carry out development works that successfully generate income, alleviate poverty, and provide empowerment, education and health to the masses.

Relationship success is also determined through fruitful contractual agreements (Batley 2011; McLoughlin 2011; Sansom 2011). For example, most NGO bonds with GOs are based on contracts to implement development projects. In a contractual partnership, non-government actors must secure legal agreements with governments or donors outlining the terms and conditions offered to them. According to McLoughlin (2011, p. 246), this is often based on a 'take it or leave it' approach. When this relationship becomes contractually bound, NGOs might be forced to align and modify their programs according to the respective government's aims

and objectives, rather than undertaking programs they see fit for a given purpose or context (White 1999, p. 316). However, contracts are also required when these organisations work with donors and attempt to secure their support to legitimise their activities (Hashemi 1996, p. 129). Citing examples from Bangladesh, the author argued that despite GOs' control over NGOs, the WB and the US Government praised the government in handling the economy as the country's development agenda is set in accordance with donor priorities (p. 130).

That said, the literature does not wholly oppose the contractual bond between GOs and NGOs. Rejecting the view that NGOs lose independence upon building relationships with government agents, Batley (2011) demonstrated that this partnership does not always minimise NGO roles of advocacy. Rather, it is important for NGOs to understand the environment in which they are operating through 'engagement in the practice of service delivery', as 'meeting and talking with government officials are important parts of the persuasive model of advocacy' (Batley 2011, p. 237). NGOs need to be aware of the risks and opportunities involved in their ties to GOs. Essentially, they must work with government agents as 'insiders' (participating in government policymaking instead of opposing government policies) to forge 'complementary advantages' and, thus, win 'the confidence of government' by using their contractual partnership to achieve policy change (Batley 2011, pp. 317–318). Another important purpose that contracts serve for NGOs is that they help to fill the gaps in government practice. For example, in analysing the implementation of a sanitation project in Bangladesh, Sansom (2011, p. 293) noted how local government institutions responsible for its success lacked basic capacities due to slow progression of national decentralisation. Evidently, the contractual relationship between GOs and NGOs in this scenario would help fill this capacity gap, deliver the project benefits by mobilising beneficiaries, better understand the local contexts embedded in development and more accurately convey local needs to the government.

However, these facets of mutual interest and benefit traded between GOs and NGOs raise questions as to whether they are equally responsive to the interests of the 'poor'. In the literature, White (1999) examined this with specific reference to the development context of Bangladesh. More broadly, Bebbington (2005, p. 945) argued that NGOs maintain 'necessary elements' of operational requirements more than these organisations focus on participation. Now, it is critical to observe whether the relationship evolves enough to willingly involve project beneficiaries in the process if partnership is required for integration and how involving people are addressed in attempts to strengthen GO–NGO connections. Literature on the relationship mostly discusses the context, objectives, commonalities and differences that vary in different project or country settings. However, it is equally important to judge whether the dynamics of this bond and the organisational roles involved therein evolve adhering to the concept of beneficiary engagement.

2.4.4. Addressing beneficiary engagement in GO–NGO partnership

Accountability to the primary beneficiaries of development is a leading principle that grounds any form of partnership (Makuwira 2014). When GOs and NGOs join through contractual agreement on project implementation, the extent of their relationship affects the latter's accountability to project recipients. Research studies on Bangladesh identified that the government's perceptions on, attitude towards and willingness to accept non-government activities influence the GO–NGO tie (Coston 1998; Sanyal 1991); as expected, this consequently affects the nature and extent to which individual engagement transpires in the development process. Narayannan et al. (2015) examined the global development policy agenda of participation and argued that maintaining systems and processes of projects, partnerships and agreements in development minimise the opportunity to engage beneficiaries. Essentially, they

suggested that doing so relative to program implementation must also create a space and opportunities for beneficiaries to participate.

Determining the institutional roles within GO–NGO partnerships presents another challenge that affects community engagement, as it takes place within the boundaries of 'projects, professionals and organizations' (Eversole 2010). In other words, this concerns how organisations design program implementation. In this view, Narayanan et al. (2015) suggest that successful partnerships require institutional restructuring or remodelling, allowing people's participation in the decision-making process. However, such reform may not materialise equally in individual country contexts. For example, Wellens and Jegers (2017, pp. 196–197) mentioned, relative to various contextual factors in southern Africa, that if the GO–NGO relationship is 'hostile' and the organisations have no solid framework supporting their partnership, the 'country factors' will affect NGO accountability (in particular) towards beneficiaries, thus, disturbing engagement.

In relation to beneficiary engagement and the organisational relations discussed in Section 2.4.3, the literature provides two solution streams. First, it demonstrates the grounds for which GOs should consider working with NGOs to ensure project recipients are properly engaged. To this, Makuwira (2014, p. 57) suggests agents better understand the NGO–community partnership through a people-centred development lens. As NGOs work towards raising awareness on various social issues (Hulme and Edwards 1997), Gauri and Galef (2005) characterise NGOs as flexible, bottom-line oriented charities present in either the private or the public sector.

Alternatively, the literature also provides evidence that supports GOs as equally important entities for beneficiary engagement. With the expansion of NGO sector in the 1980s and 1990s within the developing world, the general view sees NGOs with comparatively more 'probity'

than GOs, as well as ‘quantitatively and qualitatively significant’ ‘roles in’ and ‘impacts on’ development (Charlton and May 1995, p. 245). Together, this enabled them to expand their beneficiary-focused service delivery, forcing government agents to newly reconsider the dynamics of their partnership. That said, GOs can certainly capitalise on NGO probity by exploiting their advantages in scale, flexibility, legitimacy and their enhanced closeness to beneficiaries. Coston (1998, p. 358) explained that there are both ‘pros and cons to relations between GOs and NGOs’; however, considering the advantages that both sides can offer through collaboration means GO–NGO relations are increasingly inevitable.

Charlton and May’s (1995) ‘perceived probity’ of NGOs can also apply to GOs in reality. Although the former may, through their grassroots connections, develop ‘local friendly’ development programs to handover to governments for replication elsewhere, Jamil (1998, pp. 48–49), in investigating the GO–NGO bond in Bangladesh, argued that GOs (through ‘greater capacities, international contacts and resources’) are more suited to develop and transfer programs to NGOs for dissemination. Simultaneously, this supposed probity may neither be beyond question when beneficiary engagement and accountability is involved. Though NGOs are likewise expected to be more ‘efficient, effective and innovative than governments in providing basic social services’ to people, these organisations have ‘multiple, complex and diffuse accountability chains’ for which their accountability towards beneficiaries is affected (Wellens and Jegers 2017, p. 198). Clark (2006) explained that a complementary relationship actually determines project success and failure, as GO–NGO collaboration helps to mobilise grassroots organisations, as well as influence policies and international advocacy to bring about change. The author argued that GO-NGO relationship is scaled up through complementing the State that fills the gap in the public service and make it more relevant to the poor and not through opposing the State that is detrimental to the poor (Clark 2006, p. 152-154).

Evidently, then, NGOs need resources to deliver development programs according to GOs' demands. This particular context within their operation certainly raises questions of whether these groups simply carry out the development agendas of donors or whether they actually contribute to the development and wellbeing of both States and citizens that can enhance the bond between the two. This concern is reflected in Hulme and Edwards's (1997, p. 3) study that considers whether NGOs are getting 'too close' to donors and distancing themselves from State interests while engaged in development work. Obviously, this raises a vital concern that NGOs are merely delivering the 'interests, values, methods, [and] priorities' of donors, resulting in 'weakened' or 'lost' contributions and potentially 'losing the[ir] relationship with the poor'. Hashemi (1996, p. 129) too reiterated that donor dependence directly highlights how NGOs' positions make them comparatively more accountable to donors in carrying out their own development agendas, and less responsible to beneficiaries for project implementation.

Thus, the milieu of underlying factors that dictate organisational relations significantly affect the bond between GOs and NGOs carrying out their respective development goals and engaging people. Evident from the literature, both institutions' perceptions of the other equally affects this relationship, despite both experiencing various complexities that influence how they engage beneficiaries in a given country context. These findings, in particular, relate to the research study and create a scope through which to examine whether GO–NGO relation is relative to beneficiary engagement in Bangladesh. This also prompts another question whether it is only policies, projects and organizational framework for partnership or it is related to what beneficiaries require to be engaged. Understanding how beneficiaries responds to their own involvement in development activities led by either GOs or NGOs and whether beneficiary requirements matter for GO-NGOs strategies to address engaging in development is important to find out comparative practices that my research study intends to investigate.

2.5. Engaging in the development field: requisites for beneficiaries

The above discussion provides a background to 'engagement' as a concept of people and organisations in development, and further outlines the requirements that institutional and project-governance strategies must fulfil to ensure that people are involved in the process of development. However, people (or, more specifically, project beneficiaries) may also employ 'participation calculus' to compare the time and efforts demanded of participation against the potential benefits they expect in return; through this, they can choose whether their involvement will 'accrue to him or her' (Awortwi 2013, p. 91). According to Purvis, Zagenczyk and McCray (2015, p. 3), the most important determinant of stakeholder participation lies within one's self-interests, and this is equally true for beneficiaries (Section 2.3.3). People may also need adequate freedom to feel confident enough to be involved or else the engagement process requires greater facilitation for wider involvement. Overall, the literature in the development field detailed the gambit of demands that both organisations and project management must satisfy to properly address beneficiaries, as well as improve engagement efforts.

2.5.1. Managing ability and expectations to engage beneficiaries

'Participation calculus' confers the expectations that beneficiaries have of their involvement in development. This is a critical factor that organisations must address when managing development projects, demanding proper management of ability and expectation upon engagement. Awortwi (2013) identified that not all communities for whom development programs are undertaken are involved in projects. Some will inevitably be excluded on account of their socio-economic status. In this sense, management of community involvement is necessary in maintaining ability to 'handle, control, administer and sustain' development initiatives (Aworti 2013, p. 93). In evaluating international development projects in four countries, Ika and Donnelly (2016) concluded that along with institutional competence for

implementation, beneficiary capacity is equally important for project success. Managing development projects also means controlling the expectations of stakeholders—of which beneficiaries hold significant prominence. Here, capturing motivation proves particularly critical for individuals and official stakeholders alike. Anything 'personally unattractive' that does not match one's interests is unlikely to engage anyone in the development process that Purvis, Zagenczyk and McCray (2015, p. 3) explain; managing expectations is, thus, 'the most important determinant of whether or not a stakeholder will be engaged 'lies within the self-interests of that stakeholder'.

2.5.2. Understanding projects and benefits

Purvis, Zagenczyk and McCray 2015 argue that active participation of stakeholders occurs when people have positive understanding about a project and its benefits, and when the working environment is supportive of development initiatives. Thus, responsibility remains with organisations, management and professionals to clearly convey a project's benefits to a target population, and to facilitate understanding of their roles in development. In identifying the link between TA projects on disability services, (mentioned in section 2.3.1) Helfer (2006) mentioned that facilitating interactions is essential to engage target recipients within these settings. This argument translates to the demands that organisations and project management face in facilitating beneficiary engagement by understanding the actual needs of recipients and effectively managing expectations. Facilitation is essential, as it can promote effective group problem-solving and decision-making, encourage constructive dialogue to resolve conflict and difference, and develop feedback techniques for empowering groups and generating information (Helfer 2006, pp. 22–23). Similar views have been identified in Sillitoe (2000, p. 3).

Above all, success in all its forms requires open public communication about community projects, opportunities for active involvement in defining potential issues, identifying solutions to those issues (while developing priorities for action and resources), defining the roles of facilitators, supporters and collaborators, and understanding community characteristics (Arvelo 2012; Bassler et al. 2008; Helfer 2006; Krull 1999). These are critical for creating spaces in which communities can highlight their problems and opt for better service systems, inviting personal change and driving social initiatives (Arvelo 2012). Likewise, communities must also 'be accommodated by the rest of the system' (Helfer 2006, p. 22) through various processes of development, institutions and projects. Here, Lukensmeyer and Torres (2006) linked the concept of engagement to governance issues that are active and intentional, and where an 'infrastructure of engagement' exists alongside strong policy frameworks and institutional mechanisms to support beneficiaries in practice.

2.5.3. Beneficiaries in specific cultures and contexts

Beneficiary requirements may vary in different settings, as local culture and context influence involvement. Having strategies in place that meet requisite demands will prove essential, as approaches to securing beneficiary engagement 'across different cultural settings' are inherently 'framed' and 'operate' according to circumstance (Kenny 2016, p. 34). Concepts that deal with engagement in development have expanded in developed countries that uphold their own distinct attitudes. In particular, the culture of individualism in the Western world undoubtedly plagues its various attempts at engagement (Stone 1989). Concepts promoted herein often adopt universal (i.e., one size fits all) approaches across multiple countries where people may otherwise prefer collective instead of individualist approaches to engagement. In Stone's (1989, p. 206) study on community participation in Nepal, it was clear that stakeholders understood the exact interests of the people to manage and implement projects. That said, it is

not always a society's culture that affects beneficiary engagement. For Stone (1992), connecting with communities in Nepal relied more on structural factors, such as politics and organisational power, rather than specific cultural factors within local communes. Alternatively, Woelk (1992) found (in relation to donor-funded community health projects) that alongside social, structural and cultural influences, several limitations stem from marginalising the poor and through scarcity of training and skills among project staff. To this, Tosun (2000, p. 618) suggested that communal involvement in developing countries must be premised on cultural limitations, along with consideration of both operational and structural restrictions.

Above all, the discourse demonstrates that a variety of challenges are involved in engaging project beneficiaries. This ranges from understanding beneficiary needs to address expectations, and to understanding the cultural contexts in which recipients reside. To address these requirements, planning and managing the operational and structural aspects of development must specifically represent the organisations and beneficiaries involved. Findings detail a range of theories and concepts on engagement in development, and generally outline the various roles that organisations have in practice. Importantly, how people are subsequently integrated into that process is largely dependent on the extent to which stakeholders commit to delivering projects according to specific requirements, expectations, abilities, and social and cultural contexts. However, whether GOs and NGOs choose to address these issues when engaging beneficiaries remains quite vague in the literature. So too are the limitations that both organisations experience across countries, along with the strategies they adopt to maximise beneficiary engagement. Hence, this study finds its relevance by investigating and comparing GO and NGO schemas within these research settings.

2.6. Engaging and organizations: Bangladesh context

Research context of my study is specific to Bangladesh as mentioned in section 1.1 of the first chapter. The development discourse thus far has focused on both beneficiary engagement and the organisations and approaches involved in development. Together, this provides an overview of how development discourse has gradually become more people focused. The discussions further detail how people-oriented development has been integrated into national contexts. To relate the findings to the research, it is essential to now examine literature that unpacks these concepts within the context of Bangladesh. This will further reveal how the study contributes to the domain. Discourse outlined earlier in this chapter creates an important scope for reviewing literature that outlines people-oriented development, the roles of both GOs and NGOs in practice, the importance of project management, and the GO–NGO relations that are in place to address beneficiary engagement in Bangladesh.

2.6.1. Engagement and the colonial legacies of administering development

As part of British India and belonging to the eastern region of Bengal, Bangladesh has colonial legacies (Jahan 2006) with long-term effect on its economic development and democratisation. The literature expounds that the country's public sector is particularly subject to historical influence, and further notes that States with colonial pasts are more likely to inherit foreign domination in the present; indeed, this plays an instrumental role in shaping modern development (Lange 2004, p. 905). For Bangladesh, the end of British rule did not bring independence. Rather, the nation became part of eastern Pakistan as a result of partition in 1947. Jahan (2006) described this transition as 'Pakistani rulers replac[ing the] British', after which the country remained under administration from 1947 to 1971 before gaining independence on 16 December 1971. Now, it remains critical to understand how these two colonial legacies have prevailed in Bangladesh to gauge present-day attitudes on governmental control. Literature on

administrative culture in Bangladesh strongly supports the view that colonialism in the region had significant effects on administration, national approaches to development and the government's attitude towards people who are beneficiaries of development (Hakim 1987; Jahan 2006; Jamil 2002; Zafarullah 1987, 2007; Zafarullah and Huque 2001).

2.6.2. Political domain and trends of external assistance

Research on development assistance in Bangladesh is deeply rooted in the country's political development since 1971 and the different phases of its political history in the following decades. Literature on national development tends to examine the country's political background and development assistance in relation to its efforts in securing economic growth and policy reform. Both political instability and natural disaster remain at the centre of development discussions on Bangladesh, where different phases of political and social change prompt different dimensions and extents of foreign assistance (Kochanek 1997; Rahman 1990; Sobhan 1979). As a relatively new democracy affected by war and ecological devastation, Bangladesh has had to depend on external aid to implement most of its development programs since the 1970s (Raihan 2012, p. 240).

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in a period when development concepts and assistance were significantly manifest by policy shifts from industrialisation to poverty reduction (see Section 2.1) at international level. Two significant development initiatives include the United Kingdom's 1975 White Paper 'More Aid for the Poorest' and the US International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1975 (Moyo 2009, p. 16). These proposals at the international level held critical importance for Bangladesh following the effects of war and famine in 1974. As Sobhan (1979) noted, the nation had to depend on food aid during that time, but not without international interference and demerits of dependence (outlined in Section 2.1.2). Here, Bangladesh provides an example of how aid conditions can,

and do, affect State policies immediately after securing national independence. Sobhan (1979, p. 1973) noted that food aid was instrumental in creating political sanctions in Bangladesh, pressuring the government to change its policies on food distribution and farm subsidies. In this sense, aid became a political weapon. Important to note that Bangladesh had enforced 'socialist development' against capitalism, limited privatisation and introduced a one-party system to democracy following Constitutional amendments in 1975 (GOB 1973; Hakim and Huque 1995; Maniruzzaman 1976).

Despite changing its political system following a 15-year military rule, poverty alleviation in Bangladesh has persisted (Jahan 2006). 'A popular slogan of all successive political leadership' (Sobhan 1998), 'poverty alleviation' has provided consistent grounds upon which the nation receives external development aid. However, influence from discourse at an international level has since shifted the focus from poverty reduction to reform. In addition, heightened economic stability and privatisation in the 1980s have affected the development process in Bangladesh. Throughout the decade, development was significantly influenced by the WB's structural adjustment programs (Raihan 2008; Sobhan 1998). Subsequent scrutiny of development assistance following the devastating floods in 1988 encouraged international communities to examine the ways in which aid was provided to the country. Since then, development agencies have remained critical of aid management in Bangladesh, including the use of aid for political purposes (Rahman 1990, p. 155).

The development literature critically analysed the NGOs in Bangladesh as an institutional base to minimise gaps in the public sector and address political crises while under military rule until the 1990s. (Haque 2002) mentioned that NGO expansion was not affected during this period of non-democratic control throughout 1975 to 1990. In fact, the number of non-government agents (both local and foreign) increased from 101 in 1975 to 461 by 1990–1991 (Bangladesh

Financial Intelligence Unit 2015). Within the same context, Batley (2011, p. 308) mentioned that changes in national power structure and to its military regime did not affect the role of NGOs. Rather, the presence of donors enabled their survival and empowered them to continue their functions under different political controls (Batley 2011). As Haque (2002, p. 414) further noted, the military reign between 1982 and 1990 in Bangladesh saw significant growth of NGOs due to 'the regime's efforts to enhance its legitimacy at the grassroots level' and to 'use large NGOs as substitutes for opposition political parties'. Besides social and economic factors, NGO growth was further attributed to 'over population, rural poverty and landlessness' (Haque 2002, p. 414).

Returning to democracy in 1991, the country's economy needed rebuilding. Now at the forefront of prospective development, improved restructuring and economic governance necessitated reductions in import duties, better incentives for foreign investors and reductions in domestic tax to encourage private-sector activity (Kochanek 1997, p. 141). The country also focused on reforming its civil administration to ensure efficient management of development assistance. Donors' preference for 'good' governance has since encouraged or compelled developing countries to undertake economic and structural reforms (Jamil 2002, p. 97) that is also the case for Bangladesh.

Rather than depending solely on foreign aid, Bangladesh continued to restructure its economy while addressing the emergent trends in foreign aid, which favoured governance reform. This approach to development and administrative efficiency that the country adopted aligned with the foreign aid agenda of the 1990s—addressing both governance and community participation of the nation's people as promoted by the DAC and OECD (Führer 1996)—and the WB's aid provision, which afforded aid money specifically for governance reform and sustainable economic growth (see Moyo 2009, pp. 22–23). For Bangladesh, this trend of restructuring,

governance and development implies less dependence on aid and more focus on foreign investment, trade, export and remittance to upscale the growth it gradually experienced throughout the 1990s and 2000s, as identified by Raihan (2012). Further, too, both foreign direct investments (FDI) and policy reform were responsible for enhancing the country's steady economic growth (Tabassum and Ahmed 2014). Here, Amin and Murshed (2017, p. 104) considered four categories of foreign inflow (i.e., aid, FDIs, investment and remittance) that were instrumental for the 'terrific performance in attainment of sustainable economic development' in Bangladesh. National development planning newly focused on achieving both the MDGs and SDGs with greater emphasis on sustainable human development in health, population, education, technology and ICT (Raihan 2012).

However, focus on 'good' governance and orientation to people in development do not necessarily mean that external assistance has ceased in Bangladesh. Rather, aid contributes to its continued economic growth and development. These spheres are very distinct by definition relative to the concept of human development. Here, Kosack and Tobin (2006, p. 208) argue that it supports economic expansion by increasing the nation's workforce capacity; however, economic growth likewise contributes to further investment in human development itself. This concept relates to trends in foreign aid to Bangladesh, as more help comes in the form of project assistance and ADP funding (Raihan 2012, p. 257). This is particularly evident in an ERD (n. d.) report that shows a decline in food aid from 1,102 metric tons between 1972 and 1973 to 87.6 metric tons between 2015 and 2016. In contrast, project aid increased from 68.08 million to 85.88 million, respectively, within the same two time periods (ERD n. d.). Given this, restructuring economic growth and changes in support purposes create a gap in the literature through which to examine how project beneficiaries are integrated within this process. It also welcomes further study to see what the literature demonstrates about the roles that GOs and NGOs play in engaging project beneficiaries in Bangladesh.

2.6.3. Engaging and the context of GOs

Discourse on how the State responds to people's inclusion in development typically focuses on the roles that government has in developing strategies to implement various policies and programs. According to Section 2.4, previous literature emphasised how scholars relate the nature of bureaucracy, organisational culture and the capacity to cope with changing environments to the strategies GOs implement to involve people in national development. More specifically, literature on Bangladesh and its development has analysed the roles of both government and non-government agents, expanded findings on the relations between these two entities, and compared their individual approaches to observe how each responds to people within development.

In analysing both GO and NGO-led project implementation in developing countries (including Bangladesh), Kaul (1990, p. 25) found that organisations must, above all, adhere to changing environments, respect individuals' ability to cope with change and have alternative options in place to safeguard their success. What May, Workman and Jones (2008, p. 518) further emphasised adds to this concept, noting that the process of responding to policy demands and urgency depends on other factors such as changes in agency leadership, resources, new laws and agency reorganisation. Countering this, Jahan (2006) stated that the role of public services in Bangladesh following democratic transition in 1991 was redefined from 'intervener' to 'referee'. Hence, the objective was to make government agencies more citizen-oriented by transforming development strategies from State-centred, nationalised approaches to ones with more market focus. Some strategies used to bring about change include effectiveness, decentralisation and effective partnership (Jahan 2006, p. 4). Here, Jamil (2002, p. 97) identified four additional aspects that encompass the usual norms and values of the society, colonial administration, administrative reforms and community change programs associated with

change, shifting development focus to the public. Importantly, this transition is supposedly instrumental for creating spaces in which NGOs can undertake people-oriented development, as well as enhancing partnerships between GOs, NGOs and private sectors to implement various projects. These efforts culminated in the country experiencing major shifts in government policy, from relief to development (Zohir 2004).

Further highlighting the importance of communal involvement, the literature covers a wide range of investigations on different projects that create opportunities for people. However, the community involvement has been discussed from their participatory point of view rather than discussing how beneficiaries are engaged (the end result and process shown in Figure 2.5) in the GO-NGO development settings. Hadi (2000) assessed BRAC's sanitation programs, arguing that the social and behavioural aspects of participatory development bring success to such initiatives. Similarly, Rana, Toshikuni and Muhammed (2007) identified how participation in a forest management program influenced the standard of living and increased income for individuals in participating communities. However, Dewan, Buisson and Mukherji (2014) argued that emphasis on community-based natural resource management minimises the role of local governments. Although literature explored in this thesis primarily focuses on NGOs and communities engaged in development, Batley (2011), Alam (2011) and Sansom (2011) each found that commitment from the government primarily determines the success of project implementation. Further, it is argued that GO-based development planning ultimately decides whether NGOs can undertake participatory development programs in the first place.

Despite the findings on people's involvement in development, literature on government critically question whether succeeding administrations, which inherited the colonial legacy, can adapt and adjust to the requirements of engaging its nation's people. For Jamil (2002), the 'bureaucratic ills' generally portray government as standing in the way of development rather

than encouraging it. Both the external (i.e., political environment, citizens and civil society) and internal (i.e., authority, decision-making, uncertainty and employee attributions) environments that compose the country's organisational culture hold relevance to government in Bangladesh (Jamil 2002). Addressing these distinct spheres means stakeholders must remain cautious when initiating change to public function so that existing norms, practices, new ideas and innovations do not spark or enhance potential conflict (Zafarullah and Huque 2001). Moreover, intervention is not only about bringing structural reform to Bangladesh, but also a matter of altering bureaucratic behaviour to incite change. To this, Zafarullah (2007, p. 170) argues that the bureaucracy in Bangladesh is associated with a sense of 'elitism' inherited from the Indian Civil Service and the Civil Service of Pakistan. Offsetting this trait will prove difficult without first transforming the nation's bureaucratic conduct. Though reform initiatives have been undertaken since gaining independence, the literature either aligns these efforts with underlying political intentions or inadequate strategies to achieve reform objectives of enhanced service delivery (Azizuddin 2011; Huque 1996). Moreover, public administration in Bangladesh is typically analysed from a political point of view, characterised by the different leaders and regimes in power, starting from the Bangladesh Awami League (AL) (1971–1975), the two military regimes (BNP-led 1975-1982 and Jatiyo Party-led 1982-1990), and the BNP and AL from 1991 to date (Azizuddin 2011).

However, these findings do not necessarily confirm that people-focused reform has not been undertaken in Bangladesh. Research studies by Hadi (2000), Rana, Toshikuni and Muhammed (2007), Dewan, Buisson and Mukherji (2014), Batley (2011), Alam (2011) and Sansom (2011) each provide evidences in which project beneficiaries and communities have been integrated into the development process. Bringing people closer to government—as opposed to maintaining separation between State and citizen during colonial administration—has witnessed political reign in successive years invite changes to the centralised, Dhaka-based

government functions of bygone decades. Introduction of the UPZ system, as well as decentralisation of divisional and district administrative headquarters in Bangladesh, are just some important initiatives that sought to edge individuals closer to the country's administration and further subject bureaucracy to respond to market changes (Jamil 2002, p. 100). Schroeder (1985) provided a thorough analysis of how decentralisation caused a major shift in government function from central- to local-level service delivery during 1980s. Blair's (1985) study on participation, public policy and rural development in Bangladesh provides a thorough analysis of different regimes in the history of Bangladesh and identified how each of the political regimes emphasised on decentralisation of public functions to ensure citizen's participation. In analysing development policies starting from 1958 to 1985, Blair (1985) said that development can be successful over longer term through participatory local institutions. Table 2.2 outlines the decentralisation of administrative units in Bangladesh across various national structures between 1971, 1982 and now.

Table 2.2. Past and current administrative units in Bangladesh

Structure	Year		
	1971–1982	1982	Current
Division	4	4	8
District	21	64	64
Subdivision	71	0	0
Thana/Upazila (UPZ)	474	460 (Thana)	491 (UPZ)
Union	4,354	4,354	4,554

Source: Bangladesh National Information Portal (online), Schroeder (1985, p. 1136).

Schroeder (1985) drew attention to the centralised structure that existed before 1982, wherein administrative functions were mainly overseeing rather than able to provide direct public services. Here, the main objective of decentralising service provisions in 1980s was to minimise the distance between local people and GOs providing services at the field level. However, whether these objectives have been realised practically in engaging development beneficiaries

at the local level is yet to be identified. GOs in Bangladesh have also been studied in relation to decentralisation and in understanding the roles that local institutions play in reaching people, enhancing access to services and in contributing to regional development. Notably, Hulme and Siddiquee (1999) identified decentralisation initiatives in Bangladesh that focus on strengthening organisations at the local level and improving service delivery by local authorities. In this view, Panday (2017) argued that central control of administration and planning as well as political interference create limitations for decentralised institutions (such as UPZ) to operate effectively. Bardhan (2002) also discussed how decentralised food supply intended for a national education program helped local school committees to identify beneficiaries and to fulfil the program's 'pro-poor' targets. Women's participation in local development has also been integrated in government initiatives to increase female representation in the UP through direct election (Khan and Ara 2006).

Achievement of MDGs has provided yet another dimension of development discussion within the context of Bangladesh, further outlining the purpose of the government to reach goals in health, education and poverty alleviation (among other sectors). The General Economic Division (GED 2015) in Bangladesh published periodical progress reports on MDGs that showed gradual achievement (Sen 2018). In assessing the nation's growth in health and nutrition, Sack (2008) critically analysed challenges related to population size, which (in part) limit people's access to public health services across Bangladesh. Chowdhury et al. (2011) further identified national progress on reducing child and maternal mortality, and contributions from GOs in monitoring, training and undertaking the National Neonatal Health Strategy 2009. Meanwhile, Rabbi (2018) provided a chronology of policy interventions of GOB geared towards achieving MDGs for primary education.

Overall, the discourse demonstrates that government in Bangladesh has (in relation to development) received critical analysis according to administrative culture, historical influence of colonial administration, development interventions through decentralisation, and ongoing commitments to MDG and SDG achievements. Evidently, the literature is not only limited to examining the bureaucracy and elitism of the government but also provides an overview of how these organisations have gradually shifted from centralised administrations to people-centred development. However, how far this change is focused on engaging beneficiaries in the country's development requires further investigation of GO-NGO practices of beneficiary engagement.

2.6.4. Engaging and significance of NGOs

In defining NGO roles within the development context of Bangladesh, the research discussions submit three major angles (Charlton and May 1995; Jamil 1998; Tarrannum 2009): the development environment congenial for NGO expansion over recent decades; NGO advantages in comparison to bureaucratic functions of government; and the need to secure NGO innovations and diverse objectives to link development and people at a grassroots level. Expansion is also a result of non-government interest in a wide variety of development works such as sustainable development solutions, community development, service delivery, income generation and provision of emergency assistance across evolving nations including Bangladesh (Charlton and May 1995; Islam 2016; Zohir 2004). Since the country's independence in 1971, NGOs in Bangladesh have shifted focus from humanitarian aid and providing emergency relief, to implementing self-help projects and improving service delivery (spanning education and health sectors). This extends to raising public awareness; improving women's development; encouraging group formation, leadership and training in management; and introducing microcredit programs and income-generation projects for 'empowering' people

(Jamil 1998, p. 44). In describing the ‘genesis’ of NGOs in Bangladesh, Tarrannum (2009) further categorised these organisations into four generations according to various roles they play. That is, from 1971 to date, NGO roles range from addressing emergency relief, forming credit unions and cooperatives, providing agrarian reform and rural development, and affording policy advocacy to better reflect people’s needs for development (Tarrannum 2009, pp. 31–32; Zohir 2004).

Now considered an ‘action group’ of change, these organisations became agents of development in Bangladesh, mainly as a consequence of donor advocacy and partnership (Haider 2011; Islam and Walkerden 2015; Rahman 2006; Sarker 2005). In their efforts, NGOs are seemingly capable of mobilising the poor and organising their participation in rural development through grassroots alignment and disaster-resilience capacity. Accordingly, Sarker (2005) viewed their role in relation to the concept of NPM (see Section 2.1), arguing that in comparison to GOs, NGOs demonstrate success in providing certain basic services through creative and situational approaches. NGOs link rural people to markets and entrepreneurial activities, offer autonomous management strategies and group mobilisation, and invest in human resources development (Sarker 2005).

Moreover, Haider (2011) linked NGO roles more to community development, microcredit management, service-sector development, emergence of grassroots campaigns, and in terms of national poverty alleviation. These connections to the public contribute not only to their capacity in mobilising people for community development, but also to their resilience within periods of natural disasters. Islam and Walkerden’s (2015) study on NGO roles in disaster-prone villages outlined, from a recovery perspective, that their connections to community households enhanced both short and long-term recovery phases. In this sense, NGOs are important institutional partners in any multilayered disaster-management strategy of GOB

(Khan and Rahman 2007), mainly because they bring grassroots concerns to the fore of government-based disaster mitigation and preparedness (Matin and Taher 2001). In the literature, Batley (2011), Alam (2011) and McLoughlin (2011) further noted NGO contributions to service-sector projects in Bangladesh and provided different aspects of their roles related to service delivery, project management and community mobilisation for participation. Similarly, Chowdhury et al. (2013) noted how NGOs make palpable differences in promoting national health services, despite evidence of ongoing economic turmoil.

Non-government sectors in Bangladesh earned their reputation for uplifting rural people from poverty, implementing a variety of successful projects, delivering microcredit programs with positive repayment, delivering non-formal education opportunities, and in building rural capacity for income generation (Alam 2011; Batley and Rose 2011; Clark 1995; Haque 2004; Sansom 2011; White 1999). However, NGOs are also experiencing changes within international development contexts, mainly related to donor engagement and coordination with GOs. Questions on sustainability, the effectiveness of NGO programs and the need for effective State intervention in development (as identified) also apply (Lewis and Opoku-Mensah 2006).

2.6.5. GOs, NGOs and engagement: divergence of opinion in Bangladesh

Comparing GOs and NGOs in Bangladesh is crucial to understand how each functions according to various concepts of development and how both will continue to grow within the process of engaging the nation’s people. General perception on GOs in Bangladesh usually conjures associations with top-down administration exercising control and authority over non-government sectors. Indeed, the government has formal power over these entities in the forms of regulatory and institutional rule. Various legislations on NGOs and foreign donations regulate NGO functions in Bangladesh and the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) is the formal

organisation that monitors NGO functions and foreign aid flowing to NGOs (Haque 2002, p. 418).

Broadly speaking, the literature has condemned the power structure underlying GO–NGO relations, citing the former's control over the latter and attitudes of public-sector officials towards both NGO executives and staff as particularly oppressive (Ahmad 2002; Jamil 1998; Karim 1996; Sanyal 1991). Generally, GOs exert more control over NGOs when they feel threatened by their influence on, for example, mobilise people against the government or participate in political activities encouraging policy change (Hashemi 1996). Power also derives in their ability to manipulate donors into diverting funds from government projects, close income gaps and threaten difference through alternative lifestyle observations of NGO leaders (Haque 2002, p. 419; Hashemi 1996; Sanyal 1991, p. 1370). Here, Karim (1996, p. 137) points out that members of government and political parties generally view NGOs negatively. The most common criticisms held include the overlap of roles, lack of coordination and high administrative costs involved in their running. Similarly, NGO observations on government, according to Sanyal (1991, p. 1371), cite the 'us vs them' divide between each sphere as the main source of disparity. In the past, donors' perceived scepticism about government efficiency led to added support for NGOs in many Asian and sub-Saharan countries, causing 'resentment' and 'hostility' in the public sector (Jamil 1998, p. 43). Ahmad's (2002, p. 101) research noted similar findings, citing examples in which government officials openly opposed the popularity and influence of NGOs, as they are supposedly used to 'enjoy immense power at the local and national levels in Bangladesh'.

That said, research on local NGOs seem particularly critical about their accountability towards beneficiaries. However, Karim (1996, p. 139) defended their duty by highlighting how these organisations are regularly accountable to their respective Board of Governors or Executive

Committee. Through these management bodies (alongside government regulations), NGOs must register as organisations and report to the NGOAB. It is through social mobilisation (for which people turn to non-government forces) that make these bodies 'acceptable to the people and earn their credibility by offering programs in which people have confidence and become gainer by associating with them' (Ahmed and Rafi 1999, p. 6).

Limitations also exist at both government and NGO levels to progress development results. Worse, even, evidence shows that NGOs neither incorporate the opinions of beneficiaries in their decision-making (Tarannum 2009, pp. 14, 80), while forging dependency of the poor and charging higher interests on microcredit allowances. This joins biased selection of less advantaged social groups pining for loans, as well as limited capacity of the underprivileged to bargain with NGOs (Islam 2016, pp. 1186–1187). The lack of accountability towards service recipients is a governance issue further identified in one qualitative study by Transparency International Bangladesh, (TIB 2007), combining desk research with fieldwork and fact finding on 20 NGOs in Bangladesh. Here, exaggerated reports on service recipients were considered a key problem concerning NGO accountability towards beneficiaries.

Overall, this section highlights the underlying aspects of political and administrative influence in the development context of Bangladesh wherein NGOs have expanded their functions over multiple sectors. As shown, the GO–NGO relationship encounters forces of influence from highly specific contextual factors and institutional arrangements; however, these same factors are equally necessary to address when engaging both service delivery and community inclusion in the development process. Discourse outlined in Section 2.6 on development and its orientation to people in Bangladesh becomes particularly significant, as it covers the political and administrative aspects and roles of GOs as comparatively distant entities from the people. In contrast, NGOs are valued as more people-friendly groups that help integrate community

members into national development. Thus, analysis on their relationship is generally advanced through the perspectives of power, control and donor influence. Within the context of Bangladesh, these discussions certainly create scope for investigating whether GO–NGO roles in development are defined in terms of beneficiary engagement. This is further based on people-centred development concepts as discussed in section 2.1 notifying the challenges or opportunities that both organisations experience in practicing beneficiary engagement. As such, examination of recent trends and comparative analysis between these agents remain necessary. Given these gaps, this study undoubtedly offers a timely information that contributes to the development discourse specifically based in Bangladesh.

2.7. Review and its relevance to the research study

Engaging in development appears closely linked to the conceptual progression of development concept itself and its affiliation with people. First, sections 2.1 and 2.2 captured the gradual advancement of people-oriented development. The review includes discussions on how the concepts of development, poverty reduction, NPM, and the roles of NGOs have progressed from the West and moved within the development context of the Third World. Here, the significant roles of donors, government and non-government sectors were further elaborated. In national and local contexts, organisational roles (such as international development agencies, national government and NGOs) and project management necessary for addressing people in development constituted the focus in Sections 2.3 and 2.4. Also examined were the requirements of beneficiaries to enhance their engagement, as well as the trends in development research relative to Bangladesh (see Section 2.5). Finally, the roles of GOs and NGOs and varying perceptions on organisational duty within development (see Section 2.6) proved specific to the research context, further establishing the study's academic relevance.

Findings from the literature review also help identify the ways that Bangladesh has shaped its strategies to include people in development. Also defined are the various roles that public-sector organisations play and the spaces in which non-government groups can address community involvement in development projects. Nonetheless, there remains significant scope for future research within the context of Bangladesh to further illustrate the engagement practices that both GOs and NGOs may offer, beneficiary engagement in GO-NGO project settings, and GO-NGO relationship if fosters on beneficiary engagement. For a detailed overview outlining the relevance of the literature review to the research context, as well as the contextual scope of study and the expected outcomes following investigation (see Figure 2.6. Figure 2.1). In figure 2.1, I have sequenced the literature review to identify gaps which has been expanded in Figure 2.6 where gaps are identified that justify conducting this study as described below.

First, this study revealed limited resources on systematic reviews of planning and policy in Bangladesh covering recent trends in development and beneficiary engagement. Thus examinations of planning and policies that address beneficiary engagement in recent past and into the new millennium remain critical to gauge the extent that progress has occurred in Bangladesh. Approaches to participation in development dominate literature in the field. Against this trend of development literature, finding out the prior requirements such as beneficiary engagement as shown in Figure 2.5 will contribute to creating a knowledge base. How far GO-NGO practices are in place to ensure beneficiary engagement and this research querying whether these practices align with beneficiary engagement can provide important contributions to the literature. Moreover, investigations on GO-NGO development policies and planning relating to beneficiary engagement is also expected. This will provide more accurate summations of recent strategic trends and applications prevailing in Bangladesh.

Second, discourse on the roles that GOs and NGOs play in engaging beneficiaries within development practice mainly tackled the bureaucratic nature of government agents, non-government groups' comparatively people-focused strategies, the power relations between each sector, and their effects on GO–NGO affairs in developing countries (including Bangladesh). These arguments culminated to question whether GOs have any role in engagement when planning and implementing development initiatives, or whether NGOs are singularly responsible for these efforts in Bangladesh. Literature on the field generally revealed leverage across both groups; however, the extent to which the leverages are supportive of beneficiary engagement and the respective roles each shares in this process remain critical to create engaging environments for individual participants within Bangladesh.

Third, comparative analysis aimed to identify the advantages and limitations of GO and NGO presence in beneficiary engagement. Part of the literature highlights the nature of bureaucracy as hindering GOs from ensuring participation. Conversely, organisational objectives and ability to reach individuals were commonly attributed to NGOs. The individual limitations and advantages that each possess were also noted; however, any comparison between the two in engaging beneficiaries were limited mainly within the context of Bangladesh.

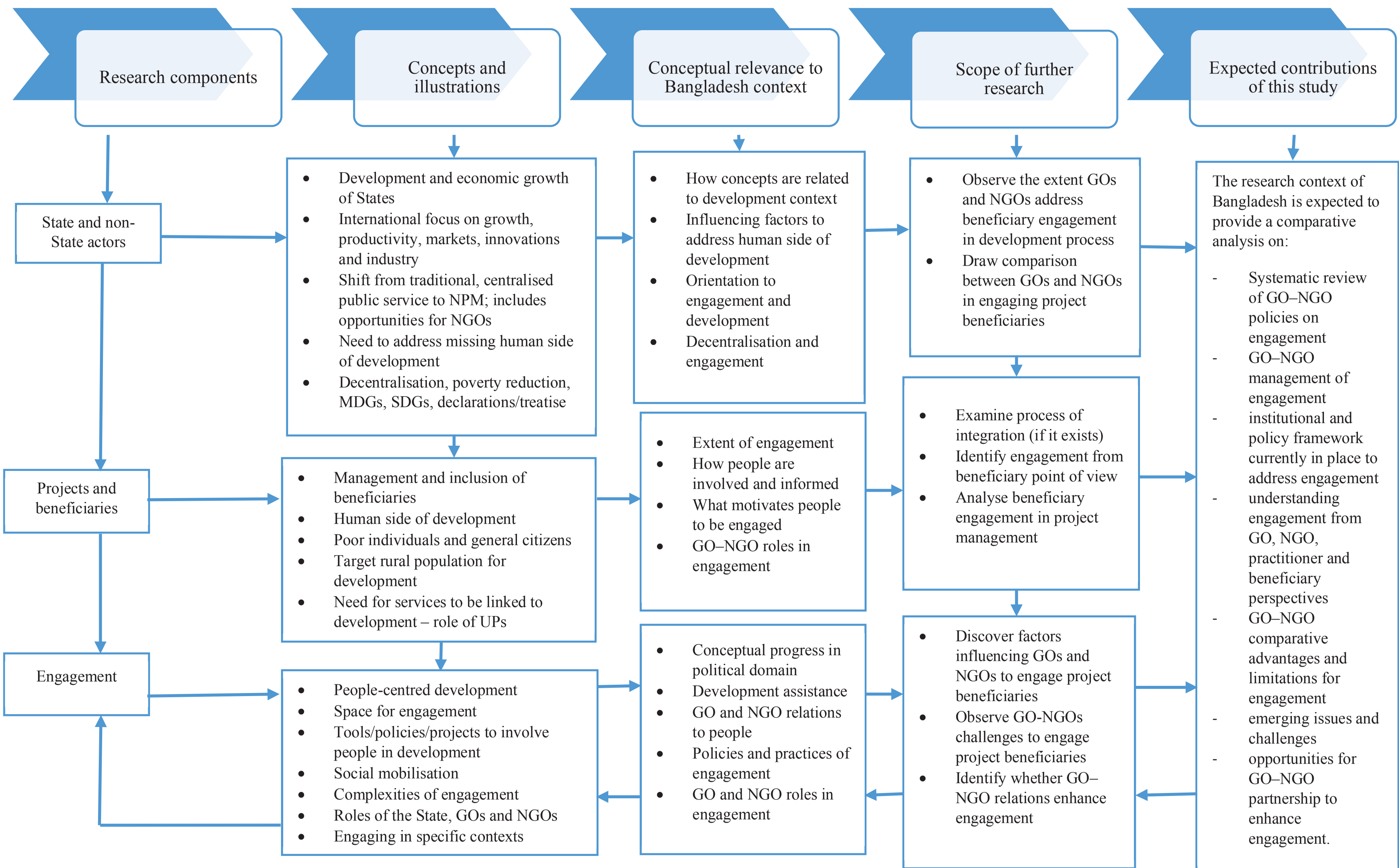


Figure 2.6. Relating concepts to research investigations within the context of Bangladesh

Hence, through comparative analysis, this study contributes by filling the research gaps and examining whether each sector's organisational leverage influences their capacity to secure beneficiary engagement. This was accomplished by drawing comparisons between the contexts in which GOs and NGOs in Bangladesh operate, thus, outlining the distinct advantages and limitations of their respective practice.

Finally, the findings on GO–NGO relations cover aspects of power, donor influence and GOs' control over NGOs. That said, the literature is yet to unpack whether beneficiary engagement in the development process can create opportunities for both groups to build effective and supportive partnerships. As such, this research intended to examine if these efforts within Bangladesh are instrumental to enhancing GO–NGO relations. Following several decades' worth of discourse on development, participation, and government and non-government influence, it is critical to observe the bond in several regards. First, consider whether partnership has any implications on beneficiary engagement; second, examine the extent to which this relationship is affected by challenges; and third, assess whether their respective engagement objectives provide opportunities through which to enhance partnership in development.

Overall, in progressing the research study, this thesis gradually builds on findings from the literature review and relates them to the purpose of investigation through a qualitative research method. The following chapter discusses the research methodology, data collection and analysis methods appropriate to conduct this study following the review of literature. Results from analysis further contribute to existing discourse on people-centred development.

Chapter 3. Research methodology

The research methodology and methods were designed according to phenomenological 'approach to research investigation, given its relevance to the study of society and its orientation, as Hitzler and Eberle (2004) mentioned, to the epistemology of social science research. Essentially, 'phenomenology' is concerned with how individuals make sense of the world and how researchers 'bracket out the perceptions in his or her grasp' therein (Bryman 2008, p. 15). The concept of phenomenology is embedded in the understanding of an 'individual's awareness' that generates information through exploring 'people's everyday life experiences' (Mohajan 2018, p. 29) within a given reality of the social context. When 'social reality' is studied, a researcher needs to consider that human beings have 'qualitative differences' and an 'ability to think and learn' (Neuman 2011, p. 94). Oriented to the epistemological problems, understanding experiences in a social context helps in understanding the meaning of social problems through formal description of their basic structure (Hitzler and Eberle 2004, p. 67). This approach also attempts to understand 'how participants make sense of their experiences' (Mohajan 2018, p. 30). To this, the concept's epistemological orientation is likewise concerned with the creation of knowledge and its attainment in addition to existing knowledge, and when uncovering the most valid ways to establish new knowledge bases (Neuman 2011, p. 93).

Neuman (2011, p. 94) illustrates how the epistemological orientation of social science research is mainly guided by three approaches: positivist social science, interpretive social science and critical social science. While positivist approaches underscore 'discovering causal laws and careful observations', interpretative science exposes how different people interpret 'the world they live in' (Walliman 2006, p. 21), emphasising 'meaningful social actions' (Neuman 2011, p. 101). Hence, interpretivism is essentially concerned with the theory and method of

interpreting human actions (Bryman 2008, p. 15). Critical social science researchers move beyond discovering and understanding, and initiate 'activism for human empowerment' (Neuman 2011, p. 108). Given the nature of the wider domain, the concept effectively questions 'the position of human subject and researcher and the status of social phenomena', with the relevant approaches being 'positivism' and 'interpretivism' (Walliman 2006, p. 19). Thus, to select an appropriate research methodology for this study, I linked these theoretical understandings to the research aims, objectives and research problems outlined in Chapter 1.

At its core, the proposed research investigation aims to understand the practices that GOs and NGOs follow to engage project beneficiaries in development initiatives, specifically within the context of Bangladesh. Through comparative analysis of the approaches both groups employ to engage people in national development, I will grasp the key methods through which engagement transpires and the specific phenomena that permit engagement opportunities. As such, I considered an epistemological explanation of the research investigation, as it denotes a 'point of reference' and creates the 'implicit basis for research work in the social sciences' (Hitzler and Eberle 2004, p. 68). I further aimed to investigate the institutional and human actions through which to interpret GO–NGO practices within the engagement process. Importantly, I adopted an interpretivist, epistemological orientation to research theory, which influenced selection of the research methodology and the analytical techniques employed herein.

3.1. Research questions

Comparative analysis between GOs and NGOs in Bangladesh was drawn to gauge how beneficiaries are being engaged in national development initiatives. This required studying government and non-government approaches to project management and strategies for effective engagement. Conducting interviews and FGDs with sample respondents proved

critical to obtain data that informed the research questions and subsequently conduct comparative analysis. This required further study on key institutions (GOs and NGOs) deemed responsible for implementing and managing development projects in the study context. Against this backdrop and as noted in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3), this research investigated four research questions, which focused on (1) the scope of development planning and policies; (2) how GOs and NGOs address beneficiary engagement when managing development initiatives; (3) the comparative advantages and limitations both groups experience in beneficiary engagement; and (4) the critical opportunities involved in GO–NGO partnership to enhance beneficiary engagement in the country's development context. Details of the research questions are provided in Appendix 1.

Data collection revealed that GOs are primarily responsible for undertaking development programs in Bangladesh, but NGOs also manage projects in various service sectors, either as implementing partners with the government or as independent providers of services, skills and advocacy (as approved by the concerned authority). Government line ministries, departments and field administration are held accountable for undertaking development initiatives and delivering services to people, while NGOs implement development projects using funds from both development partners and GOs. Both groups operate within the legal and administrative policy frameworks and have financial and administrative accountability to their respective authorities, including line ministries, departments, donors and the NGOAB (as applicable in the national context).

3.2. Selection of research methodology and methods

Generally, a research methodology refers to the 'general approach to studying a research topic', which 'establishes how the researcher will go about studying the phenomenon' (Silverman 2004, p. 37). Clough and Nutbrown (2012, p. 36) define the 'methodology' as a way of

articulating research questions asked in a particular academic field, including its effect or claim of significance. Neuman (2011) elaborates, stating how different approaches to social science research may vary in different social contexts. In this sense, researchers require awareness 'of the logic and assumptions on which they rest' (Neuman 2011, p. 90) to understand a given research problem. The research methodology must be appropriate to investigate the proposed research questions, obtain views of research participants in the given context, and help establish results through data analysis. It is also important to align the research questions, intended aims and (a combination of) approaches to gather results following exploratory investigation (Barbour 2008, p. 152). Through these attempts, researchers can and do understand the 'diverse perspectives' of a domain (as evidenced in the social sciences), and pursue 'an informed choice among alternatives for the type of research' (Neuman 2011, p. 91). Hence, it proved essential to align the research questions, aims and (a combination of) approaches in this study to garner effective results for analysis (Barbour 2008, p. 152).

3.2.1. Approach to quantitative and qualitative research methodology

Examples of social science research methodologies include both quantitative and qualitative methods. As Silverman (2004, p. 37) explains, the former deals with numbers as evidence to support key arguments, and the latter attempts to employ first-hand understanding to inform analysis. Berg (2004, p. 7) found that selecting a research methodology based on any procedure providing nominal and numerical data is not sufficient to establish the theoretical implications of investigative study, as the purpose of research is to find answers to questions through the application of systematic procedures. To this, Bryman (2008, p. 22) distinguished quantitative and qualitative research strategies by relating the former to positivism and the later to interpretivism. Essentially, qualitative methodologies seek answers to research questions by 'examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings' (Berg 2004,

p. 7). In this sense, qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world, makes it visible and transforms that setting into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photos, recordings and memos (Denzin and Lincoln 2013, p. 6).

For Marshall and Rossman (2006), the characteristics of qualitative research and the researchers involved justify its methodological selection for this study. They deemed it an approach hinged on context, which is interpretive and emergent in nature, rather than tightly predetermined. The key role of qualitative research is to understand a specific problem holistically and to use reasoning that is multifaceted (Marshall and Rossman 2006, p. 3). According to Barbour (2008, p. 9), qualitative research 'can be exhilarating and can provide unique and valuable insights', which are critical to establishing key arguments while analysing information obtained throughout a study. This may not be counted numerically, but rather measured in theoretical terms, making sense of individual or group experiences and/or identifying both the cause and effects of research findings (Gomm 2004, p. 7). As Barbour (2008, p. 15) neatly supposed, this method creates a foundation upon which to explain data through different scientific or mathematical calculations or interpretations.

Evidently, qualitative study chiefly 'allows the researcher to approach the inherent complexity of social interaction', while expanding their 'understanding' of certain 'interactions' to uncover their inherent complexity (Glense and Peshkin 1991, pp. 7, 11). Such an approach is certainly relevant to this study, as it involves a range of different stakeholders, including GOs, NGOs, project staff, beneficiaries and development partners. As such, it proved critical to recognise how each entity interacts when projects are implemented and recipients are engaged.

Qualitative study also helps researchers analyse the different dimensions involved in their interactions, whether individually or collectively. From this perspective, qualitative research

facilitates interpretation and constructs telling research narratives, rather than simply presenting the findings following analysis. Inclusion of institutions, project-management staff and beneficiaries in the data collection phase further cognise the interrelations that inform regional engagement. Upon investigating the research questions, I attempted to define these dynamics relative to how 'engagement' actually occurs. For this, a qualitative research approach encourages data generation using small number of respondents (Glense and Peshkin 1991).

Evidently, a qualitative research methodology was deemed the most appropriate approach through which to investigate the research questions and further establish a comparative analysis of GO–NGO engagement practices. Moreover, it facilitates understanding of the interrelationships between organisations and the officials responsible for beneficiary and community engagement. Selection and eventual application during practical analysis aligned with the specific research context of this study.

3.2.2. Research methods for data collection

The relationship between method and methodology typifies the link between disciplinary support for techniques that facilitate a given research study (Kinash n.d.). According to Clough and Nutbrown (2012, p. 31), a methodology explains and justifies the particular methods employed in a study, and further helps researchers articulate the means through which to answer *why* particular questions are asked, *why* specific groups are selected for investigation and the number of respondents researchers should expect once a study is underway (Clough and Nutbrown 2012, p. 25). To this, Silverman (2004, p. 37) defines research methods as specific investigative tools used either to demonstrate statistical correlations (quantitative) or interpret observations, interviews or secondary sources (qualitative).

Selection was decided according to which research techniques proved most effective in drawing comparative analysis (i.e., between GO and NGO practices geared towards project beneficiary engagement within the development context of Bangladesh) and for investigating the research questions within a (highly specific) context. Through qualitative research, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources for subsequent analysis. Interviews and FGDs comprised the former means of collection, which were crosschecked with data from the latter. I used a mixed method approach for data collection which also guided an understanding of data collection contexts and analysis using different research methods.

Qualitative methods facilitated investigation to gain an 'holistic understanding' of the research problem and to interpret the findings against the research questions. In describing the benefits of this method, Mayoux (2006, p. 120) emphasised its ability to garner more complete understandings 'of complex issues and processes' and capture their 'underlying meanings'. Through this approach, the study could 'derive' and 'demonstrate' the 'greater depth' and 'fruitfulness' of the research problems (Berg 1989, p. 2). Moreover, qualitative study has proved itself an essential method to obtain full insights on relevant organisations and communicate with research participants. It helped establish contact with key officials responsible for project implementation, follow policies and procedures, engage beneficiaries and evaluate the deliverables—all of which takes place within complex settings involving multiple stakeholders. Qualitative study also helped to examine the framework in which GOs and NGOs operate, which demands total understanding of the subject matter and grounds the research in social science. Hence, qualitative methods were essential to the study, as it prioritised the 'complexity of the object of investigation, namely the human beings' throughout its course (Rosenstiel, cited in Flick, Kardoff, & Steinki 2004, p. 129).

To investigate the research questions defined in Section 1.3, the study required in-depth understanding of how GOs and NGOs interrelate, the existing policies in place, and how different institutional strategies contribute to GO-NGO practices throughout beneficiary engagement. Compiling data from research participants was then critical to develop a comparative analysis. During the collection phase, the study also required knowledge on how GOs and NGOs in Bangladesh work in the development field, in conjunction with the government policies and development partners in place, to provide assistance that promptly engages project beneficiaries. Hence, qualitative research was the most suitable method for comparative analysis and to examine with whom and where responsibility lies for practical engagement. The locational context in which this research was situated also created a strong basis for qualitative study. The social framework in which Bangladesh is embedded is distinct from that of any developed country. With most of its development projects targeted to the rural population, living in neither 'high-tech' nor advanced circumstances, this particular context created scope for qualitative research, which is comparatively less focused on measurable, or 'quantitative' markers of information (Berg 1989, p. 2).

In this sense, qualitative research helped not only gather data but also find answers to specific questions around a research problem. Upon investigating key prompts, this study attempted to define the strategies and dynamics that GOs and NGOs in Bangladesh employ to engage people within a practical context. Beneficiary engagement in project contexts was mainly assessed according to the strategies (if any) both groups follow throughout the development process. To this end, a qualitative research approach helped me generating a detailed investigation through interviews with 42 respondents, as suggested by Glense and Peshkin (1991), involved in both 'engagement' in and management of development in Bangladesh.

Collecting data from the sample groups helped inform the various strategies involved in development and subsequently compare these approaches. This also advised a targeted study on the institutions most responsible for implementing and managing development projects in Bangladesh, while understanding (based on formal insight) the beneficiaries involved within that process. In this sense, development is about discovering learned answers 'through a systematic approach', whereby qualitative research facilitates close examination of 'various social settings' (Berg 1989, p. 6) or different contexts. It is also expected to gain access to 'embedded' forces related to institutional and individual influence 'by focusing on the context' within which strategies, programs and activities function, and where 'decisions' are made to target and engage beneficiaries—'rather than simply looking' at numerical data to implement change (Barbour 2008, p. 13). The following sections collectively describe the different qualitative methods used during data collection.

3.2.2.1 In-depth interview

One of the most popular methods of field research is one-on-one interviews. This sees researchers ask structured, semi-structured or unstructured questions to gather information and initiate 'conversation[s] with purpose' (Berg 1989, 2004, p. 13). To this, Brinkmann (2013, pp. 3–4) added that interviews are conversational processes of 'knowing', facilitating the 'inter-view' or 'interchange' of knowledge between two persons, while providing wider contextual bases than any one technical or scientific research method.

Geared to understand (and later compare) the organisational dynamics that underlie GO-NGO engagement practices, this study relied on semi-structured interviews as one method to collect data. Literature on interviewing techniques generally defines three main approaches through which researchers interview their subjects: this includes standardised or structured interviews, open-ended interviews and semi-standardised interviews (Berg 1989; Bryman 2008; Byrne

2004). Bryman (2008, pp. 438–439) suggested that if interviews start with a clear focus, they are likely to be semi-structured in nature, permitting respondents 'a great deal of leeway in how to reply'. Although I (prior to discussion) compiled a list of guiding questions to ask participants during interview, the semi-structured nature of our conversations allowed for flexible debate, which was not strictly limited to the questions I had prepared. In this sense, it is important to maintain a clear 'ordering of questions' while ensuring utmost 'flexibility', as this prioritises the needs of respondents (Barbour 2008, p. 17) and produces the most useful and informative answers. Hence, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gauge the perceptions and roles of government and NGO officials, field workers and project personnel responsible at different levels of project management, and for interacting with the beneficiaries involved therein.

A few open-ended interview questions allowed respondents to raise relevant issues of personal rather than academic importance, thus, resulting in diverse streams of data (Gomm 2004, p. 160). The semi-structured interviews were also critical to understand individual attitudes and values on beneficiary engagement, which may not be so easily identified using standardised questionnaires (Byrne 2004, p. 209). Interviews actively involved the participants and helped establishing a strong starting point from which to gather background information and later justify other forms of data collection (e.g., from secondary sources) (Willis 2006, p. 144). In line with Willis (2006, p. 146), interviews essentially helped me gain 'factual' and detailed information on GO–NGO practices currently in place to involve people in development. Details of these discussions are provided in Section 3.5.

3.2.2.2 Use of secondary data

Secondary sources of data were consulted, in part, to better understand the existing policies and development planning in Bangladesh, and to later crosscheck information obtained

following discussions. Secondary data corresponded to the qualitative nature of the study, as well as the selection and application of a mixed-methods approach to analysis. It proved itself equally necessary in gathering official data, facts and figures in relation to the research questions. According to Walliman (2006, p. 84), all research studies require secondary data to provide relevant background information that properly informs any formal investigation. Hence, 'bureaucracies of the state' typically collate government or official data, comprising 'the source of information on any past or [present government] records' (Gomm 2004, p. 139). Some common examples of secondary data include official published documents (both current and past), official statistics and relevant items in newspapers and/or journals (Walliman 2006, p. 85–86).

The secondary data in this study mainly comprised public policies in the field of development, data on government development planning, sample project templates, acts and rules in relation to beneficiary engagement, statistical information published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and NGOAB, and periodical reports related to project development. All data were categorised as national, international or local policies on development and their relation to people, including:

1. Five Year plans, Vision 2021, Perspective Plan
2. Government policies on development assistance and relations to bilateral and multilateral development partners
3. National Policy of Agriculture
4. National Agricultural Extension Policy
5. Primary Health Care Policy
6. Government policies on NGO governance
7. Policies on primary education
8. NGO policies
9. Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord
10. The Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 2009 and Planning Rules 2013
11. International treaties, declarations and organisational policies for development cooperation.

Generally, GOs and NGOs maintain websites, publish annual reports and offer data on project funds, number of projects and information on implementing agencies for public access. GOB

websites attempt to maintain transparency by offering knowledge on government activities, development progress and policies, and laws and rules. For example, GOs (such as the ERD, NGOAB and BBS) maintain websites on development and project initiatives as well as statistics detailing NGO schemes, including the division of project funds by donor countries in a given FY.

Practically, secondary data were required to fill any gaps following interviews. Understandably, participants (whether from GOs or NGOs) were not expected to provide complete streams of information, otherwise available (Willis 2006, p. 146) in public policies, reports and relevant statistical databases. The way questions prompt answering may neither 'suit the way of seeing the research problem' (Seale 2004, p. 304). Thus, gathering data from secondary sources proved critical to validate (and provide additional credibility to) any information obtained from primary sources. It is important to note that both GO and NGO participants backed my attempts to legitimise data, further facilitating the process of crosschecking any facts raised throughout discussion.

3.2.2.3 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

According to Bryman (2008, p. 475), the value of conducting FGDs resides in discussing with people having certain experiences 'in a relatively unstructured way about that experience'. Hence, this approach seemed the most appropriate technique to couple with qualitative interviews and gather data from those harbouring know-how in a relevant field. For Hillyer (1998), FGDs help reveal the 'why' *behind* answers and further represent a 'well-established' research tool in the field of development. This then helps researchers collect, through participatory research techniques, more informed community perspectives (Lloyd-Evans 2012, p. 153).

FGDs also pose advantages that, if used appropriately, can provide rich data for comparison (Barbour 2008, p. 133). Group discussions facilitate understanding of how things are done relative to a wide range of social activities (Lloyd-Evans 2012, p. 154). For Bryman (2008, p. 475), they also help researchers recognise why and how people feel in context, and (through inherent moderation) enable participants to discuss issues frankly and challenge other group members' individual views and arguments, granting more realistic accounts of what people think.

Essentially, field discussions helped me understand participants' experiences within both government and non-government spheres. Dialogue with different government ministries, field workers and project staff working in various NGOs, along with project beneficiaries receiving government- and non-government-based services, proved especially critical. In particular, FGDs with GO and NGO officials gathered perspective from an individual standpoint and from within organisational contexts relating to policy, procedure and practical experience in beneficiary engagement. It was also important to understand how aid recipients play out their involvement in development projects. While I obtained individual answers to the research questions through interviews, the FGDs generated more detailed data led by mutual discussions from those within diverse fields. In total, three FGDs were conducted with participants from both GOs and NGOs, and with project beneficiaries.

Initially, I introduced my research topic and explained the purpose of conducting group discussions. Participants from NGOs set the norms by keeping their mobile phones on silent, respecting individual opinions and talking one at a time. After obtaining formal consent for FGD, I received each participant's signed attendance sheets to record their involvement, commencing group discussions thereafter.

Accompanying were participants from GOs. These high-ranking officials (already divided into four groups) were, at the time of FGD, in training at the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC). As such, I used one training session (conducted throughout their course) as an FGD for the research investigation. Meanwhile, NGO assistance was consulted upon hosting group discussions with project beneficiaries, as this facilitated contact with participants. Each FGD totalled one-and-a-half hours in length, with some respondents providing answers in writing on flip charts while debating the given questions. I also took notes during discussions and wrapped up each session with a summary.

3.3. Approach to data analysis

Analysis of the findings was based on the research approach and methodologies chosen for the study, including individual and group interviews, and use of secondary data sources. A combined approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods proved most appropriate for data collection (Byrne, cited in Seale 2004, p. 221). However, the former demanded organisation of important data obtained from discussion, which, according to Berg (1989, p. 42), is (albeit 'creative') one of the most difficult aspects of qualitative research. Data under analysis can span many varieties and categories, and involve different thematic areas, including 'structural, interpretive and narrative forms [that] can also incorporate contexts in research projects'. All of which informs the description of specific subject matter(s) and denotes 'an important analytic activity in qualitative research' (Wertz et al. 2011, p. 91).

In particular, thematic coding, interpretation of findings and document analysis were used to examine data from the qualitative interviews, FGDs and secondary sources relevant to the study. Document analysis was used mainly to analyse data from official statistics, policies, reports and acts or laws, as applicable. Quantitative analysis further informed selected areas of study and assisted in visually presenting relevant data, including number of NGOs involved in

development and yearly disbursement of project funds and/or aid, obtained from secondary sources (see Chapter 4). The mixed method approach to data analysis further helped triangulate and crosscheck information sourced from interviews, FGDs and secondary texts. Sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.5 describe the data analysis tools employed for this study.

3.3.1. Conceptualisation and thematic coding

I conducted analysis through conceptualisation and thematic coding. First, it was important to sort by concept the gathered data against the research questions. Here, the findings are understood through different 'categories based on themes, concepts or similar features' (Neuman 2011, p. 510), known also as 'thematic coding'. This refers to the division of data into 'themes or patterns' so it is 'easier to make sense' (Rivas, cited in Seale 2012, p. 367) once sorted under a clear concept, category or theme. Codes, then, imply 'tags or labels' for any information 'compiled' (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 56) from collected data.

Thematic coding is an appropriate method through which to analyse data in qualitative research, as it invites the possibility of obtaining a 'huge amount of materials' and 'numerous additional aspects' that are 'worth looking at' (Schreier 2012, p. 58). In this way, information is sorted into the right 'bins' by setting, naming and delineating clearer concepts about their 'interrelationships' (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 18). This approach to data analysis was relevant to identify the links between data collected through interviews and FGDs. As shown in Figure 3.1, qualitative interview data were organised in three phases during analysis based on open, axial and selective coding.

Open coding helped me looking into what have been communicated by research participants and informed by the secondary sources. I then identified causes and relations of multiple data to see why the data was communicated and at the final stage, the selective coding generated analysis of data that are relevant to research questions.

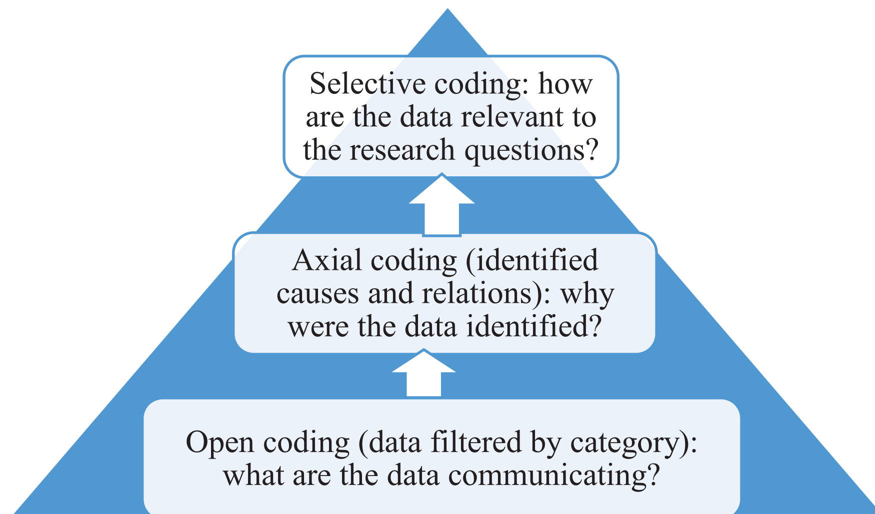


Figure 3.1. Three phases of data coding

Source: adapted from Walliman (2006, p. 132) and Neuman (2011, pp. 512–514).

This process also helped data reduction and display, and in drawing conclusions. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest three simultaneous flows that are critical for data analysis: data reduction at the description and explanation stage, data display in establishing causes and consequences, and drawing conclusions when data are relevant to the research questions. Using thematic coding, I broke down the findings by topic, kickstarting the analysis process and forcing me to select a particular aspect relative to the research questions (Schreier 2012, pp. 80–81). Thematic coding also helped me establish a logical flow of information and ensure continuation of thematic areas.

Different themes were required to display the data, as this provides a 'quick summary' of the information gathered and produces 'an overall snapshot' (Grbich 2007, p. 208) of the findings during the initial stage of analysis. Thereafter, conclusions were drawn through 'analysis, description, explanation and interpretation' sorted under different thematic codes. The research methods also included 'systematic coding and categorizing' secondary data to better understand the 'textual information' and their 'relationship' (Grbich 2011, p. 112) to the research questions.

3.3.2. Use of qualitative data analysis software

I have used NVivo Pro 11 software to organise data under thematic codes and explicate references to any themes garnered from primary and secondary sources. Essentially, the program facilitates interpretation of unstructured or semi-structured data (Bazeley and Jackson 2013, p. 2) obtained from interviews, FGDs and secondary data. While I sectioned the findings by topic, NVivo Pro 11 enabled me to identify particular segments of data more closely and organise ideas, instances and categories according to different thematic codes (Silver & Lewins 2007, p. 81). The software was not only helpful in managing data but also in generating a visual display of the data gathered. I created a few visual graphs on NVivo to display the findings, clarify data categories and concepts, and to understand their mutual links (Bazeley and Jackson 2013, pp. 217–218).

3.3.3. Data triangulation

During data analysis, the research was triangulated to ensure 'credibility', 'confirmability' and 'consistency' of information obtained through qualitative interviews (Golafshani 2003; Kumar 2014; Lincoln and Guba 1985 cited in Golafshani 2003). Though data triangulation is mainly used in quantitative research, scholars argued that the method can and should be used qualitatively (Kumar 2014, p. 218) to validate data gathered following investigation. According to Gomm (2008, p. 243), triangulation further corroborates information obtained from different sources regarding the same queries through which to validate the conclusions drawn. Selecting many sources of data collection from multiple sources—including GOs, NGOs, practitioners through different policy documents as secondary sources and upon interviewing project beneficiaries—invited me to crosscheck information and analyse facts, both by suspending any chance for bias and facilitating the opportunity for data triangulation in the analysis phase. According to Golafshani (2003, p. 603), triangulation is 'typically a strategy (test) for

improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings', and further acts as a 'qualifying check or measure' for qualitative study (Golafshani 2003, p. 602). Essentially, this method of analysis enabled me to substantiate data obtained from secondary sources and closely examine—against facts and figures published in different reports, rules, regulations and policy documents—information obtained through interviews and FGDs.

3.3.4. Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data analysis described the findings in both descriptive and numeric terms using graphs and charts. The basis for its use regards the statistical information gathered on development, quantity of NGOs and projects involved in the research context, including the amount of funds received for project implementation (as sourced from line ministries, departments, BBS and NGOAB websites). Microsoft Excel helped visualise descriptions of data using graphs and charts, providing statistical information in addition to qualitative analysis and connecting factual findings from different sources.

3.3.5. Analysing secondary sources of data

Two approaches were used to analyse secondary sources of data. The first involved NVivo Pro 11 software to search for word frequency relative to people orientation of development planning and objectives, and to examine the concept's relations to beneficiary engagement upon formulating a 'word tree'. Findings from the word search and word tree informed the second analysis approach, which required study of the most relevant sections in secondary sources and then analyse the interrelations between people and engagement in development planning and GO-NGO practices.

3.4. Research participants

Identifying a strategy to sample data was critical, given the study's qualitative research methodology. I had to consider the social and cultural contexts of Bangladesh, where development discussions have limited digital presence at an individual level (i.e., on social media) compared to both GO- and NGO-led discourse at an organisational level. Availability of relevant and appropriate information proved especially important, as interviews and FGDs were the primary research methods used to obtain data against the research questions. In saying this, I decided to select research participants based on purposive sampling.

3.4.1. Purposive sampling

In providing different strategies of purposive sampling and its relevance to qualitative research study, Palinkas et al. (2015) argued that samples for qualitative inquiry are assumed to be selected purposefully to generate 'information rich' data and it is widely used in qualitative studies. Since the research was qualitative, selection of research participants was purposive. Essentially, 'purposive sampling' reasons for 'whom to talk, where, when, about what and why', and helps articulate an 'authentic conclusion' to be drawn (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 26). As a method used for non-random sampling, Kumar (2014, p. 244) described its primary function as judging who can (and is willing to) provide the best and most relevant information as well as demonstrated expertise to the research. The objectives of selecting purposive sampling for my study relied on describing 'a particular group', to increase 'the credibility' of information, and to take advantage of 'circumstances' for additional data collection as they arise' (Palinkas et al. 2015, p. 535-536).

As such, participant selection was predetermined by the research questions and according to their contextual relevance in relation to each institution's (i.e., GOs and NGOs, beneficiaries,

project staff and bilateral and multilateral agencies funding development initiatives) strategic function(s). I interviewed project beneficiaries to validate the findings obtained from GO and NGO officials as well as relevant policies to gain full insight on the subject matter. Purposive sampling further enabled judgements regarding participant expertise, resources, experiences, roles and responsibilities around beneficiary engagement within the development context of Bangladesh. The predetermined factors that defined participant selection are provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Predetermined factors for purposive sampling

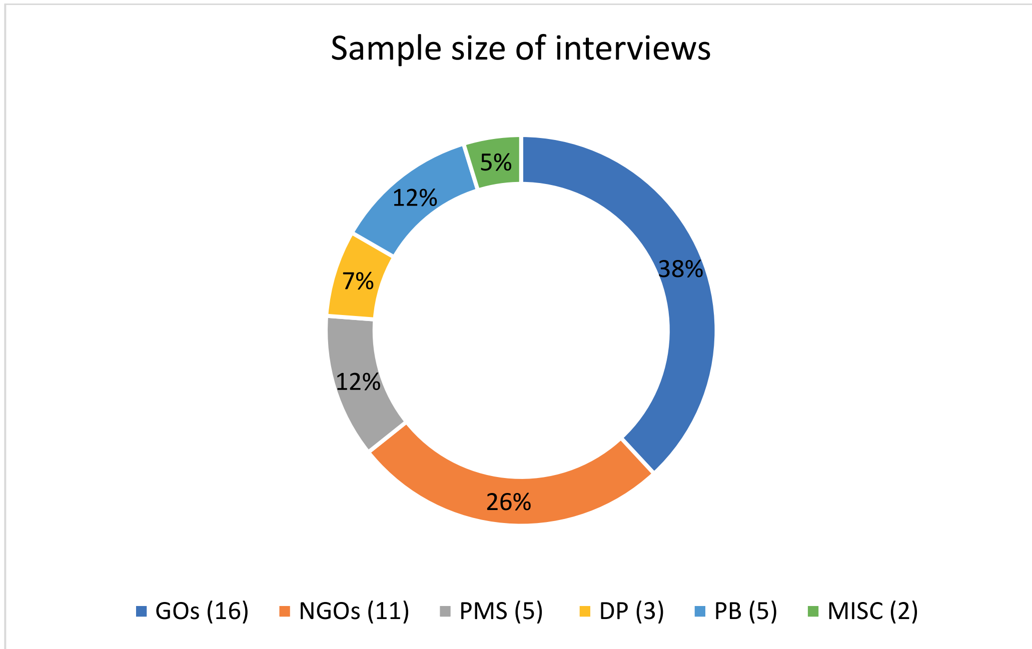
Pre-determined criteria to select research participants	**Profile of data samples**				
Respondents	GOs	NGOs	Development partners (DP)	Project Beneficiaries (PB)	Project management staff (PMS)
Research participants	Public servants and managers at the centre, district, sub-district and union levels	Executives, Field Workers, Project Managers	Officials working in bilateral and multilateral agencies in Bangladesh	Project participants/ beneficiaries	Project Managers/ development practitioners/ Evaluation Officer
Roles	Decides development initiatives, provides public services to citizens, accountable for public expenditure	Implement projects, delivers project outputs, work with beneficiaries, report to government & donors	Decide project funding at international & national levels	Service recipients, Entrepreneurs User of project outputs Community representative	Oversee project implementation/ interact with beneficiaries and project stakeholders/ report/ implement projects

Evident from Table 3.1, purposive sampling was used to identify 'who fit specified criteria' (Seale 2012, p. 144), thus, determining both categorisation and organisation of the study participants. I did not plan to interview any from private company and media; however, profiles of the two respondents in the MISC group of respondents (one from private seed company and one from media outlet) were relevant to the research context and enhanced credibility of

information gathered from several other interviews. This careful selection process ensured that the sampling was appropriate for the research purpose, as based on the roles that each individual organisation plays within the process of beneficiary engagement.

3.4.2. Sample size

A qualitative approach to research allows one to work with '*small* samples of people, nested in their context and studied in-depth' (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 27). The determining factor for sample size in a qualitative study stems from the concepts of saturation and information power. The concept of saturation allows researchers to decide on whether further data collection is needed (Saunders et al. 2017). The concept of information power informs the researcher that when the data collected from a smaller sample size holds more information, leading to earlier saturation, the study requires lower number of participants (Malterud, Siersma & Guassaro 2015). While determining the sample size of the study, I was mainly guided by the concept of information power. Mason (2010) mentions that 5-25 respondents for such situations as sufficient, and this also guided my research in deciding the sample size. The total number of interviewees was 42 and in addition, I was able to conduct three FGDs (which in total had 37 participants). Figures 3.2 and 3.3 chart the number of interviews and FGD respondents based on their profiles and gender.



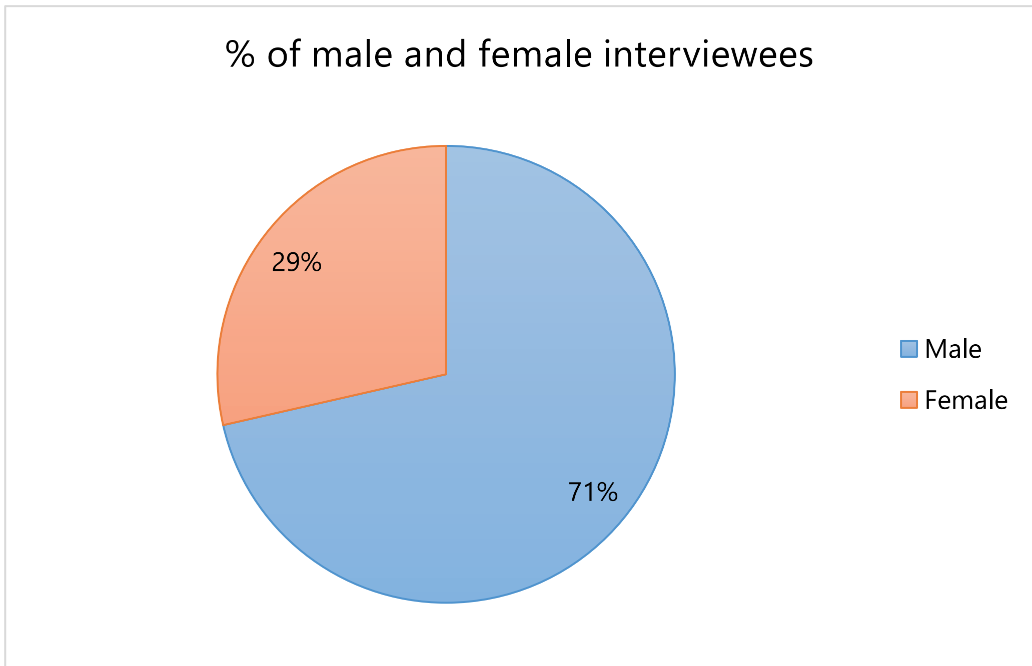


Figure 3.2. Sample size of interviewees

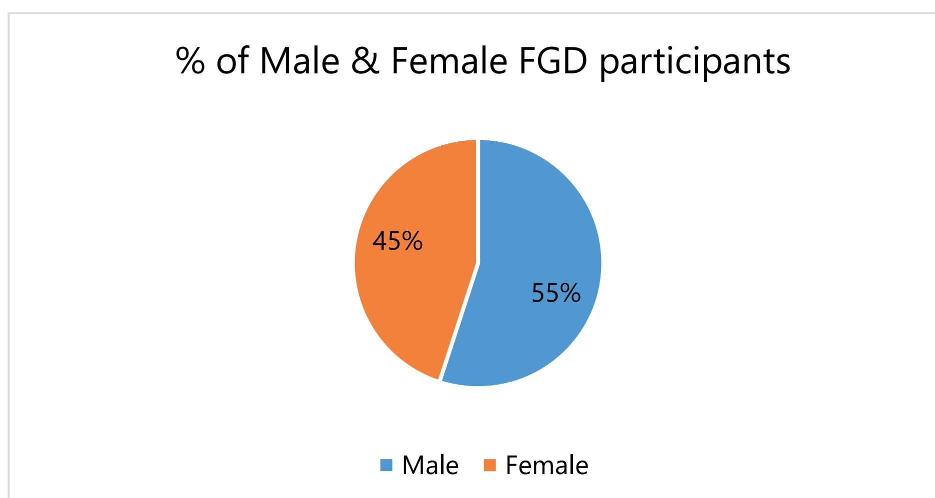


Figure 3.3. Percentage of male and female FGD participants

I aimed to ensure that representative gender equality was achieved during data collection. It was, to an extent, difficult to establish uniform participation from women in government departments such as agriculture during both interview and FGD phases. However, more female participants were available in the FGD of beneficiary groups, thus, boosting their numbers during discussions (Figure 3.3).

3.5. Research ethics

The qualitative nature of this study fostered greater collaboration with research participants, as most interviews were conducted in person. However, this demanded greater protection of ethical practices throughout data collection to honour participants' social and cultural norms (Wertz et al. 2011, p. 85). While social research creates an opportunity to establish facts on the basis of 'incisive field work', it can also 'leave behind social chaos, breakdown and conflict in the field' of research (Brydon 2006, p. 25). This is because qualitative research methods invite 'intellectual assumptions' about social positioning, which is often 'taken for granted' (Wertz et al. 2011, p. 84). In addition, any doubts concerning the credibility of research, in terms of both honesty and integrity, risk the 'novelty of its discoveries' (Walliman 2006, p. 147). Thus,

ethical practices are necessary to mitigate 'social chaos' and to prepare the researcher for any spontaneous occurrences regarding social or cultural (or other) insensitivity (Brydon 2006, p. 25). Following sections outline the various approaches used to maintain ethical standards during data collection and analysis.

3.5.1. Ethics approval

Qualitative research required approval from the University of Canberra's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). After a rigorous review process, the study obtained HREC approval on 8 December 2014 (Project No. 14-243), with the data collection period granted until 31 December 2017. All data were gathered during the approved period.

3.5.2. Informed consent, confidentiality and data security

A consent form, which described the purpose of the study, was designed and provided to all participants prior to interview. Formal agreement, provided by signature, was obtained and information on confidentiality was explained in detail before discussion was underway. Participants were also assured that their names, organisational affiliations and locations would not be published. In a couple of cases, I received email confirmation that led to interviews prior to having consent forms signed, however, interview contents were confirmed by interviewees via email.

3.5.3. Ethical standards in data analysis

Ethics concerns are not exclusive to the research design and data collection phases but hold equal importance during analysis. At this stage, researchers tend to be 'too selective' and can silently reject or ignore information, 'which happens to be one's beliefs' (Walliman 2006, p. 149); naturally, this invites bias into analysis. I acknowledged all these possibilities of bias and established arguments based on data that was obtained and later, as Walliman (2006, p. 150)

recommends, crosschecked and validated against published evidence (as and when required). A conscious attempt was also made to avoid inserting personal opinion during analysis. Harvard-style referencing is applied throughout the thesis to cite the concerned literature, authors, reports and policy documents mentioned in this study.

3.6. Fieldwork

As indicated in Chapter 1, the research context of Bangladesh was decided and pursued while I was based in Canberra, Australia. The geographical distance between each location and the limitations I faced to suspend my employment proved challenging, particularly when contacting research participants and completing fieldwork within the approved time frame for data collection. I made several trips to and from Bangladesh between January 2015 and April 2017 and established regular contact over emails and by phone through my professional network. In many cases, emails were sent in advance and overseas calls were made to ensure that interviews could be held during my stay in Bangladesh.

3.6.1. Contacting research participants

In planning and conducting fieldwork, I followed Binns' (2006, p. 15) suggestion to maintain good contact in the research location, as this plays a key role in the practicalities of research and in obtaining permission, when required. Indeed, securing continued contact in Bangladesh was essential to conduct fieldwork and further helped in gaining access to and consent from research participants for interviews. I relied on my colleagues and friends in the BCS, UNDP and BPATC to obtain contact details, and endeavoured to connect with GO and NGO respondents over email (which proved limiting) and by phone. During my stay in Bangladesh, I made three field visits to rural areas in the southern and northern districts to access field-level GO and NGO officials and beneficiaries. Contacting government offices and local NGOs was

helpful to interview project beneficiaries, and FGDs with government officials, NGOs and beneficiaries were organised through BPATC and NGO assistance, respectively.

3.6.2. Research locations and time

From 42 interviews, 39 were conducted in person. Locations for discussion ranged from the districts to UPZ (subdistricts), and UPs. The study demanded consideration of 'location' including where the interviews took place (Byrne 2004, p. 208) to better understand the various development initiatives occurring across Bangladesh. In this sense, interviewing officials at different levels of administration allowed me to access the more practical aspects of beneficiary engagement. Interviews held with central administration (e.g., ministries, bureaus, departments and directorates situated in Dhaka) and at different governmental tiers across four districts (Dhaka, Jessore, Dinajpur and Thakurgaon), two UPZs in Jessore and Dinajpur, and three UPs in Jessore, Dinajpur and Dhaka, further informed data analysis. One interview was held over Skype and two interviews were conducted by phone call only at the participant's preference and convenience. As mentioned in Section 3.6, interviews and FGDs were held between January 2015 and December 2017, as per the HREC-approved time frame for data collection.

3.6.3. Limitations of fieldwork

Despite successful and timely completion of the fieldwork, I experienced some limitations and challenges when conducting interviews and FGDs. Possibility of bias, constraints of time and location, limitations of local travel during political turmoil, and individual participant contexts each posed key research restrictions that require further elaboration.

3.6.3.1 Possibility of bias

Critics of qualitative research methods emphasise that expressions of opinion and attitude, such as those measured in interviews, may reflect superficial judgements that differ significantly

from sound judgements reached after careful consideration of both technical information and others' perspectives (Seekamp et al. 2010, p. 223). Interviewing different groups of research participants can also result in different opinions or opportunities for bias. In this study, I expected that the respondents would consider (and/or understand) the research questions differently and bias may arise from different groups of research participants due to their interrelations and dependence on one other. To minimise this possibility, I followed Gomm's (2004, p. 154) suggestion to uniformly ask the interview questions for specific groups of respondents (Appendix 1) and refer to relevant policies to compare and crosscheck the validity of information.

3.6.3.2 Constraints of time and location

I encountered difficulties in obtaining thorough responses within the one-hour time limit for interviews, particularly as most participants had prior responsibilities and meetings during office hours. It was also challenging to settle appointments that suited the interviewees' best; however, I did attempt to make myself available at their time of convenience. In a few cases, participants did not meet after signing the consent forms and I had to cancel out their involvement in the total sample number. Further, the parliamentary election in January 2014 meant that political turmoil was rife and further restricted inter-district travel across Bangladesh due to security concerns. Nonetheless, I was able to conduct interviews in Dhaka during that time. As an independent researcher, it was neither easy to organise a group of GO participants for FGDs. However, most obstacles were overcome with the help of former colleagues at BPATC and civil service in organizing interviews and FGDs.

3.6.3.3 Context of research participants

It was harder to conduct interviews with government officials, given their ongoing (and mounting) responsibilities and constant need to address phone calls or meetings, or answer to

higher authorities, during interviews. That said, keeping time for a researcher appeared to be difficult though not in all cases. In contrast, securing uninterrupted time with NGO officials proved less difficult, particularly as project management relative to beneficiary engagement formed an integral part of NGO functions. Time with beneficiaries themselves was not so successful, given their livelihood and household responsibilities, especially for women in rural areas. Thus, I had to wait longer to secure formal agreement from interviewees and organisations to arrange meetings and FGDs with beneficiaries.

Obtaining responses by email was neither easy, despite sending out a detailed project overview with a request for interview. In most cases, government officials used their personal rather than government email accounts, effectively rendering any research information sent to the former redundant. In addition, university emails tend to sit in different folders and risk being ignored (or inadvertently missed). In that case, contacting respondents by mobile phone and visiting their offices in person helped organising interviews.

Further caution proved necessary when considering the organisational interrelationships between and interdependence of GOs and NGOs. Hence, I carefully considered situations according to government authority and control of non-government roles, mainly actioned by the recent *Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Law 2016*, which oversees the work and activities of NGOs. However, no adverse situations were experienced during interviews with GO or NGO officials.

Following the research methods and meeting all the ethics requirements enabled me to complete my fieldwork in due time. Before detailing the data analysis against each research question, Chapter 4 provides an overview of the findings gathered during investigation. The discussions that follow (prior to the conclusion) provide data analysis, categorised under the relevant theme(s) and sub-theme(s) acquired from both primary and secondary sources of data.

Chapter 4. GOs, NGOs, beneficiaries and engagement—a brief overview of data analysis

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it intends to provide an overview of how the different research questions defined in Chapter 1 have progressed upon investigation. Second, this chapter offers an initial understanding (further discussed in chapters 5-8) of what the data revealed about the research questions. Background information will better inform the coming judgements regarding how GO and NGO agents have addressed the term 'engaging beneficiaries' in practice. Further discussed is how participants from other respondent groups (following interview) perceive 'beneficiary engagement'. This compiles the various knowledge bases each person shares regarding individual-level involvement within both policy and project management in the development context of Bangladesh.

4.1. Defining the term 'engaging' in relation to GO and NGO approaches

Although the research participants had different institutional and socio-economic backgrounds, their diverse knowledge bases highlight key features of 'engagement' relevant to the data in this study. Hence, this chapter provides an overview of the findings gathered from primary source interviews.

While collecting data through FGDs with GOs and NGOs, I first encouraged participants to generate discussion on how they conceptualised the term 'engagement' within a development context. This helped me understand the relations between institutions (GOs and NGOs) and beneficiary engagement, and how it has been addressed in each group's development functions. Table 4.1 provides an overview of FGD data detailing participants' perspectives on what 'engagement' means in daily practice, either in managing projects or in implementing development activities.

Table 4.1. What does ‘engagement’ mean to GOs and NGOs?

GO	NGO
Implementers	Inclusion
People	Participation
Regulators	Sharing
Policy makers	Relation
Financer	information
Attach	Community and Village Association
Agreeing	Credibility of information
Involving	Right information
Taking on board	Timely information
Contractor	Job responsibility of engaging beneficiaries
Children	accountability to beneficiaries
Women	Commitment to need-based claim
Farmer	Evaluation
Stakeholders	Monitoring
Fishermen	Align
Involving	Monitoring

It is interesting to note (TTable 4.1) that the responses from GOs were relatively more focused on processes and institutional responsibilities when addressing engagement. In contrast, NGOs aligned more with hands-on engagement practices, as shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.

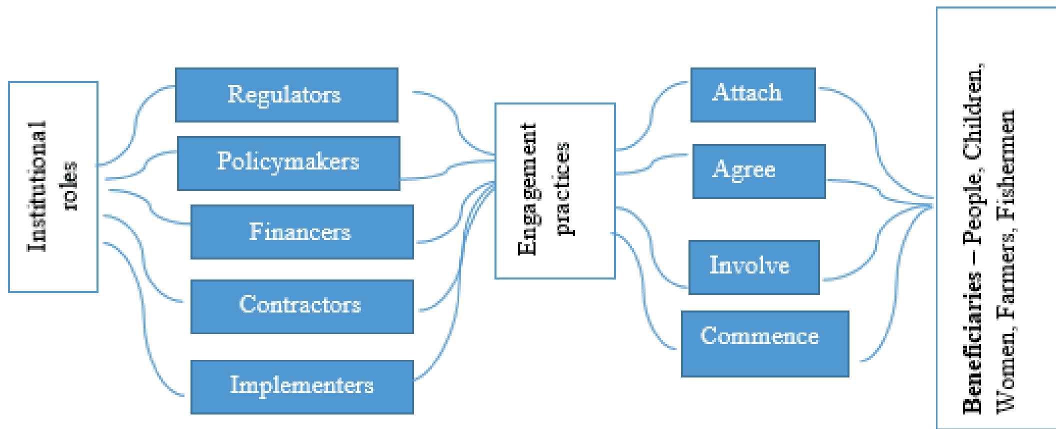


Figure 4.1. Linking GOs' responses to 'engagement'

Source: based on FGD with GOs conducted on 17 April 2018.

For GOs, institutional roles were associated with the processes and administrative functions they deemed integral to effective beneficiary engagement. Figure 4.1 demonstrates that institutional roles, as mentioned by GOs, focus on regulations, policy making, finances, contractual agreements and implementing agencies. According to the terminologies participants expressed, active involvement necessitates ongoing attempts to link together different institutions (from policy formulation to implementation) with multiple dimensions perceived as instrumental to local-level engagement. Thus, GOs tend to focus on the various concepts on and around individual engagement and the factors that precede its formation, such as policies and regulations, finance, as well as implementers and contractors. From a government perspective, target beneficiaries are from all social, cultural and economic walks of life, so attempts to engage their interests must be thorough.

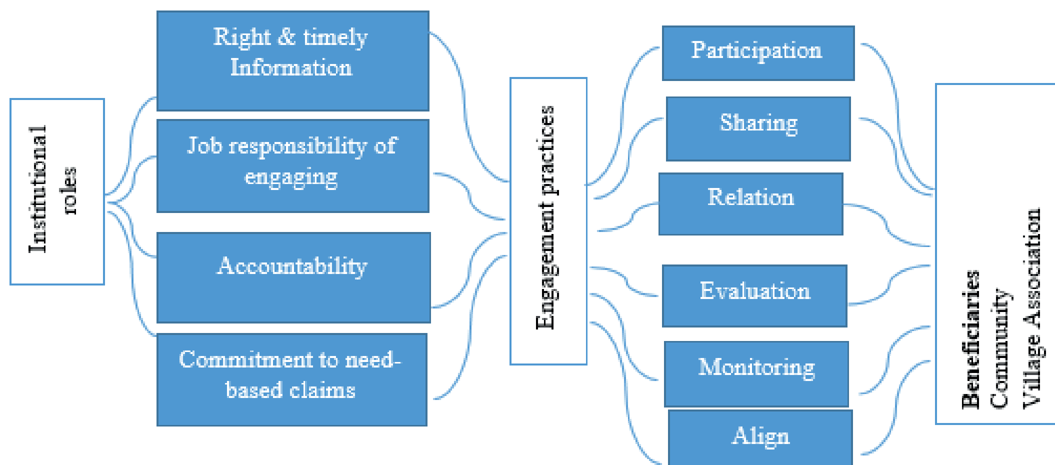


Figure 4.2. Linking NGO responses to 'engagement'

Source: based on FGD with NGOs conducted on 22 April 2017.

Conversely, NGO participants directly associated their institutional roles with practical action as evident in Figure 4.2. In contrast to institutional roles of GOs in engaging, NGO respondents focused on their obligations to beneficiaries such as timely information, responsibility of engaging, accountability and commitment. They tend to focus their responsibilities on realising specific approaches that must be taken to engage beneficiaries. In this sense, NGO participants have singularly focused perceptions that typically involve multiple approaches to formal engagement. Unlike GOs, who lump a whole spectrum of citizens under the category of 'beneficiary', NGO participants identified specific communities or groups of people as beneficiaries for whom they work and manage projects.

4.1.1. 'Engaging' as defined by GO and NGO respondents

As the interviews progressed, I presented to participants more prompts on engagement, but refrained from asking for specific (and personal) definitions. These stimuli were taken from the primary sources of data used to generate certain sub-themes, which later proved useful in connecting different thematic areas to the research questions. These also helped me understand

GO–NGO approaches to beneficiary engagement in greater detail, draw comparative analysis and acknowledge the scope of their collaboration towards beneficiary engagement. Table 4.2 shows the raw data of GO and NGO participants categorising different sub-themes relevant to the study.

Table 4.2. GO–NGO approaches to engagement

Approach to engaging	Participants from GO	Participants from NGOs
Scope of engaging	Engaging beneficiaries is subject to specific situation and context.	Government departments work directly with beneficiaries. When government departments work directly with beneficiaries that implies that beneficiaries are engaged.
	Beneficiary engagement is contextual as and when required.	Beneficiary engagement is a token.
	Beneficiaries are engaged by government where there is a direct interaction with people.	Beneficiaries are engaged through 'target group approach - beneficiary groups are formed, and these groups are linked to service provider agencies, either GOs or NGOs.
Management	Engaging implies decentralization.	Working closely with beneficiaries is engaging.
	Engaging is to inform beneficiaries about the project and its impacts.	Creating volunteers and providing equipment to manage community issues like disaster management. Here engaging is capacity development of target population. Engaging is a method to transfer knowledge.
	Engaging local people is a method to beneficiary engagement as local people know the local needs.	Engaging starts with social mapping, baseline survey and needs realization.
	Engaging is to mobilize participants to project events.	Beneficiaries are engaged through 'target group approach'. Beneficiary groups are formed, and these are linked to service provider agencies, either GOs or NGOs.
	Working together is to make engaging beneficiaries happen.	Identification of beneficiary needs.
Outreach	Engaging means giving door to door visits to beneficiaries.	NGO staff moving around in the specific locality to identify beneficiary - apply case management strategy.
	Engaging is to go to people.	Engaging is reaching beneficiaries.
	Engaging women requires rigorous involvement and contact to their families.	If it is engaging women beneficiaries, it is equally required to engage their male counterparts in the family.
	Getting in touch with people is engaging.	Engaging is assessing basic needs by reaching beneficiaries.
		Engaging is going to the field every day

Approach to engaging	Participants from GO	Participants from NGOs
Interaction	To let people know what benefits the project will bring to them.	Engaging is to sit with beneficiaries and talk to them to identify their areas of interventions.
	Engaging is to convince beneficiaries.	It requires personal and one-to-one communication.
	Engaging is to have huge interactions with beneficiaries.	Engaging is conveying information to beneficiaries.
	Engaging is to communicate with beneficiaries.	Engaging is to have day-today interaction with people.
	Engaging is a kind of everyday dealing with beneficiaries.	Engaging is assessing basic needs by reaching beneficiaries.
	Engaging is to have interaction, networking, professional and personal relationship with beneficiaries.	
	Engaging is to have campaign and communication.	
Empowerment	Engaging is social inclusion.	Engaging beneficiaries is to ensure access to services.
	Engaging is sharing benefits with target population.	Engaging is to ensure beneficiary rights.
	Engaging is to build trust between government and beneficiaries, getting their confidence. Engaging is to minimize distance between these two groups.	
	Engaging is to have a culture of accumulation and accommodation of diverse opinions.	
	It is kind of building long-term relationship.	
Capacity development	Engaging is to raise awareness.	Engaging is capacity development of target population.
	Internet service is a way to engage beneficiaries.	Engaging is a method to transfer knowledge.
	Providing technical advice is to engaging beneficiaries.	

4.1.2. ‘Engaging’ as defined by project staff

Interviews with project-management staff—employed by either NGOs or GOs, or by development organisations—revealed the many approaches through which beneficiary

engagement is perceived and practised in project management. Responsible for implementation, coordination with government and donors, as well as interaction with beneficiaries, the research participants collectively discussed selected aspects of ‘engagement’ for which they deemed beneficiary involvement an integral part of their roles or of their organisational function(s). Essentially, four key factors embodied their understanding of effective engagement:

4.1.2.1 Visibility

Project staff host different events to mobilise beneficiaries. This is especially important for donor-funded projects, as such donors generally prefer visibility. Here, engagement demands partnership with beneficiaries to ensure social mobilisation and community participation.

4.1.2.2 Engaging

The basis for participation: It is believed that engaging in project management means enhancing beneficiary participation to raise their voice. Engaging should create scope for individuals to question the use of funds and ensure their participation in decision-making processes. In this sense, ‘engagement’ reimagines beneficiaries as customers or clients within a government’s development activities.

4.1.2.3 Communication

Engagement in project management means reaching target beneficiaries and informing them about development and projects. Project-management staff must communicate with beneficiaries on a regular basis.

4.1.2.4 Capacity

Projects provide training, raise awareness on the importance of development skills and knowledge, and (from a project management perspective), view engagement as an opportunity to develop beneficiaries.

4.1.3. Being engaged: as expressed by beneficiaries

In interviews and FGDs with recipient groups, I sought to understand how they understand and view them being ‘engaged’. The key element here was to establish direct contact with GOs, NGOs or project staff to address problems, seek services, receive training and develop entrepreneurship for income generation. Thus, three key factors embodied their understanding:

4.1.3.1 Ability to communicate

All beneficiaries interviewed in FGDs own a mobile phone and have access to a mobile network in rural Bangladesh. They are connected to institutions and can call project staff, NGO officials or field level government project staff directly to discuss any matters on which they seek advice.

4.1.3.2 Ability to avail assistance

Field officials, such as GOs or NGOs and project staff, reside in the same localities as beneficiaries, enabling them to meet in local markets. These members visit people at their homes, discuss grievances and provide technical advice. According to the data, if beneficiaries request them by phone to visit their cultivated lands, livestock or dairy farms, GO or NGO staff will go to their households to offer assistance. As such, beneficiaries generally perceive these officials as willing to respond to their needs.

4.1.3.3 Next of kin

Through daily visits and regular interaction, NGO field workers and GO–NGO project staff develop somewhat long-term relationships with beneficiaries. In many cases, locals will perceive certain staff like family, thus, creating a comfort zone in which both groups can interact.

To address beneficiary engagement in project management, I intended to explore the context and the extent to which individuals are involved in a process for which GOs and NGOs are held responsible. This further reasoned my decision against examining a specific project or case study to observe how engagement typically transpires. Rather, I wanted to investigate the broader contexts in which GOs and NGOs manage and involve people in development projects, including the scope of policies involved, and the prevailing or perceived challenges and/or opportunities that both groups experience in beneficiary engagement. Hence, Section 4.2 provides an overview of these contexts, as reflected in the data analysis.

4.2. GOs and policy contexts

Development planning in Bangladesh is a long-term government intervention that guides the prospective development strategies of the country. With an FYP each covered by a five-year period of the FY (July–June), the country is now on its seventh iteration, which provides for individual ministries and their respective administration guiding principles to national development initiatives. Government employees that carry out these development agendas are from the core civil service and are centrally recruited by the Bangladesh Public Service Commission. Similarly, staff are employed directly by ministries or departments and salaried from the government's core revenue budget. For development projects, recruitment spans the

duration of the project-management period, with remuneration paid from the respective development budget.

Though government administration is termed as centralised bureaucracy, both primary and secondary sources of data established that national development planning and policies are typically grounded on two strategies: 1) commitment to development agendas at the international level, and 2) stakeholder (NGOs, CSOs, private organisations, donors, think tanks, research institutes, academia, relevant ministries and departments) consultation and advocacy campaigns at the national level. However, the data also demonstrate that simply having policies is not the only criterion on which to carry out development activities; it also requires implementation at the field level. Thus, examining the scope of GO–NGO policies and practices in beneficiary engagement provided ample background information on which to investigate the research questions.

4.3. NGOs and policy contexts

Tarannum (2009) provides a chronology of strategies spanning four generations of NGO work in Bangladesh, from 1971 (immediately following independence) to date. While the first generation of organisations intended to meet the immediate needs of a war-torn population, the second generation focused more on ‘micro-interventions’ for community development. Now receiving foreign funds, the third iteration of NGOs in the 1980s contributed significantly to rural development in line with a global movement towards greater local-level participation in development. Currently, fourth-generation groups seek ‘changes in specific policies and institutions’ (Tarannum 2009, pp. 30–33), reflecting more global aspects of policy advocacy.

Given the number and scope of NGO-led activities in socio-economic development, it is safe to say that Bangladesh is a hub for NGO growth. According to NGOAB statistics, the total

number of NGOs increased from 2,313 in 2013–2014 to 2,604 in 2017–2018 (as of February 2018). I have used these two periods depending on the availability of information as the website indicates the latest and I have found the 2013-2014 report online. Figure 4.3 compares both periods to illustrate the noted increase of (local and foreign) NGOs in Bangladesh.

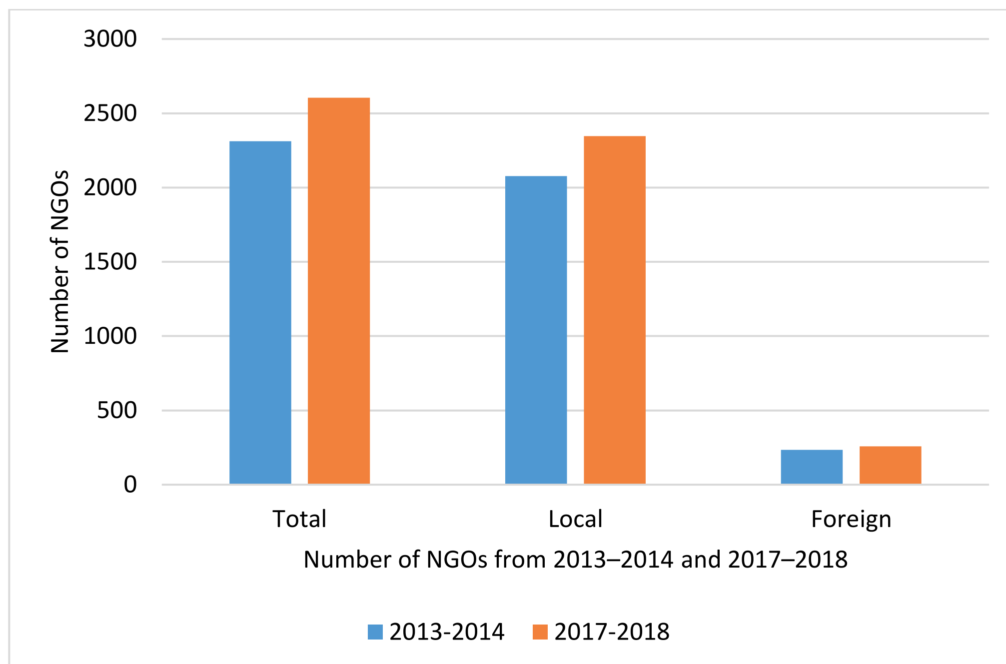


Figure 4.3. Number of NGOs in Bangladesh

Source: NGOAB Annual Report 2013–2014 and NGOAB (online).

In 2013, the GOB officially recognised non-government contributions to development in its nationwide consultations with NGOs. The GOB considers its strategic relationship with non-government sectors as a collaborative endeavour through which it facilitates partnership in development activities. In particular, NGO contributions towards achieving the MDGs and implementation of development projects have been well documented in the NGOAB's (2013, pp. 15–20) report on consultations. As noted, while the government remains chiefly responsible for policy formulation, NGOs work as collaborative partners in terms of policy advocacy and project implementation under administrative rule.

NGO attempts to mobilise foreign resources are particularly noteworthy within the development context of Bangladesh. Here, the government claims it makes possible such efforts through accommodating development policies and by providing ongoing support. Figure 4.4 shows the number of NGO-implemented projects and foreign resources mobilised between 2012 and 2017.

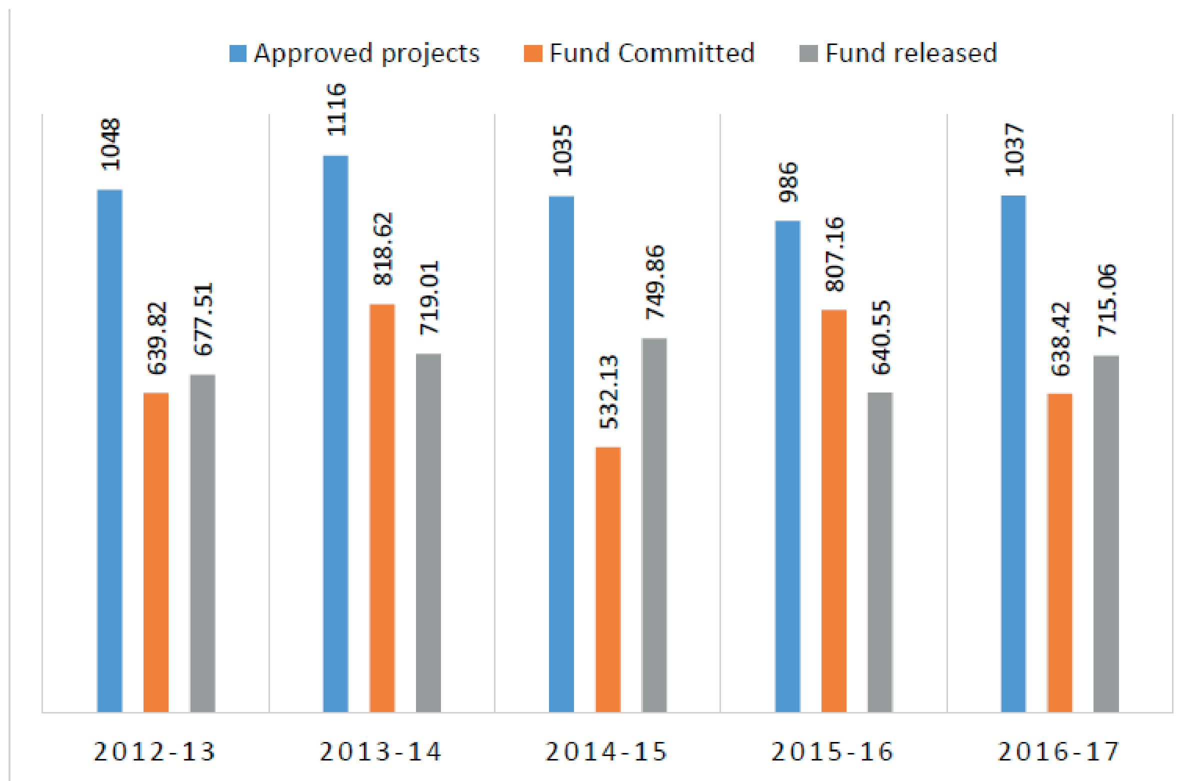


Figure 4.4. NGO mobilisation of foreign funds

Source: NGOAB (2019).

It is important to note (in accordance with primary data) that receiving foreign resources for NGO-implemented projects creates scope for aligning beneficiary engagement strategies in project management with donor policies.

Note here the *Palli Karma-Sahayak* Foundation (PKSF n. d.), established by the government in 1990. As a development organisation that works for 'sustainable poverty reduction through

income generation', it operates, through its core programs and projects, by providing financial resources as loans or grants to its partner organisations (NGOs) for project implementation. Currently, PKSF (n. d.) partners with 199 NGOs in seven divisions across Bangladesh. The data also indicate the foundation's presence in relation to NGO involvement in national development and noted alignment to key beneficiary engagement policies.

4.4. Project management (GOs and NGOs)

Projects comprise the specific development interventions through which agents implement policies in specific areas of development planning in Bangladesh. For both GOs and NGOs, project management and implementation arrangements are subject to the approval of concerned government authorities. According to the Planning Commission (2016, pp. 1–22) and the GED (2014, p. 4) under the Ministry of Planning, projects are divided into seven categories:

1. Investment projects: this includes capital investments such as the construction of roads, bridges and power plants.
2. TA projects: these are usually funded by donors, with production costs either fully or partially met by foreign aid.
3. Service-sector projects: these offer social benefits, for example, education, health and sanitation.
4. Self-financing projects: these generate resources in the industry or production sectors.
5. Non-revenue earning projects: these accrue benefits to other parties, including water and irrigation projects.
6. Regional TA projects: these are intended for certain regions (including Bangladesh), but are not nationally financed.
7. Private-sector TA projects: there are received through the ERD.

Based on these definitions, my research investigation focused on TA and service sector projects and excluded any government investment, industrial and private sector investment projects. I intended not to examine any specific project rather investigate the project beneficiary engagement from GO and NGO perspectives. As such, I focused organizing interviews and FGDs and examining secondary sources of data in relation to beneficiary engagement in service sectors and relevant TA projects in general where both GOs and NGOs work directly with beneficiaries. Where partnerships between GOs and NGOs in managing these types of projects exist seem to be relevant to investigate research questions under this study. The following four chapters on data analysis capture and illustrate research findings in detail.

Chapter 5. Scope of beneficiary engagement in GO-NGO development planning

This chapter presents data analysis in response to the research question regarding the scope of beneficiary engagement in GO and NGO policies. The research question required data regarding GO and NGO policies that created scopes of beneficiary engagement for development initiatives in Bangladesh. The sub-themes emerged during interviews include GO-NGO policies on beneficiary engagement as a development strategy; influencing factors for project beneficiary engagement and the way GOs and NGOs transfer policies into practices for engaging beneficiaries. Respondents included GO and NGO officials, field workers from GOs and NGOs, UP representative, DPs and the PMS. Information obtained from beneficiary interviews were critical to triangulate findings from interviews with other group of respondents to determine whether provisions in the policies created opportunities for beneficiaries to become involved in the development. The data from primary sources were cross-checked with relevant documents on development planning and policies, which were revealed during interviews to determine how the policy framework created scope for beneficiary engagement in development. This chapter has two sections: the first analyses primary and secondary data sources that reflect the scope of beneficiary engagement in policies and development plans; the second examines how GOs and NGOs transfer policies into the implementation of beneficiary engagement practices.

5.1. Scope of government policies and beneficiary engagement

This chapter is built upon the concept of the state and its agencies having essential functions of development and policy formulation to govern citizens as explained in section 2.1. Roberts (2004) argued that the dependence of citizens on public officials and administrators for public policy formulation and implementation is a phenomenon that developed following the

emergence of new states. It is logical to identify how policies are transferred into practices, which involves a combination of approaches, strategies and influencing factors (Narayanan et al. 2015; Hickey & Mohan 2004). Citizens tend to be engaged where they are dissatisfied with the existing policy interventions and their 'direct' and 'deliberative' engagement is expected to ease the dissatisfaction (Roberts 2004, p. 343). At the same time, the neoliberal agenda of development encourages NGOs to remain 'prominent' within international development and humanitarian policies and to become active in development activities, service delivery and advocacy (Lewis & Opoku-Mensah 2006, p. 666). Investigating the research question regarding the scope of beneficiary engagement in GO and NGO policies is critical to understand the approaches of integrating people into development in the policy context of Bangladesh. Figure 5.1 displays the extent to which research participants elaborated on the scope of development policies for beneficiary engagement:

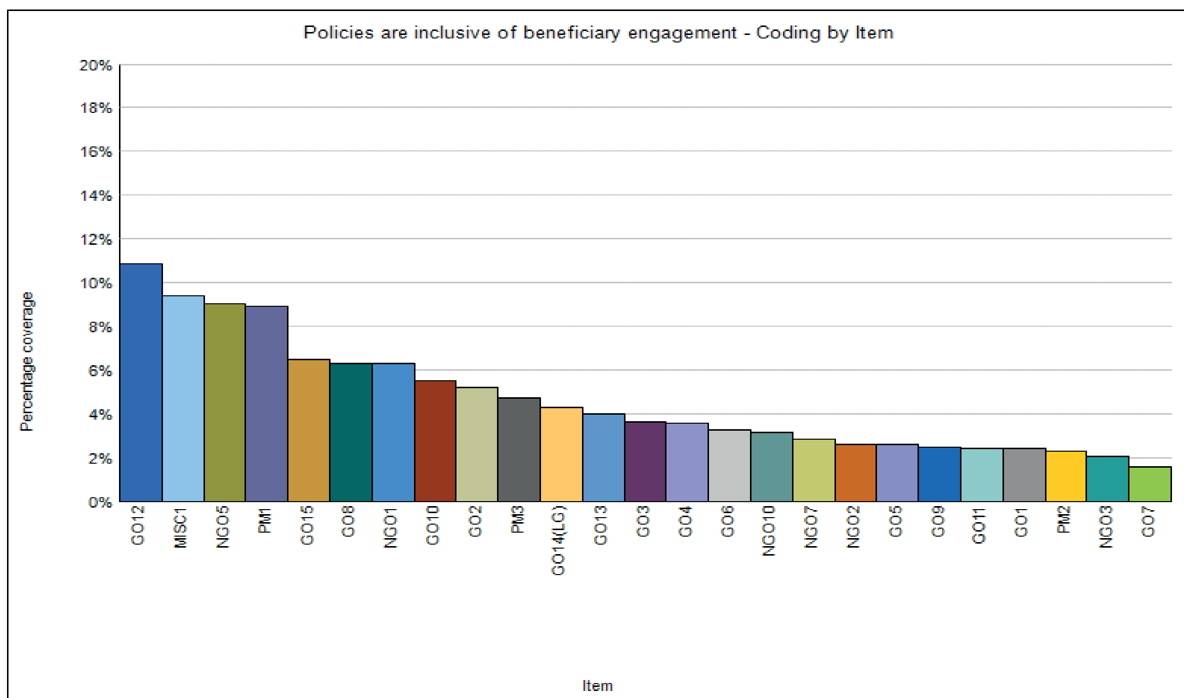


Figure 5.1. Coverage of responses on scope of beneficiary engagement in government policies

Twenty-five of 42 interviewees elaborated on the scope of beneficiary engagement in the government's development policies. They perceived that government policies were inclusive of beneficiary engagement strategies. Fourteen of sixteen GO respondents said that government policies included people and their participation in development programs. One respondent from this group referred to the department's website instead of elaborating on the scope of policies. Only one GO respondent mentioned that he was unaware of any government policies that included beneficiary engagement. Six of ten NGO respondents claimed that government policies have provisions for beneficiary engagement. Rest of the NGO interviewees did not make any solid comment on this. Three of five PMS respondents mentioned that government policies were inclusive of beneficiary engagement and two PMS respondents agreed that policies had scope for beneficiary engagement, but their responses related more to gaps between policies and their implementation.

I did not ask this specific question of PB participants, given the relevance of policy related questions for beneficiaries. Answers from DPs mainly focused on donor policies and preferences to provide development assistance through GOs and NGOs. One respondent from the MISC group, who represented the private agriculture research sector, claimed that government policies were supportive to engage communities because it ensured community participation in agriculture research. Several sub-themes were generated from interview responses (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1. Category of respondents perceived policies as inclusive of engaging beneficiaries

Sub-themes	Respondents					
	GOs	NGOs	PMS	PB	DP	MISC
Social inclusion in state principles	√	√	√			√
GOs reaching out communities	√	√				
Engagement as outlined in guidelines	√	√				
Making local government responsible for engagement	√		√			
Engagement as evident in service sector policies	√	√	√			
Engagement in policies as donors prefer/value	√	√	√		√	
Presence in the community for beneficiary engagement	√	√				
Day-to-day interaction with beneficiaries	√	√		√		
Getting access to services and staff	√	√		√		√

5.1.1. Engagement as integrated in development planning

Interviews perceived that key policies in the public sector of Bangladesh that outline engaging beneficiaries in development initiatives. Research participants believed that the scope of policies originated from the mandate of the State, which was outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of Bangladesh (GOB 1972). Long-term development planning and different service sector policies under which individual ministries and departments operate include beneficiary engagement. Interviews revealed that different government ministries and departments are responsible for the design, planning and implementation of projects in consultation with various stakeholders, which creates scope for beneficiary engagement. None of the research participants disagreed on the scope of government policies for involving people in the development. Research participants explained the process of policy formulation in the public sector and how it is linked to beneficiary engagement in different service sectors from local to central levels (see Figure 5.2).

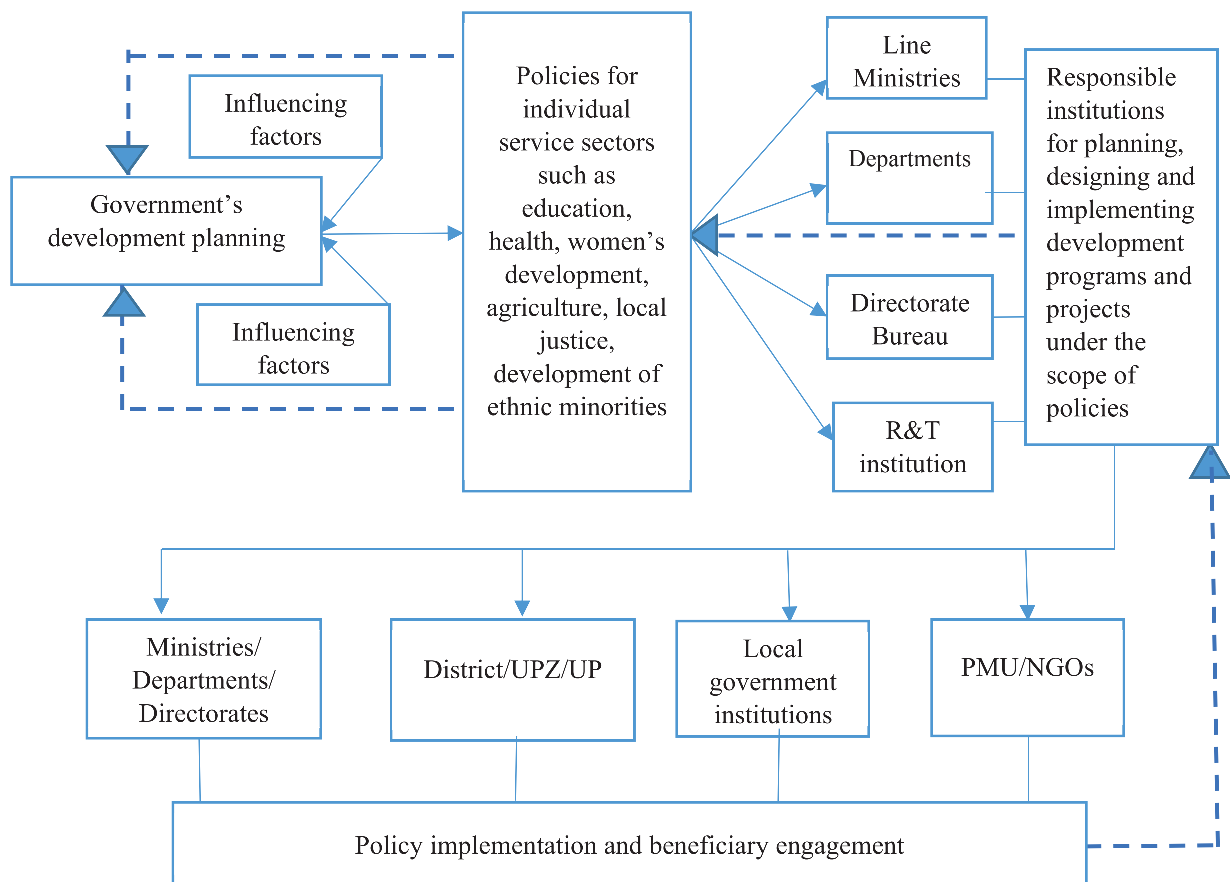


Figure 5.2. Public sector policy process and beneficiary engagement

Source: based on primary data sources.

I have developed this policy process based on interviews with NGOs, DAE and Health directorate officials in the government and GO-NGO project staff at the field level. As illustrated in Figure 5.2, research participants seemed to have established a link between policy frameworks and government agencies, and that implementation and obtaining information at the local level forms the basis for government policies and development programs.

An interview with a Health Directorate official revealed that the health programs were based on the available data at the field level. The interviewee mentioned that the Health Directorate plans projects on the basis of field-level data and the program is designed by the directorate:

> The Health Directorate plans for projects on the basis of field-level data and the programs are designed by the directorate based on research information database, such as RI Software database, Management Information System and Directorate database (GO interview, 18/04/2017).

An interview with an agriculture official revealed that the policy process in this sector is based on requirements identified within the farmers communities. In addition, government ministries, departments, and research institutes bridge what the farmers need, research products and development programs. Beneficiary engagement in this sector is more qualitative in the specialised area of agriculture:

> Each of the research institutes conducts research on the basis of demands from the field … The Ministry is responsible to provide the research findings to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) to spread this among farmers for production (GO interview, 18/01/2016).

It is important to note that 'demand' in the above quote implies what the farmers need or are able or willing to produce that DAE coordinates with the line ministry and research institutes. The farmers are representative of small farmers groups (in 4554 unions) and the wider community of farmers remain involved when the development programs are implemented throughout the country.

My interview with an NGO executive revealed that beneficiary requirements are reflected in the disaster preparedness programs of the Disaster Management Bureau (DMB), which are designed for the communities in coastal areas. The community needs in special situations create provision for engaging beneficiaries in the disaster management program.

Both GO and NGO respondents perceived that this process of development planning in Bangladesh creates scope for beneficiary engagement. Development planning reflects beneficiary requirements that are assessed at the field level though methods of assessment for engaging varies in different sectors, such as understanding the needs of farmers by talking to them and collecting health-related data in the public health sector. GOs appear to be involved in engaging beneficiaries and identifying beneficiary needs, which has usually appeared to be an NGO-only intervention, following the emergence of NGOs and their innovative 'bottom-up approach' to development. While development planning is based on information at the field

level, primary sources of data demonstrated that engagement is needs-based. This implies that the beneficiary requirements are assessed by relevant authority at the field level which in turn forms the basis for government's development planning. However, whether this strategy is giving beneficiaries a 'say' in development planning as Lukensmeyer & Torres (2006) defined or creates scope for their roles in decision making that Eversole (2010) argues is not evident in the primary sources of data. Instead of demonstrating 'dissatisfaction' of current policy or making demands on the state that Roberts (2004) and Gaventa (2002) considered for engagement, conveying the needs is how people are engaged in the development context of Bangladesh. However, the concept of engaging in different stages of development theories as progressed in literature are relevant to determine how development planning should be documented from a centralised to a people-centred development approach in Bangladesh.

With its colonial bureaucratic origins, the Government of Bangladesh possesses similar ingredients (Hakim 1987, Jamil 2002, Lange 2004). However, aligning with the concepts of people-oriented development requires practices and policies that can make government functions more people-oriented (Verhoest 2011). Jamil (2002, p. 96) suggested that GOs require information beyond organisational boundaries and from various sources, such as politicians, citizens, academics and voluntary organisations to work effectively and make informed decisions. Government administration requires planning from below because community development 'means a meeting-point of politicians, bureaucrats and citizens' and the process is based on 'cooperation between these actors rather than segregation' (Jamil, 2002, p. 103).

The research participants claimed that the adoption of beneficiary engagement in development planning is an outcome of the realisation that involving people in the development process does not function in traditional colonial-style administration. The shift from centralised functions is

necessary to integrate people in development, which requires a clear understanding of the need to minimise distance between GOs and people. An interview with a senior government official revealed that the concept of beneficiary engagement is 'new' and it is gradually emerging:

> 'The concept [of engagement] is new to the government; however, it is developing and there is a scope to develop policies in the government further. The government realises that it cannot reach beneficiaries due to culture of colonisation. There is a psychological distance between people and administration' (GO interview, 10/01/2015)

This realisation is positive and when beneficiary inclusion is realised and integrated as a priority in national development planning, GOs need to respond to its implementation (May, Workman & Jones 2008). If the priority is to integrate people in the development, an opportunity for GOs to connect with beneficiaries is created. The statement above indicates a realisation of minimising distance between GOs and beneficiaries, which creates the scope of development planning to engage its beneficiaries.

I also took note of various secondary sources that research participants recommended during interviews. I examined the secondary sources of data such as the Constitution, several Five Year Plans (FYPs), Union *Parishad* Act, Perspective Plan, Vision 2021, service sector policies and NGO objectives to see how beneficiary engagement has been reflected in development planning. I selected secondary data sources that were relevant to development planning, ministry or departmental functions in implementing development programs and NGO operations in Bangladesh.

5.1.2. Engaging: the fundamental state principle

An interview with PMS, who was a former civil servant, identified that involving people in the development process and having pro-people development policies is enshrined in the Constitution:

> Article 21 of the Constitution of Bangladesh refers to engaging people. The role of civil servants is also stated in the Constitution, based on which government policies and laws became pro-people. Beneficiary engagement is pertinent to the Bangladesh Constitution' (PMS interview, 24/01/2015).

It is important to note that the Constitution was enacted in 1972 when development concepts experienced trends of community development to meet basic human needs and undertake integrated rural development (Leal 2007, p. 540). These aspects of development and meeting basic needs are reflected in the Constitution. For example, Article 7 recognises people as being the 'source of all powers of the Republic'. Part II of the Constitution outlines the 'Fundamental Principles of State Policy'. Several Articles under this section are directly related to people's right to participate in development and democratic processes. Article 21 defines the responsibilities of rights-holders (citizens) and service providers (public service). In line with the duty of citizens to abide by the Constitution and the law, it is the duty of public servants 'to strive at all times to serve the people' (Article 21, Section 2). The key principle is that people are at the centre of all development activities assumed by the nation. Therefore, development planning should be inclusive of people; not an isolated national priority but integrated into the government policy apparatus.

5.1.3. Scope of beneficiary engagement in development planning

The Government of Bangladesh formulates FYPs for the continuation of the development process. I have examined the first, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh FYPs, which covered the years between the 1970s and 2015. Political stability was at stake between 1975 and 1990, when Bangladesh experienced two military regimes. The development activities were disrupted due to a lack of resources and political instability (GOB 1995, Section 3.1, pp. III–1) and the country experienced 'an absence of truly representative government' (GOB n. d., Section 1.1.2, p. 1). I have deliberatively chosen the first FYP (1FYP) because it was

formulated just after independence and the FYPs from the 1990s, following the return to democracy in 1991.

The 1FYP (Section 1.5, p. 2) in 1973 asserted the need for political commitment and ability to 'mobilize people' for nation building (GOB 1973). Recognising the young generation's contribution to the independence of the country, the 1FYP emphasised leadership and organisations to 'mobilize their talent and energies towards productive ends' (GOB 1973, p. 5). I ran a query using NVivoPro11 to determine 100 words (minimum 5 letters) that were most frequently used in selected sections of 4FYP and 7FYP to examine how people were linked to development planning. The reason for selecting these two in particular was to compare two different decades, the 1990s and 2000s. Given the size and volume of each FYP, I selected the sections on objectives and strategies to undertake secondary source analysis. Figure 5.3 displays the macro level focus on development, change and resources in the public sector integrating people and communities into development objectives, such as poverty alleviation, social, economic and service sectors development.

Figure 5.3. Integration of 'people' in the government development planning

The FYP strategy was to ensure development for the target population with the objectives of poverty alleviation, rural development, economic growth, income and productivity. Strategies included leadership, participation, justice, empowerment, projects and the government's commitment to the people. Figure 5.4 displays how 'people' have been integrated into development planning and political commitment for improvement of their social and economic conditions in these FYPs.

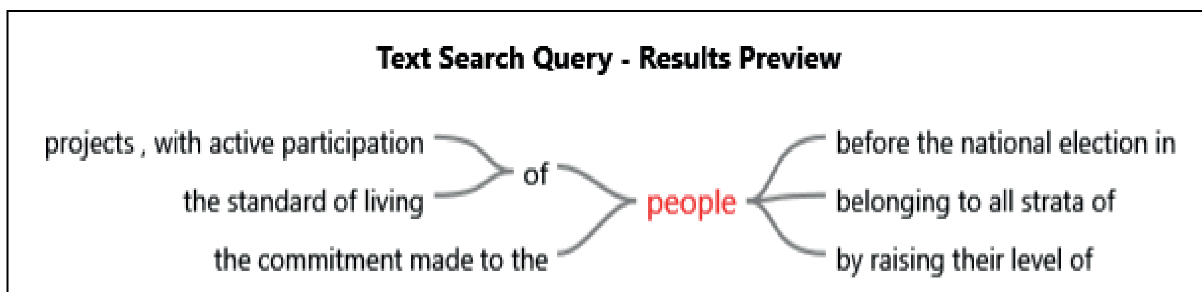


Figure 5.4. People in public sector development objectives

As identified in literature review, development planning of Bangladesh is also focused on participation rather than beneficiary engagement. The following sections provide an overview of FYPs that addressed beneficiary engagement in relation to participation, the role of NGOs, the private sector and local government and strategies of institutional reform to involve people in the country's development.

5.1.3.1 Beneficiary engagement as a response to participation

Research participants considered the focus on participation in FYPs as the basis for engaging project beneficiaries and believed that development planning and policies created scope for beneficiary engagement. The FYPs articulated the need to ensure people's participation in the country's development. From this point of view, development planning in Bangladesh seems to be documented as people-focused and aligns with people-oriented development concepts and is reflected in identification of development planning.

The 4FYP outlines development strategies for the rural population through 'appropriate organisational and institutional mechanisms for participatory planning including women's participation' (GOB 1995), along with different service sector development strategies. One of the major development constraints for the service sector identified in the 4FYP (1990–1995) was a lack of central planning and the 'absence of complimentary locally initiated' plans. The 4FYP identified constraints of service delivery and claimed that distance between service providers and recipients was caused due to bias against the poor. The project performance was described as 'less than satisfactory' for not having 'adequate involvement of local community', resulting in less impact on the beneficiary groups (GOB 1995).

The 5FYP (GOB n. d.) added a new dimension to development planning, which shifted from central planning to participatory planning by strengthening local government institutions (LGIs), introducing local level participatory planning and integrating local level development projects into national development planning (Chapter II, Section 2.2.4, p. 42). Similarly, the 6FYP (Chapter 6) outlined strategies including labour force participation, the participation of women and rural poor people in land management, community participation in health services and improvements to ensure participation, social inclusion and development (GOB 2012). The 5FYP (Chapter II, Section 2.1.3, p. 39) outlined the need to interact with citizens to keep pace with the changing international order, which included political and technological change, markets, private sector development and the need to sustain growth and alleviate poverty (GOB n.d.). The 6FYP (Chapter 1, p. 18) considered the effective participation of poor people and women in anti-poverty programs to be an indicator of development achievements. Similarly, the 7FYP (GOB 2016) related community participation to these areas and prioritised addressing broad-based participation in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth.

5.1.3.2 NGOs, the private sector and local government to address engagement

The 4FYP (GOB 1995) recognised the contribution of NGOs to poverty alleviation and income-generating programs through engaging target beneficiaries and communities. Section 2.5 of the 4FYP focused on decentralised rural and local government development through community participation, such as the formation of village development committees for development and welfare activities at the community level and bottom-up planning. At the same time, 4FYP considered it necessary for NGOs to complement and implement government policies on community participation.

The 5FYP claimed that development planning responds to the changing strategies of development in the international contexts of changing relationship and balances between the government, private sector and NGOs (GOB n. d., Chapter II, Section 2.1.3, p. 39). The significant role of NGOs in building public awareness was further recognised in one of the strategies of the 6FYP, which included NGO advocacy to raise awareness regarding health behaviour (GOB 2012). NGOs were successful in these areas for their ability to actively engage and motivate communities. Having NGOs involved in service delivery reduced dependence on government employees (GOB 2012, Part 1, p. 139).

While the 4FYP recognised the role of NGOs in community engagement and participatory development, the 5FYP emphasised LGIs and created procedural strategies for NGO accountability towards government bodies. The 5FYP created a scope for UPs to implement public projects at the union levels, such as primary schools and primary healthcare programs to enhance the delivery of services at the union level (GOB n. d.). The 6FYP expanded UP's scope of work with the objective of delivering services through direct communication with people (GOB 2012). The objective of the government is to 'bring services to the doorstep of people' and beside NGOs, UPs are in close connection with people – the electorates. Direct

interaction with people is a major strategy to engage people in development initiatives and has been the basis for the government to expand the scope of UP activities. It is not only NGOs that directly communicate with people; GOs are also responsible through UPs to interact with people because UPs provide various services and implement local development work.

5.1.3.3 Engagement and development vision

Apart from FYPs, the GOB formulated two important documents to articulate the future focus of development with longer term development visions and perspectives. While Vision 2021 is a 'strategic articulation of development vision, mission and goals of the government', the Perspective Plan 'provides the road map for accelerated growth' through eradicating 'poverty, inequality and human deprivation' (GOB 2012, p. 1). The 6FYP (2011–2015) and the 7FYP (2016–2021) have been developed in the context of Vision 2021 and the Perspective Plan, which outlined long-term development visions. These two FYPs provide the operational details of achieving Perspective Plan targets. In its implementation strategies, the 6FYP has placed emphasis on the private sector to strengthen service delivery, although it recognises GO–NGO collaborations are required to upscale service sectors (GOB 2012, p. 122). The objective of the 7FYP focuses on 'accelerating growth, empowering citizens' (GOB2016). The social inclusion covers major areas of development and the plan highlights the government's commitment to disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

Vision 2021 outlines the development target, in which 'citizens will have a higher standard of living'. One of the goals is to build a caring society by leading individuals, communities and institutions to work towards development and having 'communities to work collaboratively with trust, goodwill, integrity and civic pride' (GOB 2011, p.13, 15). This emphasis on community collaboration creates opportunities to engage communities in the development work and for the State to play the role of 'facilitator'.

5.1.3.4 Institutional capacity for engaging beneficiaries

Development planning also outlines strategies for building institutional capacity to reach people. The FYPs focus on institutional and individual capacity development, including LGIs. The management of development programs experiences a significant shift from measuring financial progress only to measuring government performance through annual reviews of line ministries. Strategies to reform public administration are expected to transform traditional bureaucratic public sector into client oriented public service to transfer the government's development policies into practice. The Grievance Redress System (GRS) has also been introduced for all ministries and the Cabinet Division to connect citizens with public services and to allow government departments to be responsive to complaints and required improvements (GOB n. d.).

GOB has introduced the Annual Performance Agreement (APA), which is a performance management tool to measure the performance of individual ministries on a yearly basis and the MOU is signed between individual line ministries and the Cabinet Division to establish the performance goals. Beneficiaries have been the key elements of the APA mission that each line ministry is responsible to integrate into their annual performance report (APA n. d. p. 5). It is now the responsibility of every government office to display the Citizen's Charter, which provides information on service delivery such as requirements, fees, forms and processes to apply for services (e.g. applying for copies of land records). The enactment of the Right to Information Act (2009) is considered to be a high level of government–citizen interface. Government ministry and department websites include the right to information as a method for citizens to claim information on service delivery. Hence the provisions of service delivery are an important aspect of beneficiary engagement as evident in interviews.

The FYP strategies, institutional reforms, enactment of laws, information access policies and strengthening LGIs are convincing for research participants, who claimed that development policies are inclusive of beneficiary engagement because these policies encourage participation. Important to note that these institutional roles respond to the institutional reforms that were generated during the era of NPM in 1990s.

5.1.4. Engagement in service sector development

According to research participants from different groups, development policies in the service sectors, such as agricultural policy, disaster management policy, youth and women's development policies were equally inclusive of beneficiaries who were the service recipients. Respondents from NGOs considered government policies in some service sectors to be unique in engaging beneficiaries. An interview with an NGO executive revealed the 'Ministry of Agriculture is exceptional that works so closely with beneficiaries' (interview on 08/01/2015).

According to this interviewee, the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) is doing much on beneficiary engagement in the agriculture sector because it is integrated into the functions of this organisation. The interviewee also mentioned other departments that include project beneficiaries, namely the Directorate of Health and Family Welfare, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and its directorate, DMB, the Ministry of Youth and Department of Youth Development Department of Social Services, the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Health and Family Planning. These government entities engage project beneficiaries in the process of delivering services and managing development projects, as the respondent mentioned.

I interviewed a UPZ Health and Family Planning Officer (UH&FPO) at the UPZ level in a northern district, who considered his job (being a doctor) not only to provide treatment for diseases but to engage people in health-related issues because the government health programs

target poor people and vulnerable groups. He thought that bringing people out of traditional ideas is difficult, which is why the government has expanded community clinics:

> 'It is difficult to bring out people from traditional perception. This is why community clinic service is provided. The concept is to have community ownership. To increase attendance of people, there are community groups and support groups, which link people to the community clinic. It requires positive advocacy and the community representative is responsible to involve people' (GO interview, 20/04/2017).

The key objective of health programs is to deliver health and family welfare services to all people, including women, disadvantaged and marginalised rural and urban populations. The provision of community clinics was outlined in the 6FYP (GOB 2012). The focus is to target 'better healthcare delivery to the rural communities' and difficult-to-reach areas. These community clinics serve rural communities as a one-stop health care service, which covers health, population and nutrition services. The development planning recognises the gap between government provisions of healthcare services and the participation of service recipients during the project planning phase (GOB 2012, p. 128). With the objective of accessibility of services, the government policy on community clinics is to integrate communities at the local level for their access to healthcare services. The establishment of community clinics was the basis for ensuring accessibility to primary healthcare services and implementation is ensured by having communities on board to establish and manage the clinic that research participants perceived as a strategy to engage beneficiaries.

Given the scope of policies to engage beneficiaries in the health sector and the responsibility of officials to inform people as mentioned by the UH&FPO, I wanted to cross-check data from beneficiary points of view. Interviews with female beneficiaries in a union under Dhaka district revealed that rural people are aware of this initiative:

> 'Women in the village go to the community clinic. Clinic staff are there most of the time. We receive primary healthcare treatment in the community clinic for immunisation, common cold and fever. People in the village know that there is a community clinic' (PB interview, 23/04/2017).

As evident in an interview with a respondent who worked in a government education project, beneficiary engagement seemed to have a key focus in the primary education sector (GO interview on 11/01/2015). The objective of primary education program is to ensure equal access to primary education for the entire country, which is inclusive of street children, orphans and children deprived of service facilities and children with special needs (Ahsan & Burnip 2007). For example, the School Level Improvement Plan mentioned that it will include people in implementing the improvement programs and establish networks between schools and local people (Primary Education Directorate n. d.). In this sector, incentives such as food for education is important to engage beneficiaries. Data regarding beneficiary engagement in this sector are limited and mainly focused on informal and primary education programs in which NGOs are involved. Interview findings also demonstrated that beneficiary engagement in this sector is ensured mainly by NGOs. For example, BRAC's education projects were successful in increasing enrolment (GO interview on 10/01/2015). This is because NGOs are partners to GOs in primary education programs. A senior government official in the seminar at BPATC where I presented a paper on 19/04/2017, commented that beneficiary engagement in the education sector is fragmented or limited because communities are divided into several streams of education such as urban, rural, public, private, Madrassa, Bengali and English medium. It is difficult to ensure beneficiary engagement where there are so many service providers. The seminar participant claimed that too many divisions will result in less engagement.

Officials from the Directorate of Women and Children Affairs believed that policies on women's development are instrumental in engaging women beneficiaries in development programs. Strategies on women beneficiary engagement have been outlined in the National Women Development Policy 2011 (GOB 2014). The policy prioritises developing women as skilled workforce through education, health and training and providing opportunities for mental and cultural development and supporting women's entrepreneurship. The policy emphasises

the inclusion of women in agricultural activities and the grassroots development through empowering local organisations and linking these with LGIs. In each FYP, women's development cover significant development strategies, which interviewees considered to be the basis to engage women beneficiaries.

5.1.5. NGO policies and beneficiary engagement

For a comparative analysis, I have investigated the scope of beneficiary engagement in NGO policies. Interviews revealed two perspectives of NGO policies on beneficiary engagement. Some research participants perceived that NGO policies were dependent on government policies. Others believed that it was NGO initiatives and advocacy that provided input for government policies on beneficiary engagement. However, with both these perspectives, it was mentioned that beneficiary engagement is the core component of NGO functions. This section describes the scope of NGO policies for beneficiary engagement as revealed during the interviews.

5.1.5.1 Basis for NGO policies on beneficiary engagement

NGOs operate within the institutional and legal framework of GOB in Bangladesh and government functions are guided by constitutional provisions and the laws of the State. While operating within the government's institutional and legal frameworks, data from interviews demonstrated that the inclusion of beneficiary engagement in NGO policies are based on two concepts: beneficiary engagement in NGO policies is subject to implementation of government policies and it was NGO advocacy and campaigns on human development issues, inclusion and participation that led to the formulation of government policies. The following statements reflect these findings:

> 'NGOs study government policies and Human Development Index. NGOs try to identify the funding and relate the gaps with available funds' (NGO interview, 25/01/2017).

> 'NGOs are actually implementing government policies and not contradicting' (NGO interview, 23/04/2017).

While NGO policies do not contradict national development planning, interviews revealed that a participatory approach to development is in practice in the NGO sector, which led to beneficiary engagement in government policies. This is evident in the case of women's empowerment, brining women out of traditional household work to non-traditional activities, such as using motorbikes for fieldwork, driving, farming and women's entrepreneurship. A critical finding from interview with a respondent from the Women and Children Directorate revealed:

> 'NGO contribution to women's mobilisation is important. It is the NGOs that first started giving women bikes, cycles to work in the field level. It was possible to engage women that we see today due to NGO campaigns, it is a significant development' (GO interview, 12/04/2017).

NGOs have established their operational objectives to reflect the requirements of addressing people's participation and development in existing policies. According to research participants, these two concepts incorporated in NGO policies stimulate individual NGO objectives for being 'people-centred'. I gathered objectives of some randomly selected NGOs that clearly exhibited this 'people-centred' strategy of development theories and concepts. These objectives focus on lifting people above poverty, serving the poor, providing skills to the poor, justice for disadvantaged people and delivering services to people through establishing their rights (see Box 1).

Box 1. Beneficiary integration in NGO objectives

BRAC—We act as a catalyst, creating opportunities for **people** living in poverty to realise their potential.

ASA—The institutional mission of ASA is to support and strengthen the economy **at the bottom** of the socioeconomic pyramid by facilitating access to financial services for the **poor, marginalised and disadvantaged**.

Grameen Bank—Ensure that the credit system serves **the poor** and not vice-versa. Credit officers visit villages, enabling them to get to know the borrowers (one of the Methods of Action).

Grameen Australia—Grameen Australia is leading the way in the development of social businesses to provide employment for **the poor** and provide them with the skills and financial responsibility to permanently escape poverty.

Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA)—Access to justice increased for empowerment of **disadvantaged people**, particularly women and children.

Eco Social Development Organisation (ESDO) —Reduction in income poverty and human poverty of the **people** in the working area through undertaking massive integrated development program for the **poor** and **marginalised communities** through service delivery and rights-based approach.

BASTOB - BASTOB envisions a society in which **poor and disadvantaged people** are socially developed and economically self-reliant.
Source: Different NGO websites.

Using NvivoPro11, I ran a query to determine the most frequently used words in NGO objectives. This word search was used to compare how beneficiary engagement is integrated in NGOs' objectives and functions. While development, change and resources covered the significant part of development objectives of GOs, the objectives of NGOs covered people, poverty and disadvantage (see Figure 5.5).

people
poverty
disadvantaged
access
credit
development
financial
marginalize
action
approach
australia
based
bastob
borrowers
bottom
businesse
catalyst
children
communit
creating
delivery
develope
economic
economic
economy
employm
empower
enabling
envisions
escape
facilitating
grameen
human
income
increased
institution
integrated
justice
leading
living
massive
methods
mission
officers
program
provide
pyramid
realise
reliant
opportuni
responsib
services
skills
social
socially
particular
rights
society
support
system
undertakin
permaner
serves
socio
versa
visit
women
potential
service
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villages
worki

Figure 5.5. Integration of 'People' in the NGO policies

NGO objectives on beneficiary engagement focus on specific areas of work because different NGOs work on different issues, which result in different projects with 'people' at the centre of core values. NGO policies and actions include 'people' in organisational objectives to create opportunities for poor and disadvantaged communities, including women in rural areas to work as a catalyst for poverty alleviation and social and economic development (see Figure 5.6).

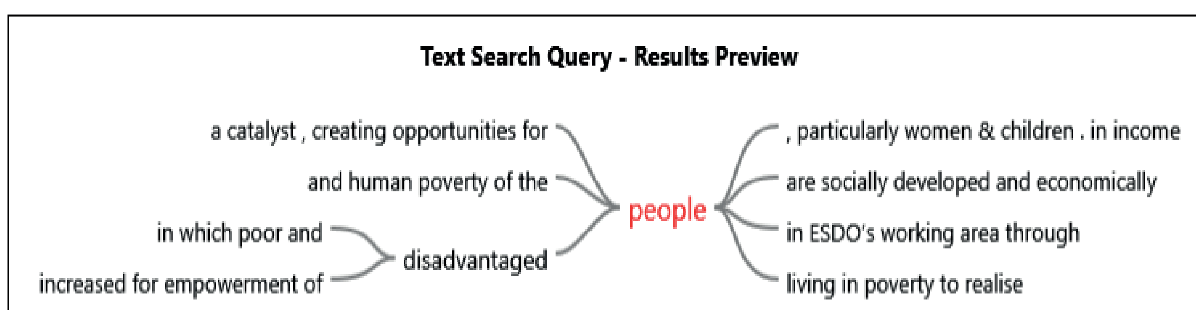

Figure 5.6. People in NGO objectives

5.1.5.2 NGO contributions as recognised in government policies

An interview with NGO professional revealed that NGO advocacy is instrumental for government policies on beneficiary engagement because it recognises NGO strategies of

beneficiary participation: ‘Government actually acknowledges NGO practices and, in many cases, adopted policies’ (NGO interview on 11/01/2015).

The beneficiary participation strategies and advocacy role of NGOs are recognised in the government’s development planning and policies as identified in secondary data sources. The government’s development planning recognises the capacity of NGOs to engage beneficiaries in development activities. For example, the 4FYP recognises the contribution of NGOs to poverty alleviation and income generation programs through engagement with target beneficiaries and communities (GOB 1995). The 5FYP creates opportunities for NGOs as well as government institutions to partner on consensus building and replicated innovative NGO projects through GO–NGO consultation (GOB n. d.). Similarly, the 6FYP recognises the role of NGOs in building public awareness and creates advocacy opportunities for NGOs to raise awareness on health behaviour (GOB 2012).

As NGO policies are expected not to contradict with the core development agenda of the government, they are expected to carry out services to target populations. Government policies form the basis of development initiatives for NGOs and as such, being governed by rules and regulations does not necessarily create limitations for NGOs to engage beneficiaries. Instead, participatory provisions in government policies create opportunities for NGOs to ensure beneficiary engagement. NGO officials believed that they could modify the engagement criteria accordingly to adjust the needs of development interventions:

> ‘Department of Social Services (DSS) defines the format for case management approach but these are not adequate. However, NGOs can modify this format according to the needs of the beneficiaries. NGOs supplement the DSS template but DSS allows this modification’ (NGO interview, 08/01/2015).

GO and NGO policies demonstrate integration of people in development functions. However, at the macro level, the development plans and policies of GOs appear to be development-centred, in which people form the essential focus of development objectives and strategies.

NGOs exist at the micro level, with a focus on individual development issues that centre on 'people'. However, policies do not contradict the concept of engagement, which has been emphasised by research participants during interviews. The comparison between GO–NGO policies on beneficiary engagement belonged to macro and micro level development and do not necessarily reveal contradictions or opposing elements, which is evident in the primary and secondary sources of data.

5.1.5.3 External influence for engagement in GO–NGO policies

While research participants claimed that GO and NGO policies include beneficiary engagement, they also believed that it is the condition of donors for which policies are inclusive of beneficiary engagement. Research participants identified 'donor influence' as a major conditioning factor for incorporating people, participation and beneficiaries in development planning in the public sector and objective setting in the NGO sector. Section 2.2 illustrates how international assistance influence development strategies at the national level. In describing the impact of development aid on the policies of aid recipient countries, Bourguignon and Sundberg (2013, p. 317) drew a 'causality chain' between international development assistance and country outcomes, which connected international donors to policy-makers through aid and technical assistance. The authors argued that better policy and development performance changed international trends of development assistance because it does not prefer weak policy and governance (pp. 319–320).

Research participants (mainly from GOs, NGOs and PMS groups) view that beneficiary engagement is an outcome of donors' influence rather than being locally driven. While the State is committed to international development frameworks as a signatory to declarations and treaties, it is dependent on development resources that come from development partners. The interviews cover these issues while identifying donor conditions and agenda as an influencing

factor for the provision of beneficiary engagement in GO–NGO development objectives (see Figure 5.7).

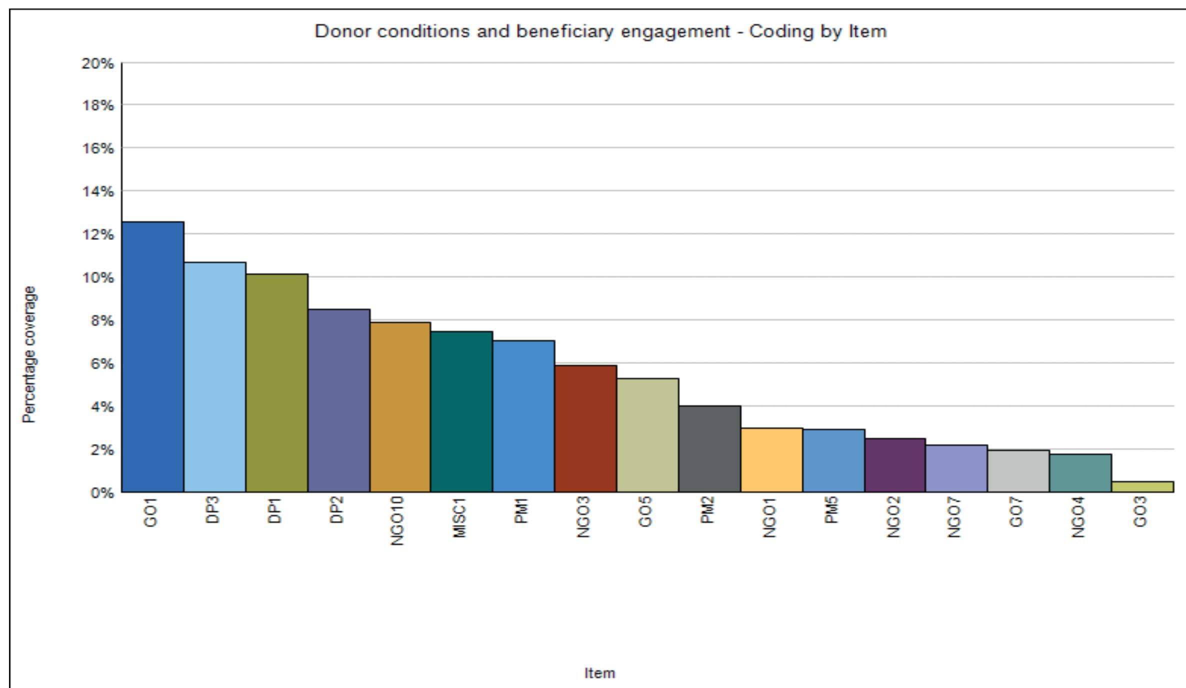

Figure 5.7. Data coverage on donor conditions for beneficiary engagement

Several respondents from various groups claimed that beneficiary engagement is a donor agenda and exists in policies and projects because donors emphasise participation at the grassroots level. Interviews with development partners revealed that they value engaging beneficiaries, taking development benefits to people and aligning project objectives to target beneficiaries. GO and NGO respondents mentioned that development agreements between donors and government or between donors and NGOs form the basis for policies and project components on engaging beneficiaries. Three of five respondents from the PMS group said that concepts of beneficiary engagement came from donors while the rests neither emphasise on donor influence nor disagreed. An interview with a media staff (MISC group) revealed that his organisation has received project funding from donors while ensured that target groups are

engaged (i.e., children not below 10 years of age) at the field level for journalism practices and reporting to media on anything they are interested to present publicly.

The data above reflect research participants' views that beneficiary engagement is a donor agenda, which is reflected in the government's development planning, policies and in NGOs' objectives. Bangladesh receives foreign funding for different development sectors. Donor funds are usually channelled to sector-wide development interventions such as health, education, agriculture, public health, environment, governance, trade and many other social development opportunities (Riddell 2007:180). An interview with a Project Director (PD) of a donor-funded government agriculture extension project demonstrated that GO considers beneficiary engagement in project management because 'donor funding provisions include beneficiary engagement and this is very important for them' (GO interview on 18/01/2016). Naturally, development assistance provided to Bangladesh reflects donor preferences for beneficiary engagement and influences the government's development planning to incorporate this provision (in the form of participation) in policies. From a development partner organisation's point of view:

> 'Engaging project beneficiaries forms the basis for considering any development assistance program for Bangladesh. Funding development programs have major focus on this to monitor what extent the assistance is reaching target beneficiaries, specifically the minority, marginalised and vulnerable groups and this is why social inclusion matters. Donors value participatory approach, humanitarian assistance to development and inclusive growth where engaging beneficiaries is critical to integrate this value to any development assistance program' (DP interview, 08/11/2016).

The influence of donors is identified in NGO objectives for beneficiary engagement. Because of the requirements of funding, research participants perceived that NGO functions and the implementation of development activities integrated beneficiary engagement because their donors value the participation and inclusion of beneficiaries for funding NGOs. Research participants from various groups appeared to be critical and sceptical of the inclusion of beneficiaries in NGO policies:

> 'NGO policies have infusion from outsiders as they receive foreign aid. It is a question whether NGOs really have any policies to engage beneficiaries' (PMS interview, 24/01/2015).

> 'Government creates space for participation and remains open when necessary mainly as a result of donor pressure. There is also a question of how far NGOs are participatory. There are perception problems like NGOs are doing everything and GOs are not doing anything. It is important to see whether without donor pressure, even NGOs engage beneficiaries' (GO interview, 09/01/2015).

Research participants confirmed that funding from donors is subject to the organisation's ability and objective of beneficiary engagement from the beginning to the end of a development interventions (NGO interview on 08/01/ 2015). In other words, NGO-led development interventions involve beneficiaries because these are donor funded and conditions are there (NGO interview on 25/03/2015). Interviewees perceived donor influence to be a conditioning factor in government polices and development programs, which was equally applicable for NGOs. An interview with an NGO executive revealed his perception that donors come with 'agenda-based funding' and had their 'own priority' (interview on 22/04/2017). Given the preference of donors for beneficiary engagement, NGOs admitted that donors take engagement seriously and monitor whether NGOs' connections with target populations exist in reality (NGO interview on 23/01/2017).

My interview with DPs further supported these insights obtained from GOs, NGOs and PMS respondents. Donor perspectives identified in interviews were categorised into two major traits: the data identified donor values for engaging project beneficiaries and donors encouraged monitoring to ensure beneficiary engagement. From a donor's point of view, it was important to assess the investment model, to monitor whether service was being delivered for the target population, whether economic growth as achieved and how far the development was resilient (DP interview on 8/11/206). The aid policies of individual donors have direct impacts on beneficiary engagement and program implementation funded by donors. For example, the purpose of Australia Aid was to 'promote Australia's national interests by contributing to

sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction' (DFAT). Primary sources of data validated this objective:

> 'To address social inclusion, engaging target population (project beneficiaries) is inevitable. In some situation, it needs day-to-day interactions as well as face-to-face interactions. [The agency] values participatory approach, humanitarian assistance to development and inclusive growth where engaging beneficiaries is critical to integrate this value to any development assistance program' (DP interview, 08/11/2016).

Data revealed that it is important for donors to monitor whether the NGO selected the target beneficiaries appropriately for development interventions, if templates for beneficiary engagement were followed and whether development interventions implemented by GOs or NGOs reflected deliverables for beneficiaries:

> 'Donors want methodology for selection of beneficiaries; it has to be well defined and have clarified criteria for selection. They maintain procedural aspects of participatory approach to development. Program for whom it is targeted (beneficiaries) the program is only for them' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

Interviews also revealed that engaging beneficiaries was not simply a matter of contracts and templates, but also involved physical monitoring by donor agencies. The following diagram (see Figure 5.8) was provided by an NGO executive and demonstrates how development interventions, coordination and monitoring of beneficiary engagement in project management could occur practically at the field level.

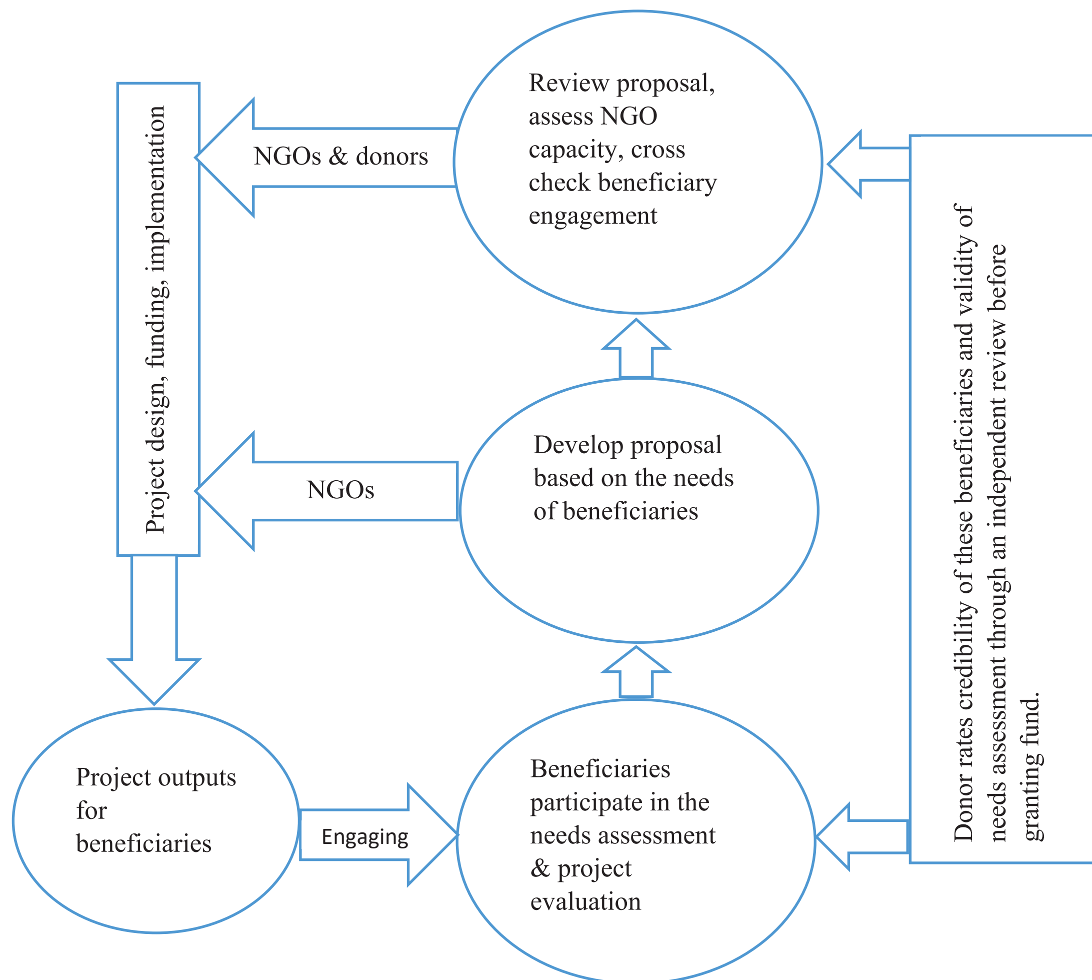

Figure 5.8. Integration of engagement and monitoring in donor-funded NGO-implemented projects

Source: based on NGO interview on 08 January 2015.

Similar data have been obtained during another interview with a different NGO executive, who mentioned that monitoring beneficiary engagement has been extended to digital tools, such as Google Maps. When NGOs provide addresses of target beneficiaries, it is the digital device that facilitates monitoring process because individual donors go to beneficiaries to determine how far beneficiaries are included in the project (NGO interview on 22/04/2017).

The assessment of deliverables is an essential criterion for donors to decide which institutions should receive project funds. As evident in an interview with DP, donors value measuring project deliverables to target beneficiaries and whether these are achieved against the project work plan. Achievement of planned project deliverables had a substantial effect on partnership

and funding strategies, it also has major impact on continuation of project funding. Box 2 demonstrates how donors are critical about achieving project deliverables for target beneficiaries.

Box 2. Fund diverts if assessment fails on beneficiary engagement

This is related to a donor-funded project focusing on children's participation in media. The project continued for more than 5 years implemented by an NGO. In overall evaluation of the project, it was identified that only 3 per cent of funding utilised with a focus on children, whereas the project was about children. The priority was to ensure direct child participation in media. The key deliverable was to establish a children news portal. However, the main objective of the project that to create a platform for children to participate in writing stories for publication was not achieved. To ensure the sustainability of capacity development, the agency had to find out an alternative partner organisation (DP interview, 11/04/2017).

Analysis of primary and secondary data sources identified how research participants perceived GO–NGO policies on beneficiary engagement as an outcome of donors' perspectives of the participation of people in development activities. Despite donor influence creating the conditions for GOs to include beneficiary engagement in development planning, the primary and secondary data sources demonstrated that engagement has been integrated into GO–NGO policies in Bangladesh through the provisions of people's participation. In the theory of organisational dependence, external forces are important, but 'a parallel set of domestic configurations' must also be taken into account (Caporaso 1980, p. 607) to reflect internal contexts in policy-making. This is because donors have no choice but to work with the government in a given country or to work through governments in their partnership with NGOs (Collier & Dollar, 2004). Donor conditions and their influence on aid recipient countries to adopt policies has been examined in the development literature (see Section 2.1.2). However, the expansion of the concept of donor influence in a country and its effects on specific development planning for GO–NGO roles in beneficiary engagement is an interesting finding

presented in this section. This exploration is critical to further reveal how GOs and NGOs transfer policies into practices.

5.2. Beneficiary engagement: transferring policies into practices

Given these data on the scope of beneficiary engagement in both government and NGO policies and how these were perceived to be an outcome of donor influence, I sought to determine what enables GOs and NGOs to engage beneficiaries at the field level. I conducted interviews with GOs at the centre (e.g., department headquarters in Dhaka) and at the field level (e.g., district, UPZ and Unions) to identify the extent to which policies were instrumental to engage project beneficiaries at the field level. Interviews with GOs, NGOs, PMS and PB at the field level helped me identify several key factors that enable GOs and NGOs to engage project beneficiaries. In addition, interviews with PB helped me to triangulate data obtained from other groups of respondents and understand how they are engaged in the development process.

While development planning ensures social inclusion in the public sector, individual service sector policies appear to be open to beneficiary engagement, which was revealed during interviews with different groups of research participants. Provisions in relevant service sector policies, rules and legislation have created the basis for beneficiary engagement in the day-to-day functions of government departments across service sectors and UPs. Interviews helped identify key aspects that enabled GOs to transfer policies on beneficiary engagement into practices in development initiatives. The following section presents the analysis of data obtained during interviews.

5.2.1. Decentralised services and beneficiary engagement

Research participants viewed project beneficiary engagement and access to services for beneficiaries as their right (NGO interview, 22/04/2017). Implementing public sector

development interventions at the local level allowing local people to participate is the major concept argued in favour of decentralisation (Conyers 1983; Conyers 1984; Mohan & Stokke 2000; Bardhan 2002; Devas & Grant 2003). Since access to service is perceived as a beneficiary right, it is important to ensure service provisions within reach of communities. Interviews at the district, UPZ and union level revealed that the decentralised structure of service providers is inevitable to create service provisions for communities and engage beneficiaries at the local level. The critical factors for engaging beneficiaries appeared to be directly related to decentralisation of services at the field level. Research participants categorised the provision of decentralised services into two groups: decentralised services in local administration and service provisions in UPs. The following sections narrate how these two categories contribute to beneficiary engagement in GOs:

5.2.1.1 Local administration and beneficiary engagement

GOs are responsible for the management of development programs at the field level, which are mainly implemented through various government departments and local administrations under relevant line ministries. Government service sectors like agriculture, health and education, social services and women's development are decentralised to the field level. Each of 485 UPZs have headquarters under different line ministries, which are extended to the union level in the service sector. For example, DAE remains responsible for implementing agriculture development projects at the district, UPZ and union levels. Down to the rural level, each union has three sub-assistant agriculture officers who work closely with farmers. Interviews with district, UPZ and union agriculture officials demonstrated that given the service providing nature of DAE, it needs to work directly with farmers, who are the primary beneficiaries. The central focus of DAE is to have its planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in

close connection with its stakeholders, including farmers, NGOs and government agencies at the field level (GO interview on 21/01/2016).

Interviewees from the Directorate of Health and UPZ Health Complex considered this sector to be a vast and complete area of health services that covers the community, maternal health, nutrition and many other aspects. At the field level, the health administration is responsible for the management of district hospitals, UPZ health complexes, union sub-centres and community clinics. There are program guidelines that are sent from the directorate to the field-level offices, where UH&FPOs are responsible for the implementation of health projects at the district, UPZ and union levels. Family Welfare Volunteers (FWVs) are present at the union level to reach individual households and directly interact with beneficiaries. The Community Healthcare Provider (CHCP) in the community clinics provides first aid and there are female staff who provide support to skilled birth. Currently, there are 14,000 community clinics in operation that encouraged the development organisations to provide support to the implementation community clinic (WHO n.d.). The CHCP project data demonstrated that there was a 48 per cent increase of beneficiaries seeking community clinic services between 2011 and 2013 (Nargis, n. d.).

Similarly, the presence of NGOs at the grassroots level enable these organisations to engage beneficiaries. While interviewing NGO executives and field workers, I found research participants are based in the district and UPZ levels and have strong networks within communities. Travelling to households from district to UPZ or from UPZ to union is an everyday activity for NGO field workers. These door-to-door visits are considered to be one of the success criteria for NGOs engaging communities: 'Family planning projects are successful as NGO officials used to go door-to-door and the success rate is better than neighbouring countries' (GO interview on 10/01/2015).

Despite the administrative network of GOs at the field level, research participants held strong views about NGO networks with communities at the grassroots level, which they believed were helpful for these organisations to engage project beneficiaries: 'NGOs also use the lowest tier to involve beneficiaries. NGOs can go door-to-door and they are more intimate with beneficiaries than government officials' (GO interview, 10/01/2015).

The primary data sources revealed that strategies of having administrative networks at the field level were essential for GOs and NGOs to engage beneficiaries. The presence of NGOs at the grassroots level is well recognised by GO and NGO respondents; however, the administrative network of GOs is an additional support for NGOs to engage beneficiaries.

5.2.1.2 Engaging and UPs

Policy provisions empower LGIs, such as UPs in Bangladesh, to engage rural people in the process of local development. In an interview with a PMS respondent, I was advised to examine *Union Parishad Act 2009* that creates scope for beneficiary engagement at the grassroots level:

> 'UP Act 2009 and its Rules clearly state engagement strategies by local government institutes. UP gets block grants and the selection criteria includes open budget system that directly engages beneficiaries through participatory budgeting' (PM interview on 27/01/2015).

Government policies in Bangladesh also make UPs responsible for beneficiary engagement, which was reflected in the Union *Parishad* Act 2009. The Union *Parishad* (Development Planning) Rules 2013 connected beneficiaries through ward committees directly to the government's development programs, which specifies strategies for including beneficiaries to identify project needs, existing challenges and economic opportunities. Figure 5.9 displays how the Act 2009 and its implementation rules allowed the UP to engage communities in the local development process through ward committees.

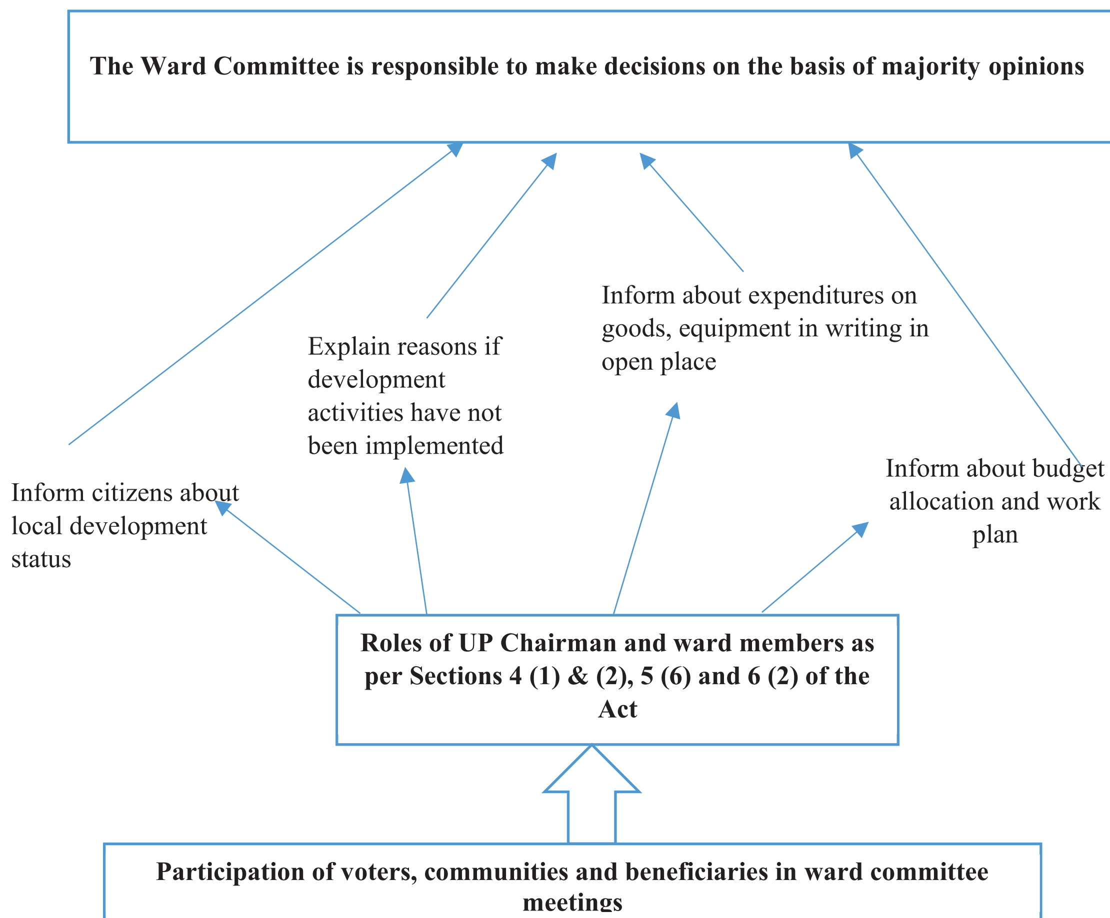

Figure 5.9. Community engagement in local development

Devas & Grant (2003, p. 308) observed that the traditional model of LGIs, in which citizens had no role to play between elections and the elected representatives make decisions on behalf of citizens prevail in many countries. However, the above provisions as stated in the UP Act 2009 rejected this traditional role and created scope of beneficiary engagement, which was identified in the primary data sources. In this process of integration, UP accountability provided local populations with opportunities to participate in the development activities undertaken by the government. The notion of participation is a dimension of decentralisation, which can produce a 'multiplicity of local developments which are determined by the local people themselves' (Mohan & Stokke 2000, p. 252). Research participants thought that this

decentralisation of development activities significantly contributed to beneficiary engagement at the lowest tier of administrative units in Bangladesh.

NGOs considered the involvement of UPs to be critical for beneficiary engagement. It was the local people who were expected to provide feedback on project context and the need for improvement. It is important to include people from development location to contribute to monitoring and evaluation (NGO interview on 25/03/2015). However, local people need to be engaged and contribute to planning, monitoring and evaluating development interventions, in which UPs can play an important role. NGO field workers shared that UP was one of the key stakeholders with which NGOs work: 'One of our key stakeholders is UP and we need to link beneficiaries with certain institutions like UP. The UP Chairman helps communicating the project benefits to the people' (NGO interview on 22/04/2017).

UP's involvement in beneficiary engagement is supportive of NGOs' activities because the absence of this institution, decisions may be referred to a higher level, which will cause delays and less appropriate outcomes (Uphoff 2014) for NGOs.

5.2.1.3 Guidelines to engaging beneficiaries

NGOs usually follow different methods to engage beneficiaries and NGO workers are skilled in using different tools to engage beneficiaries. Household surveys, courtyard meetings, beneficiary group meetings, trainings, advocacy, micro-credit management and interactions with beneficiaries are some of engagement tools that NGO workers utilise. NGOs are guided by principles of Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), Women in Development (WID), Community Action Plan, Early Childcare Development, Project Management and Sustainable Development, Participatory Reflection and mapping of Social Wellbeing (NGO interview on 22/04/2017).

For GOs, it is the implementation guidelines that individual departments receive from line ministries that need to be followed to engage project beneficiaries. Research participants revealed that the scope of development planning and policies at the national level creates provisions for staff at the field level to follow guidelines to engage beneficiaries. For example, engaging beneficiaries is outlined in the diary of the sub-assistant agriculture officer, who is in charge of a union agriculture office and is responsible for door-to-door visits at the field level, enabling farmers to directly receive services from DAE. The diary outlines everyday tasks of the official, including how to assist farmers in the identification of problems and remedies, planning of agricultural block extension on the basis of individual needs, gathering agriculture information and linking farmers to other relevant offices for assistance on agricultural activities:

> 'Engaging beneficiaries is outlined in the diary of sub-assistant agriculture officer. It is a responsibility to work with beneficiaries. I have database of farmers at the union level, which is based on selected areas. I can select beneficiaries from the database. Farmers have agriculture cards and bank accounts, through which they get the government subsidy directly. So, beneficiary engagement is a regular area of my work' (GO interview, 21/01/2016).

Similarly, family welfare assistants provide family planning support services at the union level following the UP Health and Family Planning Centre Management Guidelines. These guidelines provide necessary information and skills on how to engage beneficiaries that makes the staff responsible for the engagement of project beneficiaries (GO interview on 20/04/2017). Policies at the national level provide guidelines that make the staff–beneficiary interaction mandatory and contact target beneficiaries regularly, which was identified by the interviewees. This is equally the fact for NGOs implementing government development programs. For example, partner NGOs that obtained funds from PKSF need to follow its guidelines for project planning, implementation and community engagement (PKSF n. d.).

5.2.1.4 Technical expertise and staff presence at the local level

While interviewees perceived decentralised administration as a means of engaging beneficiaries in the service sectors, the presence of staff at the field level and their technical expertise were equally critical to reach and integrate communities in development activities, which was revealed during interviews with agriculture and health officials. The district administration claimed that presence of government agriculture staff at the field level was very strong, which is the main reason for miracle advancement of agriculture in Bangladesh (GO interview on 18/01/2016). UPZ and the union administration reiterated that staff at the field level need to deal with various groups of beneficiaries:

> Agriculture is a service sector and farmers are our beneficiaries. Since this is government organisation, everyone is our beneficiary which ranges from those who plants on the roof top to those who cultivate on 50 *bigha* [16.76 acre] land. Engaging beneficiaries is a kind of everyday dealing with beneficiaries. I need to deal with seed dealers, fertiliser dealers—all come to my office. This is a demand-based 24/7 service provider organisation (GO interview, 21/01/2016).

This appears to be slightly different in other service sectors, such as health. For example, the central level official in the Directorate of Health said that health officials (public health sector) remain responsible for the implementation of health projects at the field level, but existing staff strength at the field level was lower than planned for in the departmental organigram. Despite having the government mandate to deliver healthcare services to rural people, a lack of required number of staff constricts the scope of engaging beneficiaries in this sector. In one UPZ health office, only four out of 22 doctors were posted at the time of interviews (GO interview on 20/04/2017). In addition, due to lack of appropriate infrastructure at the union level, medical professionals mainly stay at the UPZ level:

> Medical officers stay in the district and mainly stay in UPZ level. There they have convenient infrastructure but this cannot be said in the case of union level so they cannot stay there (GO interview, 18/04/2017).

5.2.1.5 Shared benefits and engagement

Interviews revealed that when communities were informed of development benefits in government initiatives such as food for education, educational stipends, financial benefits or benefits of local infrastructure, they are more engaged. For example, free primary education, projects like girl students' stipends or income generation activities for drop-out girl students created a positive impact on beneficiaries to be engaged in the education sector. Social inclusion has increased for programs such as the old age allowance, vulnerable group development (VGD) cards and allowances in which GOs create opportunities for shared benefits to target populations. Similarly, target beneficiaries are engaged in different projects under the Forestry Department, in which they receive a portion of benefits for maintenance of forest (GO interview on 10/01/2015).

In this view, providing small loans or financial support to beneficiaries appears to be critical for NGOs to engage beneficiaries. NGOs are also involved in government development projects to implement financial incentive components. For example, the donor-funded agricultural extension project has a micro-credit component for farmers, which is implemented by NGO (GO interview on 18/01/2016). In addition, NGOs create value chains for farmers and small entrepreneurs to market agriculture production and goods, which is an example of how communities benefit from NGOs and become involved in the process of engaging in NGO-implemented projects.

5.2.1.6 Capacity development and engagement

NGOs and GOs engage target beneficiaries by providing training in different service sectors. As identified during interviews, capacity development strategy is used to transfer specific skills or technologies, to build awareness on development initiatives and to enhance entrepreneurship for income generation activities. However, research participants revealed that government

staff, like UPZ or union and agriculture officers, provide training to beneficiaries even in NGO-implemented projects or training components arranged by NGOs. Having specialised staff like doctors or agriculture officers enable NGOs to conduct hands-on professional trainings and demonstrations to engage beneficiaries. Youth Development Department develops capacity of youths with an objective of creating skilled workforce (NGO interview on 08/01/2015). Similarly, trainings are provided to health workers on immunisation, safe motherhood and skilled births where public health officials provide hands-on training to health workers, who then transfer the knowledge and skills to midwives and women in individual households (GO interview on 20/04/2017).

5.2.1.7 Involving communities and volunteers

Engagement also occurs in the involvement of communities and volunteers by GOs. Interviewees identified that beneficiary engagement was ensured through the purposive engagement of communities and volunteers (section 5.1.2). In establishing community clinics and primary schools, LGIs engage well-off communities in rural areas, who provide land and support the construction of clinic and school infrastructure in specific areas (GO interview on 20/04/2017). This community support on establishing community clinics and primary schools leads to beneficiary engagement in development initiatives and goes beyond traditional government policy of land acquisition and paying compensation.

5.2.1.8 Digital facilities, communication and engagement

Internet services, mobile network and the provision of digital information portals have eased beneficiary engagement, which was identified by research participants. For example, ICT4D is a recent dimension of development (see section 2.1.5), which argued in favour of openness of development (Loudon & Rivett 2013; Smith, Elder & Emdon 2011). The question of connecting regions without infrastructure was answered through the provision of wireless

connectivity to poor communities in developing countries (Heeks 2008). During interviews, government respondents considered the internet, mobile phones and websites to be the main logistics that enabled them to effectively engage communities in development programs. The use of mobile phones and network coverage play a significant role in beneficiary engagement in Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), the number of mobile phone subscribers was 150,945 in June 2018 (BTRC n. d.). The five project beneficiaries residing in remote rural areas who were interviewed and the 10 who participated in FGD owned mobile phones.

From the beneficiary point of view, mobile phone networks are instrumental to connect to service providers in public and NGO sectors. Interviewed beneficiaries revealed that they have the mobile numbers of government staff and NGO officials or workers, which enabled them to contact concerned offices at any time. The beneficiaries of agriculture development projects believed it was useful to receive text messages from union officials that helped to instantly transfer important information to beneficiaries. Digital facilities enabled beneficiaries to interact with each other and with GO-NGO staff which was identified during interviews with beneficiaries. The following statements from project beneficiaries validated findings from interviews with GO and NGO officials:

> 'I contact staff through mobile phone. I have mobile number of the agriculture officer. I came to know the solution to my problems by calling him at his mobile. Sometimes I come alone [to Union Agriculture Officer or UAO] or sometimes as a group. UAO takes us to those who are above union level.'
>
> 'I contact UAO through mobile phone. I go to their offices' (PB interviews, 21/01/2016).

FGD with beneficiaries where participants were mainly female also revealed the similar data:

> 'We have mobile numbers of NGO officials. They are not annoyed if we call them at their mobile phones. We can call livestock/VET officers, who can be contacted at any time. When we call them, staff come to our areas. Our neighbours also come to them with their problems and they (NGO staff) help' (FGD with PBs, 22/04/2017).

The Union Information Service Centres (UISC) in each UP further adds to beneficiary engagement because rural communities come to UP for information on various services and for ICT training (GO interview on 20/04/2017). Similarly, DAE has the agriculture information service, which demonstrates relevant agricultural information for farmers and agriculture officials. Mobile applications call centres (e.g., 16123), community radio and e-agriculture mobile applications are some of the digital communication facilities through which beneficiaries are engaged. All monthly e-agriculture magazines are available on the ASI portal (AIS n.d.). Telephone calls and SMS function as a way of engaging beneficiaries and confirms what Heeks (2008) suggested regarding accessibility to mobile service that can benefit rural communities.

Digital communication facilities add value to beneficiary engagement and connect the central with local administrations, which speeds up decision-making. Communication technologies, wi-fi, computers and laptops in local administrations make it easy for local staff to coordinate with central offices within a short span of time (GO interview on 18/01/2016). It was the digital facilities that development information reached beneficiaries and helped identify intervention areas and contribute to beneficiary engagement in development activities. Accessibility to mobile phones is important from the beneficiary point of view on engagement and digital devices, networks and the internet are ICT facilities used by GOs to connect beneficiaries and manage development projects, which was identified in interviews. The concept of ICT4D has been integrated into government functions and enhances skills to deliver services to beneficiaries as identified by Walsh & Power (n.d.).

However, interviewees also identified that digital information facilities were not the only means of beneficiary engagement. Keeping information online is insufficient unless information reaches beneficiaries. Since beneficiaries belong to different socioeconomic

groups, the levels of education, access to internet services, capacity to pay for internet services and to download online information appear to be key factors that affect the engagement of beneficiaries through digital facilities. Although mobile phones are handy for communicating with GO and NGO officials and communities, they may not be the only means of communicating development benefits to beneficiaries. Therefore, communicating program benefits to target populations is a major task, which was identified during interviews. The UH&FPO interviewed argued that engaging beneficiaries involves directly communicating with beneficiaries. For example, to achieve the government's primary health programs, staff need to go to people and possess communication skills to convey messages to them. Health and nutrition education are primary level needs for which awareness programs are carried out under primary healthcare programs (GO interview on 20/04/2017).

The analysis presented in this chapter demonstrates that the development planning in Bangladesh is open to engagement in its provision of participation. Development planning in Bangladesh strikes a balance between theories, concepts and local contexts. While accelerating people-focused development and the expansion of NGOs, which covered most of the development discussions since the 1970s and 1990s, a cautious articulation is evident in relation to GO–NGO roles, institutional accountability and the responsibilities of UPs to ensure integrating people into development. Although the Vision 2021 and the Perspective Plan emphasised accelerating growth and empowering people, the development planning remains people-centred, as it is evident in the development literature. A safeguard is to make NGOs more accountable to GOs; however, these strategies also allow NGOs to work with beneficiaries in the field.

Interviews and FGD with beneficiaries further validated the findings obtained from other groups of research participants. The analysis demonstrated that 'people-centred' development

has been a component of the development planning of GOs and is not solely an NGO agenda for beneficiary engagement. The government expanded the role of UPs to ensure that local communities are involved in local level development. In addition, the concept of ICT4D has been integrated into the political and development campaign, which research participants consider to be a tool to engage beneficiaries. However, donor influence seems to be instrumental for GOs and NGOs and creates opportunities for beneficiary engagement. There are critical issues relevant to beneficiary engagement in government and NGO policies. The data also revealed multiple factors in addressing beneficiary engagement, ranging from government, NGO and donor policies to practices. The findings discussed in this chapter lead to data that identify the extent to which practices of beneficiary engagement are integrated in development interventions.

Chapter 6. Beneficiary engagement in GO–NGO project management

Research participants referred to projects as the institutional base for the management of development assistance, implementation of development programs and the involvement of beneficiaries in the implementation of project components. Beneficiary engagement appears to be project-focused within public sector such as agriculture extension, primary healthcare, and local government as well as projects in NGO sector. For NGOs, beneficiary engagement is related to project planning for funding or implementation of donor or government funded projects. Research participants related projects with beneficiary engagement (see Appendix 3) in terms of management, personnel, NGO implementation, project templates, service delivery, and donors.

Against this backdrop, the analysis presented in this chapter includes data on practices of beneficiary engagement that prevailed in the project management of GOs and NGOs. I categorised the data into two sections. For the first section, I identified data that related beneficiary engagement with GO and NGO project management settings. The second part of the discussion includes a few circumstances which research participants described as a way of engaging beneficiaries and project stakeholders in development projects. I also examined secondary data sources relevant to the research questions and triangulated the different datasets.

6.1. Beneficiary engagement: a matter of project component

Research participants considered beneficiary engagement to be a component in projects and beneficiaries are engaged because the activity is included in project components. It has always been a project that implements development initiatives, either in government or in NGO sectors (Eversole 2010). Projects deliver intended services to target population either by GOs or NGOs

as development assistance, either locally funded or aided by international aid, entails the purpose of responding to local needs through a management structure (Abraham 2014, Führer 1996). In addition, projects are the main tools for GOs and NGOs to transfer policies into practices in carrying out development initiatives. International development assistance consists of projects for which funds channelled to interventions in different services sectors, tourism and cultural projects, trade and the recent trends include democracy, human rights and peace projects (Riddell 2007, p. 180). Projects with international development assistance also cover development project settings in the public sector, such as 'infrastructure, utilities, agriculture, transportation, water, electricity, energy, sewage, mines, health, nutrition, population and urban development, education, environment, social development, reform and governance'(Ika & Donnelly 2017, p. 45). It was noted during interviews that beneficiary engagement occurs during development activities, implemented by NGOs and GOs, when the project has a specific requirement for engaging beneficiaries.

Figure 6.1 displays the coverage of responses that presents beneficiary engagement as a project component implemented by GOs and NGOs that makes beneficiary engagement happen.

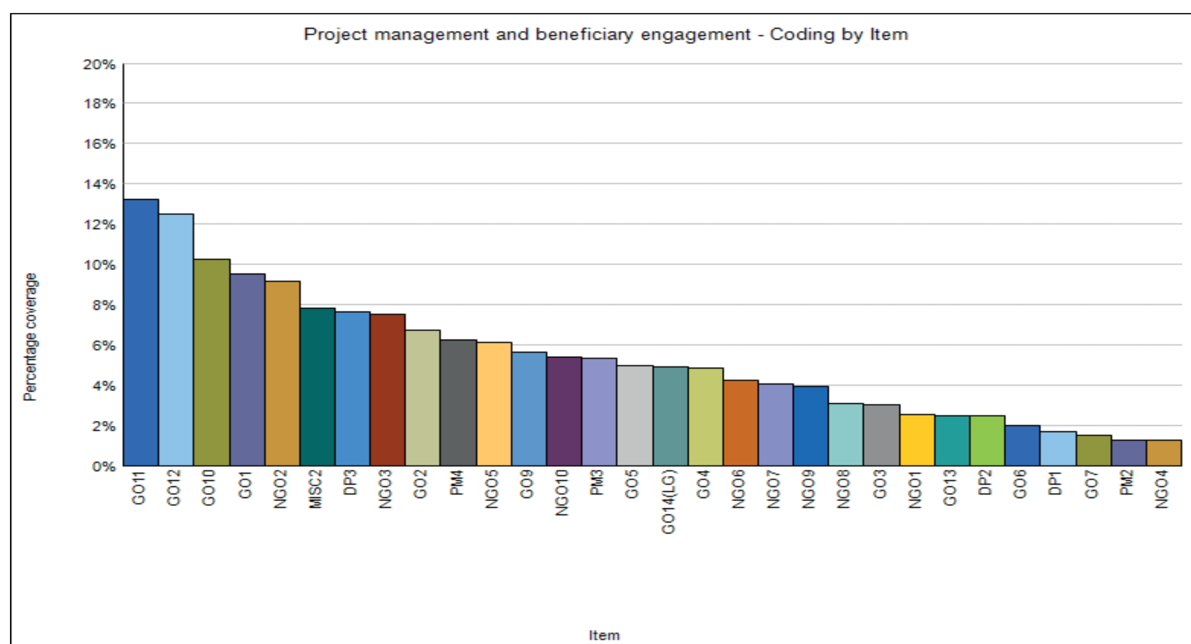

Figure 6.1. Coverage of responses on beneficiary engagement as project activity

Majority of research participants mentioned that beneficiary engagement was integrated into projects, which made engagement easier for GOs and NGOs. Conversely, interviewees also provided information regarding the strategies that both GOs and NGOs undertake to engage beneficiaries in project management. Reference to these findings are reflected in the significant number of interviews. Twelve of sixteen GO and ten NGO respondents mentioned that beneficiary engagement is a project component and is mainly implemented through projects at different phases of project management. Four respondents from GOs and one from NGOs discussed beneficiary engagement in relation to project management. It was identified during interviews with DPs that funding has been provided to GOs and NGOs for projects and sector programs. Four of five project staff mentioned that beneficiary engagement is included as a project component. One respondent from this group discussed engagement at the broader context, such as policies. The three interviews with DPs revealed that development assistance is being provided through projects, although bilateral development partners also provide budgetary support to the government. One respondent from the MISC group indicated how engaging target groups in the process of implementing projects enabled the organisation to receive the project funds. The other respondent from this group focused more on research and research products to discuss beneficiary engagement. The following sections provide a detailed analysis of data obtained in response to the research question.

6.1.1. Projects make engagement easy

For implementation agencies such as GOs or NGOs, having beneficiary engagement as a component in projects is critical. When projects are implemented, beneficiaries are selected as per project provisions and beneficiary engagement strategies are outlined in the project goals and objectives, which was identified in interviews with agriculture officials and NGOs, with

the latter connecting beneficiaries through projects: 'Once outlined in the project, it is easy to implement beneficiary engagement components. If not, very difficult to implement' (NGO interview on 23/01/2017).

The data on beneficiary engagement as a project activity or component were identified in a majority of interviews. Projects that are implemented by GOs, the responsibilities remain with these entities to ensure that beneficiaries are involved in development programs, such as primary education projects where the GOs have significant implementation responsibility (GO interview on 10/01/2015). In another interview, an education officer revealed that the inclusion of beneficiaries was mentioned in the cooperation agreement, which was signed between the government department and schools for the project. For projects that receive foreign funding, directives already exist regarding the role of government, beneficiaries, schools and the authorities to engage beneficiaries (GO interview on 11/01/2015). Apart from usual roles and responsibilities of DAE, engaging target group beneficiaries take place in a project setting. Data have revealed that projects in this sector follow a group approach to beneficiary engagement and groups comprise small and marginal farmers. Engaging beneficiaries occurs at different stages of project implementation such as crop production, disbursement of credit support, post-harvest management, marketing, value-chain creation and training (GO interviews on 18/01/2016).

Projects are critical for UPs to engage with beneficiaries as these local government entities now have expanded role of service delivery and inclusion of local people (see Section 5.2). An interview with a UP Chairman revealed:

> 'The project Local Government Support Programme Phase II is led by the government and the World Bank where people's demands have been addressed through Ward meetings. The project has components on Ward meetings which is the platform for people's participation' (GO interview, 20/04/2017).

Like GOs, the beneficiary engagement component of projects is convenient for NGOs because NGOs 'connect beneficiaries through small projects' (NGO interview on 8/01/2015). Data from an interview with an NGO executive revealed that beneficiary engagement is a project component. Apart from projects, individual NGO strategy was also instrumental to engage project beneficiaries: 'NGO owns 5-year strategic plan that has beneficiary engagement strategy as well. It is by laws and NGO's own guideline that projects are being implemented' (NGO interview on 23/01/2017).

As identified in the primary data sources, both GOs and NGOs consider projects and their components to be critical for beneficiary engagement and seem to be confident of beneficiary engagement within the comfort zone of projects. I did not find any contradiction between GO and NGO data on this finding.

6.1.2. Engaging is subject to project type

While research participants claimed that beneficiary engagement is subject to project component, they did not confirm whether beneficiary engagement has been included across all projects in the public sector: 'Beneficiary engagement depends on project type and nature. If the project is too technical, for example, electrical project, beneficiaries are not involved rather experts are involved' (GO interview on 10/01/2015). According to an NGO official: 'If the government has projects from revenue budget, beneficiary engagement is not at all present' (NGO interview on 25/03/2015). These findings were evident in another interview:

> 'Beneficiaries are informed of projects only when they see the impact, either positive or negative. For example, the *Sundarban* power plant project. People only come to know when media published its negative impacts' (GO interview, 10/01/2015).

In contrast, none of the research participants mentioned that beneficiary engagement was not included in NGO projects, although primary data sources demonstrated conditioning factors, such as donor influence and the requirements of funding for beneficiary engagement in NGO

projects. The above data demonstrated that beneficiary engagement varies with GOs because they undertake projects under revenue and development budgets. By definition, revenue budget includes domestic receipts (e. g. tax, non-tax revenue) and development budget prepared for development activities inclusive of revenue surplus and private receipts (Banglapedia 2015). From this end, NGO projects appear to better integrate beneficiaries because funding falls under development. This is a reason associated with beneficiary engagement and 'type and nature' of projects, which was identified in the interview data.

6.1.3. Compliance to project manuals and templates

While research participants agreed on the fact that project components enhanced beneficiary engagement in development programs, a few research participants suggested the examination of project templates and formats in the public sector. Data in this connection revealed that the templates and formats used in the formality of project formulation and implementation are critical to ensure provisions for engaging with beneficiaries in the first instance: 'If DPP and TAPP templates of Planning Commission are examined, it would be easier to find out whether beneficiary engagement is a need for development projects from GOB's side' (GO interview on 09/01/2015).

Compliance to processes was an integral part of project management system (Too & Weaver 2014, p. 1389), which also emphasised compliance with beneficiary engagement provisions in project templates and formats. I conducted a review of secondary sources comprising project templates of GOs and NGOs, sample projects and project reports to further investigate how these interactions between organisations and beneficiaries were integrated into projects. The following sections highlight key findings from the secondary data analysis.

6.1.3.1 Requirements of project templates in the public sector

Section 6.1(a) of the Planning Division's Circular, issued on 10 October 2016, stated that all development projects in investment or technical assistance categories needed to align with the government's development policies, SDGs, individual ministry strategic plans and development partner country's program priorities (GOB 2016). Following development planning policies, technical assistance projects in different ministries and service sectors formed the basis of beneficiary engagement given the scope of project activities. As evident in the circular, establishing the right content for project templates play an important role in receiving approval of projects for implementation. The template provides broad categories of project costs for proposed consultancy services, human resources, seminars and trainings (GOB 2016, p. 15).

Beneficiary orientation of the Development Project Proforma (DPP) is outlined in the Project Description template (Part 2, Section 15, p. 55), which included a description of information regarding gender-segregated data, problems specific to women and the description of population coverage under the proposed project (Section 15.6). The template also included a description of project impacts on gender, women and children, disadvantaged groups of people and the community (Section 24, p. 56). However, for the Technical Assistance Project Proforma (TAPP), project description requirements as mentioned in the circular do not clarify the requirements of beneficiary integration in the project template. It is difficult to understand from the template of TAPP project description requirements (Section 19) whether expected outputs and outcomes imply a beneficiary orientation in terms of 'trained manpower' (Planning Division 2016, p. 93). However, the Project Implementation Plan requires a description of issues relating to poverty, environment, climate change, women, children and gender.

The DPP manual makes the project description inclusive of target beneficiaries, in that targets should be furnished in numbers and percentages to make the project consistent with the project logical framework and sectoral priorities. Given the nature of projects, beneficiary engagement becomes part of reporting to outline project objectives, verifiable indicators and means of verification (GED 2014, Part A, p. 15).

6.1.3.2 Requirements of project templates in NGO sector

Analysis presented in section 5.1.6 demonstrated how aligning to government's development policies, donor preferences and the NGOAB institutional framework were critical for NGOs to engage project beneficiaries. Examining the specific requirements of project templates for NGOs further expanded the findings identified from the primary data sources. NGOAB has a specific project template for NGOs that submit project proposals to receive foreign funding. The template is called FD-6 Template for Foreign Aided Projects. Paragraph 6(D) includes a table to display the main activities, allocation of funding against each activity and the number of target beneficiaries. The total number of beneficiaries are set against the total project funding, which is subject to the size and scope of work of an NGO submitting a proposal for approval of funding (NGOAB n. d.).

The above findings from secondary data sources demonstrate that having beneficiaries integrated into the development activities occurs in the project design and components. Projects are the basic tool used to engage beneficiaries in development. The PKSF template clearly outlines requirements for integrating communities and ensuring social inclusion in its project appraisal policy. The Social Management Framework provides guidelines on community consultations with beneficiary groups. Project preparation guidelines include a section on target people or groups to describe how communities of project area will be included (PKSF 2012a).

Similarly, donors want a methodology for participant selection, which has to be well defined with clarified criteria:

> '[Donors] want methodology and clarified criteria for participant selection which has to be well defined. They maintain procedural aspects of aid management and participatory approach to development. Program is only for those whom it is targeted for' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

The data reiterated that beneficiary engagement is not an 'automatic' or 'immediate' activity in development planning and projects, which is demonstrated by Moser and Sollis (2006, p. 21) in their evaluation of community participation in a public healthcare project in Ecuador. It could be part of a number of important factors, including complying with project templates.

6.1.4. Project interaction and scope of beneficiary engagement

Given that both GOs and NGOs consider beneficiary engagement to be a project component specific to the context of projects, primary data sources also suggested that interactions in project management steps were critical to engage beneficiaries. However, data in this connection also raised some key elements that research participants felt equally important to find the right context of beneficiary engagement.

Engaging in project responds to project management cycles, organisational interaction and stakeholder coordination. Research participants mentioned that beneficiary engagement occurs mainly in the implementation phase. As shared by research participants, beneficiary engagement is subject to organisation–beneficiaries–project interrelationships in the total project management cycle, which enables GOs and NGOs to engage with project beneficiaries. In addition, when it is a matter of project management, beneficiary context, project context, project type and liaising with local administration and UPs, everything needs to be considered for beneficiary engagement.

6.1.4.1 Project context

The development context in which projects are designed matters significantly to the success factors. Each context varies and even within a specific country, problem identification and project planning need to be taken into consideration (Ika & Donnelly 2017, p. 44). While engaging beneficiaries is integrated into project provisions, the specific context of development problems is identified, in line with development policies that intend to deliver services to communities. The development contexts differ in individual service sectors and are subject to the commitment and priorities of the higher authority:

> 'It is important to note that the agriculture sector has the highest level of political commitment which is why donors do not have to impose any conditions. Agriculture projects receive priority from the highest authority of the government.' (GO interview, 18/04/2016).

> 'In all stages beneficiaries are engaged. However, it depends on the priority of projects. Project that comes directly from the [highest authority] gets the highest priority. (GO interview, 12/04/2017).

Engaging beneficiaries in the public sector responds to the priority of the project context. The project context for NGOs falls within, but is not limited to, government priorities or priorities of funding organisations in the public sector. NGOs study the policies of GOs and determine gaps to develop into funding opportunities, which lead to project implementation:

> '[Responding] to donor expectations depends on what donors are intending to. NGOs study government policies and HDI. NGOs try to identify the funding and relate the gaps to which funding is available for the areas that are lagging behind' (NGO interview, 25/01/2017).

Similar information has been identified in FGD with NGO respondents, which demonstrated that work with minority ethnic communities in the northern part of the country ultimately obtained government's priority:

> 'Project on ethnic minority [*Dalit*] works for social inclusion through standardisation of living. The project continued from 2008 to 2012. *Dalit* representative spoke in an event held in Dhaka that convinced the top people in the government to carry out the project' (FGD with NGOs, 22/04/2017).

Therefore, it is not only the development planning and policies that can create the project context. Responding to priorities, addressing development gaps and conveying to the top of the government create project context for beneficiary engagement in project management. Therefore, beneficiary engagement commences with the commitment and support of GOs on top of support of communities as argued by Oakley & Marsden (1984).

6.1.4.2 Project agreements and resources

The legal and institutional frameworks presented in Section 2.4.2 provide the basis for GO-NGO roles to engage beneficiaries in project management. Each concerned organisation (e.g., GOs, NGOs) allows agreement of development activities and guidelines for participation that research participants consider important for beneficiary engagement in project settings. It is the development agreements signed between donors and GOs, GOs and NGOs and between donors and NGOs that create provisions and the roles of GOs and NGOs for beneficiary engagement (GO interview, 11/01/2015). The agreements also form the basis for human and financial resources required to deliver services to target population and engage communities in development activities. Development activities intend to deliver services to the community, which requires both financial resources and human skills to manage the funding and deliver the services. A couple of views identified in the primary data sources revealed the following:

> 'Funding guarantees staff to reach beneficiaries' (PMS interview, 19/01/2015).
>
> 'Engagement starts when funding is received' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

Therefore, agreements and resources play an important role for GOs and NGOs to engage beneficiaries because these are important for the implementation phase of project management.

6.1.4.3 Achievements and continuation

Research participants noted that it were the beneficiaries who can tell whether a problem has been resolved or services have been delivered. This phase covers the evaluation part of projects, in which beneficiaries are engaged to assess the progress and achievements of projects. This is related to the project lifecycle, which is critical for GOs and NGOs to continue or to hand it over to communities. For NGOs, it also indicates transferring project achievements to GOs to continue or replicate in other development interventions.

These elements of projects identified in the primary data sources enabled me to identify critical aspects of project interactions with beneficiaries that were inevitable in the process of engaging beneficiaries (see Figure 6.2).

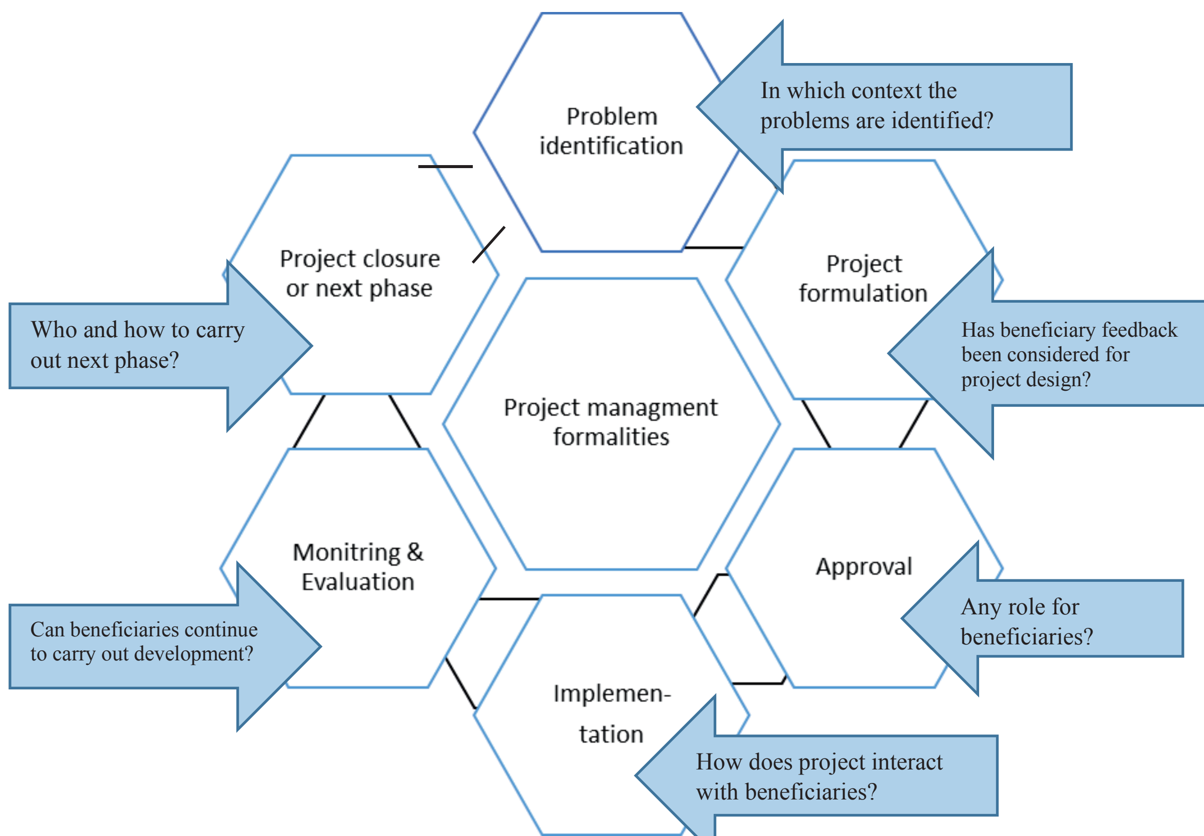

Figure 6.2. Interactions of organisations and beneficiaries in project management

Source: adapted from Abraham (2014, p. 1-3) and data from primary sources discussed in section 6.1.4.

Figure 6.2 demonstrates the relationship between organisations (i. e. GOs, NGOs or project management units/PMUs), contexts and beneficiaries to deliver project benefits to target populations. Organisations and beneficiaries carry the same importance to link each of the project management stages within and between organisations and the communities. According to Abraham (2014), regardless of project type, the steps in the project management cycle 'links with the proceedings and leads forward to the next one' (p. 1). The absence of any of these elements may weaken interactions between projects and beneficiaries, which was identified in research interviews. To discuss 'management of project management', Too and Weaver (2013, p. 1384) provided a diagram to display elements of organisational governance, which included addressing change, people in organisations, finances, future aspects and relations with stakeholders and communities that were interrelated to each other. According to the authors, none of these elements operate in isolation and any disconnect of elements will impact other elements and the organisation as a whole. Similarly, beneficiary engagement and project management were perceived by research participants to be interrelated with aspects of project management, which does not automatically happen in GOs or NGOs.

6.2. Beneficiary interactions within project management

Research participants categorised project–beneficiary interactions as 'tripartite interactions'—interactions between GOs, NGOs and beneficiaries. Different project management and coordination committees have representation from GOs, including UPs, NGOs and project beneficiaries. These committees are the platform through which communities get opportunities to talk to representatives from GOs and NGOs about advantages, disadvantages, problems and their requirements. For example, the village development committee in the UP is represented by local communities, in which direct interactions with project beneficiaries occur. The union development coordination committee also holds monthly meetings, at which representatives

from project beneficiaries or local communities participate as designed in the project work plan. The key purpose is to build relationship between these committees representing GOs and/or NGOs, beneficiaries and the communities that lead to the management of projects from problem identification to evaluation (see Figure 6.2). As organisations, GOs and NGOs need to govern relationships with their stakeholders and communities and not operate in isolation (Too & Weaver 2013, p. 1384).

These institutional interactions with communities is related to project governance (see Section 2.3.1). This engagement in the beginning occurs in consultation between project and community representatives, which enables the provision of feedback for implementation (Nakibinge et al 2009, p. 192). These interaction strategies for engaging beneficiaries generate a 'feedback system' to identify problems in the community that leads to 'corrective actions' to resolve problems. Primary data sources identified in this study included interactions between GOs, NGOs and beneficiaries at different stages of the project management cycle (see Figure 6.3). There are several interactive activities undertaken by GOs or NGOs, through which beneficiaries are engaged in planning, implementation and evaluation phases of the project management cycle.

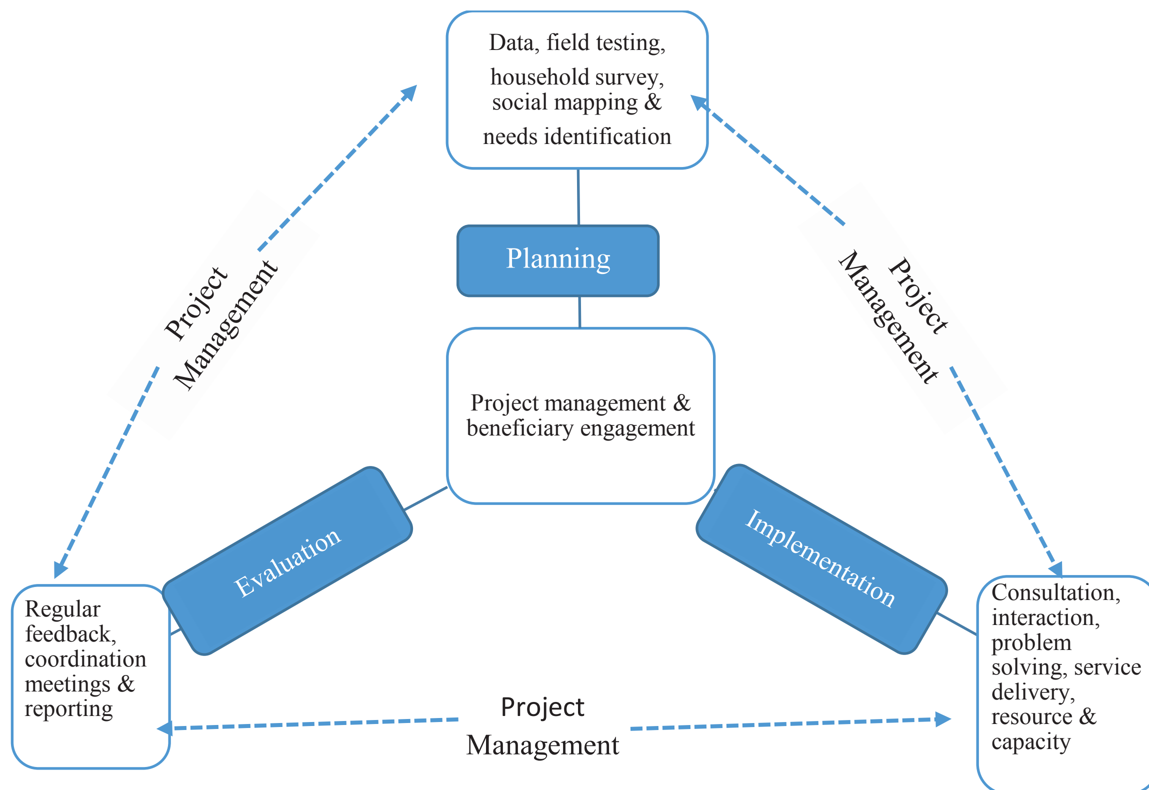

Figure 6.3. Beneficiary engagement in project management

Source: based on interviews.

Despite these project management arrangements, there could be insufficient conditions to build relationships because they could not perform on their own without linkages to other conditioning factors (Turner 2004, p. 349). In addition, although engagement is desired and acknowledged in the development field to ensure people's participation (see Section 2.1.5), questions remain, such as 'why, how, who and when' engagement occurs during project management (Moser & Sollis 2006, p. 19). The following findings outlined beneficiary engagement in three basic steps of project management cycle, which were discussed by research participants.

6.2.1. Project planning in public sector

Interviews revealed that feasibility studies were undertaken in the public sector investment and infrastructure projects. Abraham (2014, p. 13–14) defined feasibility studies as preliminary

studies to determine project viability and to address changes in project environments, including cultural and social changes based on quality information for decision-making. However, the interviewees did not claim that beneficiary engagement was an element of feasibility studies for government development projects, such as bridge construction or capital projects. Since I did not include any such projects in my study (see Section 1.2), the research investigation did not focus on feasibility studies. However, participants revealed that beneficiary engagement occurs in service sector development programs, in which baseline studies, field-level quantitative data on target populations and feedback from beneficiaries are taken into consideration to ensure beneficiary engagement in the initial stage of project formulation.

> Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council (BARC) organises field trials of the research findings with the farmers. After trials, the feedback is sent to the Agriculture Ministry and this is done by the BARC. The Ministry is responsible to provide the research findings to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) to spread this among farmers for production' (GO interview, 18/01/2016).

Similar views were presented by an agriculturist in the private seed company, who worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and DAE for seed production and commercialisation. He noted that large scale agriculture production decided by the ministry is subject to beneficiary concurrence:

> 'Once seed is developed, the organisation conducts trial at the field level in partnership with beneficiaries. Trial involves cultivation on farmer's land on the cost of the company to assess results of the research findings. It depends on the farmer whether the cultivation of the crop will continue or not. Farmer's opinion is the basic requirement to continue cultivation. If farmers are convinced about the benefits, companies go for seed production for mass beneficiaries which results in commercialisation of seed' (MISC interview, 18/01/2016).

In a successful trial case conducted by the private company, the DAE at the field administration was responsible to convey the requirements to relevant authorities, such as agricultural research institutes or the MoA that led to project planning. In this sector, project planning is based on information that departmental officials obtain from farmers.

However, this strategy is not applied in the same way across other service sectors, in which public sector officials would directly talk to beneficiaries to identify their needs. In such cases, it is the national database, which was created on field research by health professionals, that was considered to be a strategy of beneficiary engagement in health project planning. For example, the statistics of child mortality or maternal mortality rate should lead to projects on child nutrition or safe motherhood, which is reflected in the national database available from the Department of Health (see section 5.1.2). Here, data are mainly quantitative and scientific. However, my interview with the UH&FPO in this sector raised the question regarding how far beneficiary engagement is integrated across development programs in this service sector:

> 'There is bureaucracy in program design and planning. Field-level staff are involved but not in an effective way. There is always a gap between field-level officers and the officials at the central level' (GO interview, 20/04/2017).

6.2.2. Project planning in the NGO sector

Project planning appears to be different in the NGO sector, in which identification of needs, social mapping and household surveys are mandatory tools for engaging with beneficiaries during the planning stage. In addition, visits to project areas and face-to-face interactions with beneficiaries enable social mapping to identify development issues and to assess project needs based on information directly obtained from beneficiaries. In interviews with NGO field workers, I found that they visit the field on a regular basis and talk to people who are not existing beneficiaries. This interaction helps them to identify new beneficiary needs that can generate new project plans in specific geographical locations.

> 'Beneficiaries identify needs when NGO staff go to the rural areas and conduct survey by door to door visits. Need assessment helps identifying areas where beneficiaries need assistance and, in such case, beneficiaries are mobilised by [other existing] beneficiaries' (NGO interview, 23/01/2017).

This process of engaging beneficiaries appears to be the same across NGOs working in different areas and implementing different development programs. For example, an interview with an NGO field worker in the northern part of Bangladesh revealed similar findings:

> 'The engagement process starts with Social Wellbeing Mapping Analysis before formulation of a project. At this level, beneficiary identification has been done. We also conduct base line survey where we engage beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are divided into different groups through social mapping and baseline survey. Social mapping identifies the resources available in a specific area, how to link resources identified in social mapping with the government's development programs. We engage beneficiaries also based on needs' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

For NGOs, it does not matter what type of projects they undertake, because beneficiary engagement is a mandatory component, although 'people-oriented' development is also evident in GOs.

6.3. Engaging from planning to implementation

Project planning is followed by project formulation and the approval process, in which professional expertise regarding project design is more important than beneficiary engagement, which was identified in the primary and secondary data sources. GOs and NGOs engage stakeholders in project design. In the public sector, concerned ministries or departments formulate projects in consultation with think tanks, NGOs and a cross-section of professional groups. NGO project design follows the same way of engaging stakeholders and includes GOs, which was evident in several interviews. In both cases, if the project receives foreign funding, donors are involved in the design phase, such as consultations with GOs, verifying NGO interactions with beneficiaries (see Figure 5.8) and establishing development agreements or contracts. It is the project size in terms of total project cost that different agencies in the public sector remain responsible for approval. NGO projects that receive foreign funding receive NGOAB approval. If NGOs receive local funding, projects are approved by the Department of

Social Services. Aligning with requirements is critical to receive funding and commence beneficiary engagement along with other project components (see Section 6.1.3).

Section 6.1 demonstrated how research participants considered beneficiary engagement to be a project component and that engagement is largely undertaken during the implementation phase of project management. This is because implementation is the stage during which most project activities take place (Abraham 2014, p. 3). Interviews demonstrated that project implementation was the critical phase for engaging project beneficiaries in the project management cycle. The implementation stage includes beneficiaries in project activities either through gaining access to services, obtaining skills and knowledge on income generation activities or being empowered to raise their voices for a common social need, such as the development of marginalised groups of people.

6.3.1. Service delivery and engaging beneficiaries

GO respondents from different departments at the central and field level described the delivery of services under development projects to be a way to engage citizens who were the main users of government services, for example, health, education, agriculture, livestock and local development. Interviewees from NGOs perceived beneficiary engagement to be the key element to ensure access to services and a matter of citizen rights (NGO interview on 22/04/2017). During project implementation, individual departments remained responsible to inform target beneficiaries of intended benefits of services. Therefore, beneficiary engagement during the implementation of GO or NGO projects implies conveying of development information to people or target groups and delivering services to people. To some extent, it is beyond traditional methods of delivering services, which was observed by one research participant:

> 'Now [doctors] needs to think beyond traditional ideas that suggests doctors are only for providing treatment. Rather [they] need to have skills to reach people, inform people about development in this area. It needs door to door visit to engage beneficiaries. I am working with the [help] of Health Assistant, FWVs (who have Training certificate) and Union Supervisor to go to people' (GO interview, 20/04/2017).

Beneficiary engagement in development programs requires multiple strategies and options to deliver services to communities, especially in the health sector. There needs to be synchronised engagement activities that are related to the purpose of development programs, which was identified in the interview with the UH&FPO. Nakibinge et al (2013, pp. 192–193) identified how a comprehensive set of multiple engagement activities comprising clinical care, healthcare promotion, sports and commemoration of national days to 'improve the social interaction and cohesion' in the community led to community engagement in the context of a health research project in Uganda. An interview with a UP chairperson revealed that engagement comprises provision of multiple services beyond the traditional function of participating in elections every five years. It is the provision of services that encourage communities to remain in touch with UP and to access required services:

> 'Now that UP's scope of work has been widened, people need to be in touch with the UP. There are many [services] that UP provides like birth registration, citizenship certificate and verification to combat terrorist activities under government program for which people need to come to UP, they know about UP. Local government work on safe drinking water and sanitation is being done in partnership with people. Community toilets have been built on private land and cleaning is done through community support. ICT program is a new area of work in UPs. UP has a training school where young people come and learn computer skills. UP ICT program provides services like emails, [downloading] and filling out passport forms, getting exam results and information regarding land records that people need. They apply to UP and UP obtains these from the district administration and provide to the people. All of these are provided through UP computer centre established under A2I project and more people are coming to the UP' (GO interview, 20/04/2017).

Service delivery for engagement requires strategies to ensure people's access to services and the creation of provisions in the UP brings communities closer to development initiatives. In addition, when the government undertake initiatives for infrastructure development for service delivery, such as community health services or education institutions for rural communities, engagement begins with wealthy people, who may not reside in those areas but have

connections through businesses, properties or kinship. The UP chairperson revealed that engaging in the establishment of a primary school in his constituency was two-fold: engaging a rich family for land, infrastructure establishment, the payment of salaries for a designated teacher and learning materials for children and engaging parents to send their children to the school. Engagement was subject to the personal connections of the UP chairperson, his or her credibility to convince the community and the willingness of parents to send their children to that particular school.

For NGOs, it is mainly advocacy and campaigns that mobilise target beneficiaries for common understanding, which commences during project launch and continues until completion. NGOs do not have the authority to directly deliver services to people unless it is specifically mentioned in their project implementation guidelines. However, NGOs establish links between target beneficiaries and service providers in project areas. NGO field workers believe that to gain access to services, beneficiaries need to be linked with government departments such as the Social Services Directorate and Directorate of Youth Development or land office. Following social mapping, NGO staff realised which institutions beneficiaries needed to be linked with (NGO interviews on 22/04/2017). NGO field workers visited target beneficiaries, listened to their problems and assisted them to reach different institutions, such as the land office, livestock office or institutions that provided legal services. NGO field workers also coordinated with various departments to obtain required information for beneficiaries, which was identified in these interviews.

6.3.2. Capacity development and beneficiary engagement

Research participants referred to capacity development as one of the major strategies through which GOs and NGOs engaged beneficiaries during the project implementation phase. Capacity development contributes to the development of human skills in the community, which

leads to economic growth and social development in rural areas. As detailed in Section 2.3.2, capacity development is one of the project approaches used to engage beneficiaries. Capacity development incorporates various approaches in the field of development, grouped as organisational, institutional, systems and participatory (Lusthaus, Adrien & Perstinger 1999, p. 3). Merino and Carmenado (2012) argued that capacity building does not necessarily mean only providing training but includes building organisational capacity. However, in the views of research participants, training was an important project activity to engage beneficiaries. Primary data sources revealed that GOs and NGOs engage project beneficiaries through training and skills development activities. These are specialised skills-based training, such as promoting health workers for community clinics, computing, demonstrations of new technologies for cultivation and other livelihood activities, including raising poultry and livestock for income generation. This finding was confirmed by beneficiaries:

> 'Government people provides hands on training which is very helpful. The government agriculture officers are always with us' (PB interview, 21/01/2016).

> 'Now the cultivation method has been changed a lot which needs knowledge and skills. Government people provides hands on training which is very helpful' (PB interview, 21/01/2016).

Capacity development of target beneficiaries is an obvious project component, which was identified from relevant documents. The study examined four sample projects, of which two were from NGOs approved by NGOAB and two from GOs. Table 6.1 displays the percentage of the capacity development component for each project:

Table 6.1. Capacity development component coverage in sample projects

Organisation and project theme*	Project duration (years)	Total project cost ($)	Target beneficiaries received training** (No.)***	Capacity development component cost (%)
1. GO: Village Courts	5	14.9 m	25,000	23
2. GO: CHT Development	13	155.79 m	0.2 m	25
3. NGO: CRPD Implementation	1	7,608	505	40
4. NGO: Food security	2	84,641	19,046	21

Note: *all these projects are foreign funded; **number of beneficiaries is calculated based on project documents and annual reports; ***No. = number.
Source: based on project documents and annual reports available online and obtained during interviews.

According to research participants, capacity development appears to be the basis for beneficiary engagement because this leads to income generation activities for poverty reduction, which is the prime focus of development policies. Engagement is critical because mobilising beneficiaries for training and demonstrations is subject to convincing target beneficiaries. It has been identified during interviews and FGDs that GOs and NGOs need to demonstrate how projects or training opportunities would benefit people in terms of income generation or improvements in their social and economic conditions.

Interviews and FGD with NGOs also revealed that beneficiaries do not always voluntarily join capacity development activities. Research participants identified the importance of appropriate engagement tools. The critical aspect was to bring them in and get them involved in project activities, which requires engagement and conveying appropriate messages of project benefits to communities. This requires continuous follow up, which was indicated in interviews with PB. Findings from interviews with GO respondents were as follows:

> 'It is important to make beneficiaries understand the benefits and positive side of projects' (GO interview, 11/01/2015).
>
> 'It is not that all farmers will accept the new technology but government department needs to make them understand the benefits' (GO interview, 18/01/2016).

FGD with NGO staff and field workers demonstrated that usual communication materials or project launches did not work effectively in some cases to engage communities for training and skills development activities. Box 3 reveals the practical experiences of NGO field workers.

Box 3. Talking face-to-face to engage beneficiaries

This practical experience is related to the formal publicity of a project on training, skill development and income generation in a district on the northern part of Bangladesh. The NGO distributed project leaflets on training programs among people in the project area. However, the responses from people to participate in the training programs was not up to the expectation and target of the program. When the leaflets were not working to mobilise participants, NGO project staff decided to talk to people. They were divided into groups and started sitting in local tea stalls, community gathering places, *hat-bazar* (rural open marketplace) and talking to elderly people coming to those places. It was important to communicate the benefits to these people, so the project staff talked about the benefits of the training programs. Following this initiative, responses to project participation were higher. People gained the confidence to send their young family members to the training and the problem of non-participation was minimised (NGO FGD, 22/04/2017).

Both GO and NGO officials admitted during interviews that they experienced difficulties in engaging women beneficiaries. Although advocacy of NGOs helped raising awareness of women's participation in capacity building and other development activities, which was recognised by interviews with participants from the Directorate of Women Affairs, social barriers made it difficult to ensure the participation of women. Similar views were shared by a GO respondent, who noted: 'The challenge is to engage women farmers due to social and cultural context of rural areas, which are mostly conservative. It is difficult for the government to reach them although things are changing slowly' (GO interview, 18/01/2016).

An interview with an NGO executive revealed that the organisation had gone through difficulties in engaging women beneficiaries when NGO staff were not allowed inside houses and had to sit outside to talk to women, who were sitting inside behind the curtain (NGO interview on 23/01/2017). An interview with another NGO executive (10/03/2016) revealed that engaging women is sometimes difficult in training programs for farming and cultivation because it is a non-traditional area for women and there are social barriers. In such cases,

engaging beneficiaries begins with engaging male counterparts, who are not direct project beneficiaries. Box 4 describes how women beneficiaries were eventually involved in project activities implemented by an NGO working in the area of food security.

Box 4. Engaging men to engage women

The NGO with 48,000 farmers of which 90 per cent are women. Apart from this, it has a specific group of 500 women whom the organisation provides training from production to harvest. Women are also learning how to use bio fertiliser instead of chemicals and becoming successful in production of crops. However, it is sometimes difficult to engage women due to social and cultural barriers or pressure from family not to participate in the group. The NGO arranges field visits for their husbands to see some successful initiatives of cultivation. These kinds of visits convince them to allow their female members to take part in trainings and continue agro-based income generating activities. When these women or their male counterparts see others' success, they are convinced to take part in the group (NGO interview, 10/03/2016).

Although capacity development activities cover the major strategies of beneficiary engagement, individual contexts and circumstances leads GOs and NGOs to determine engagement strategies. However, it is mainly providing training, which was evident in the public sector and in contrast, NGO staff identified strategies to mobilise beneficiaries.

6.3.3. Financial resources and beneficiary engagement

One of the major purposes of engaging beneficiaries is to build individual capacity (discussed above) so that they can take part in development activities, contribute to local development programs, integrate marginalised communities with mainstream development programs and undertake income generation activities. Interviews with GOs and NGOs revealed that individual beneficiary capacity is enhanced through transferring skills such as training and providing financial resources to beneficiaries, such as micro-credit or small loans. Micro-credit interventions in the lives of the rural poor in Bangladesh is said to be instrumental in creating gradual enhancement of 'peace through economic inclusion' rather than any radical movement for social change (Cons & Paprocki 2010, p. 640). These interventions, as mentioned by

research participants, enable beneficiaries to improve economic and social conditions of rural people, especially women, to be involved in development.

While advocacy, campaigns and training develop knowledge and access to information, financial resources help project beneficiaries transform skills into income generating activities and improve their social and economic conditions. It was evident from conversations with GOs, NGOs and beneficiaries that micro-credit programs lead to beneficiary engagement in project management. Findings from interviews with NGOs demonstrated that having access to financial resources is critical for beneficiaries and has been recognised as a method of beneficiary engagement, in which the contribution of NGOs is significant:

> 'Beneficiaries get access to money through micro-finance and poor people are having it without mortgage which is a big achievement of NGOs' (NGO interview, 11/01/2015).
>
> 'Money flow is important; people need capital for alternative income generation activities. Without micro-credit, where would have people got income from?' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

Although beneficiaries were randomly selected for interviews in different locations and from different GO and NGO projects, all beneficiaries interviewed or who attended the FGD had received small loans or micro-credit, which was identified during fieldwork. NGOs provide micro-credits for livelihood and income generating activities. This is not an exception for government service sector projects, such as agriculture projects. For example, three male farmers were interviewed, who were the direct project beneficiaries of the agriculture project and received loans for cultivation. In addition, beneficiaries receive repeated loans or micro-credit, depending on the expansion of their livelihood activities, which was noted by a female beneficiary in a different district:

'Loan has been adjusted before and received again to continue business' (PB interview, 23/04/2017).

The beneficiaries who were interviewed and those who participated in the FGD appeared to focus more on their livelihood, empowerment and asset creation, which encourage them to receive further loans. Cons and Paprocki (2010, p. 641) argued that beneficiaries:

> *'repay their loans because they know that doing so is the only way to get new loans and because purchase of productive assets with their loans will increase household income at a rate that will keep repayment unburden some'.*

Engagement and providing financial resources are linked through capacity development and in most cases, beneficiaries are engaged in a loan-management process (see Figure 6.4).

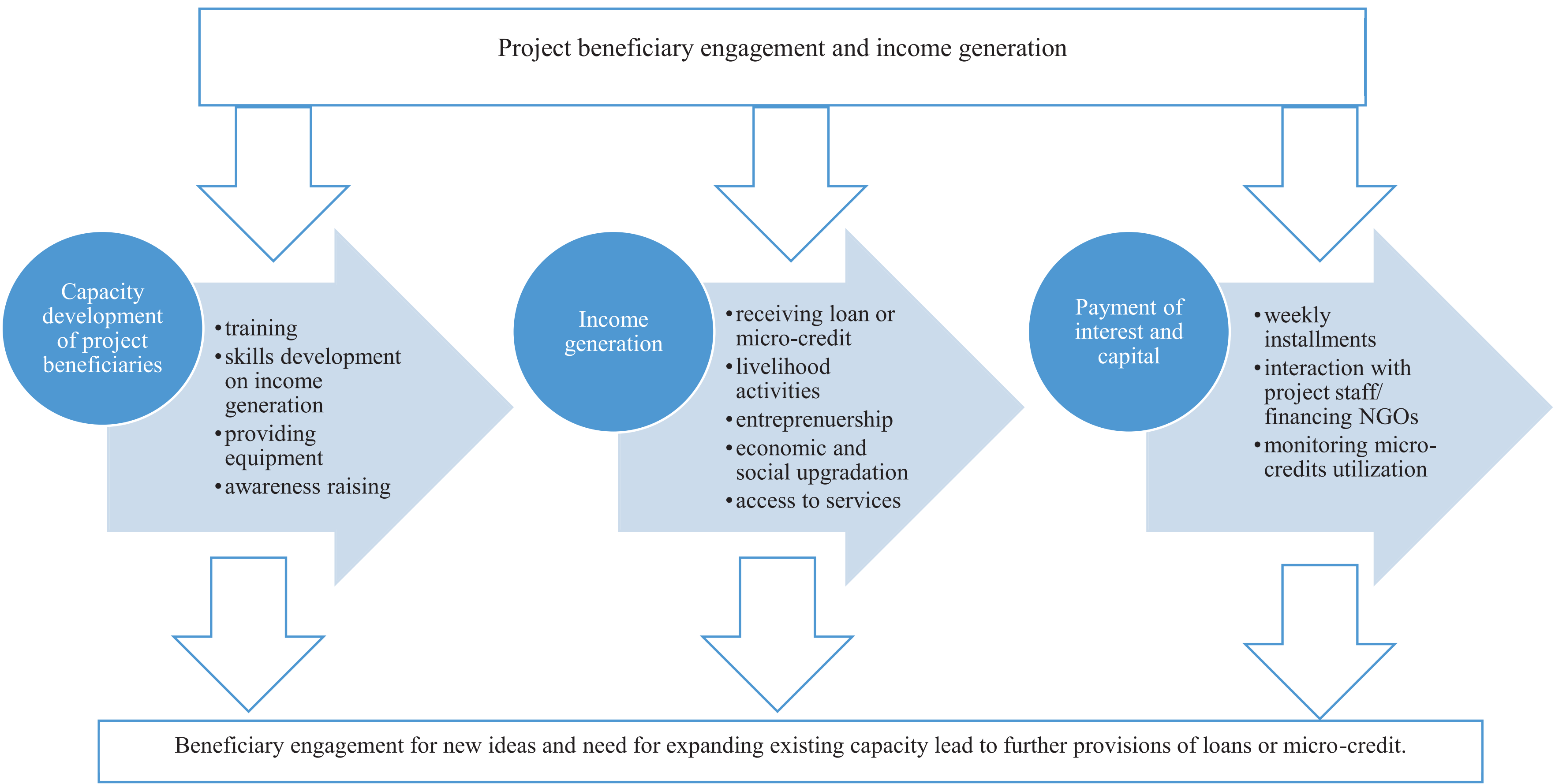

Figure 6.4. Beneficiary engagement for income generation

Source: data from primary sources

FGDs with beneficiaries revealed that financial resources were important for them to generate income and to ensure family wellbeing. Women beneficiaries participated in development programs, such as small entrepreneurship (GO interview on 20/04/2018). They have small-scale businesses, including hand-made shopping bags, tailoring, poultry, goat and cow farms and home-made dairy products. These women received training from NGOs for these activities and intended to do something to generate income. Box 5 presents the practical aspects of engagement, capacity development and wellbeing of beneficiaries, which are closely linked to each other in implementing the micro-credit component of projects and founding beneficiaries in the family and the community.

Box 5. Capacity, financial resources and engagement

She eloped with a man when she was very young and her family did not accept it. Her in-laws also did not accept it, so they had to go to Dhaka for earning money. Meanwhile, she got pregnant and could not continue in Dhaka. They came back to village but was not allowed to stay with their families, did not receive any support from their families. She started stitching *kantha* (hand-made quilt made of worn out cotton *sharees*) for other families and her husband became a vegetable vendor. Once she noticed that NGO people coming to her neighbour's house, she willingly talked to them. Eventually, she came to know about small loans that the NGO provided to other families. She was able to obtain two thousand taka on an interest return of taka ten per week. She bought a goat gave birth to two kids, which she sold. She further borrowed loan of eight thousand taka. She obtained training on tailoring. Now she has tailoring shop, bought a piece of land in the town and earns 10–12 thousand taka per month. She borrowed loan again and is paying interest. Now she is well accepted in the family and respected in the community. (PB FGD, 22/04/2017)

For beneficiaries, it is important to have capital to continue entrepreneurship and income generation activities while they receive required skills during project implementation. The above anecdote shared by a beneficiary is relevant to understand how micro-credit or small loans are instrumental to engage beneficiaries and is eventually integrated to project activities.

6.3.4. Awareness raising and beneficiary engagement

Apart from being engaged for financial resources, project beneficiaries are also engaged for awareness raising, which is integrated into community empowerment programs during the

implementation of projects. This is evident in the development of the *Dalit* community as revealed during FGD with project beneficiaries included representatives from the *Dalit* community in the northern part of Bangladesh (see Box 6).

Box 6. Engagement and community harmony

Women from the *Dalit* community were engaged for capacity development under an NGO-implemented project. Additionally, the broader community comprising people from Hindu and Muslim communities and cross-section of people were engaged to build positive attitude towards the *Dalit* community. Previously, people from this community were not able to talk to Hindu or Muslim people because of their identity and cast. Now this division is less visible; people from all communities go to their houses, attend ceremonies and *Dalit* people can also go anywhere. According to a *Dalit* woman beneficiary, when they learn skills and earn livelihood through income generating activities, they can get married and have equal rights and voice in the family and the community. (PB FGD, 22/04/2017)

However, the FGD with NGO staff revealed that raising awareness in human rights-based projects like one for the *Dalit* community was not all to engage beneficiaries but required engaging higher authorities in the public sector as discussed in section 6.1.4(i). It was important to establish the connection between grassroots level community development activities with policymakers to demonstrate the need for development. Therefore, it is not only engaging with project beneficiaries, but engaging with government departments in Bangladesh to support policy interventions for the development of ethnic minority communities. Additionally, media is an important stakeholder to spread out the achievements of development activities. Thus, beneficiary engagement takes place within the project management strategy of stakeholder engagement as noted in OECD 2015; WB 2018; Freeman 2017 (see section 2.3.3).

Engaging beneficiaries through the provision of micro-credit by NGOs includes awareness raising on various social, health and education issues. At the grassroots level, NGO officials discuss various awareness issues written in the credit interest register while collecting weekly interest repayments in a specific project area. During interviews with PBs at the union level on

23/04/2017, I was informed that NGO staff discuss many issues that are relevant to their everyday life:

> 'We will stay clean and keep households clean. We will encourage others to follow this.'
>
> 'We will discard dowry system and will not let our children get married at young age.'
>
> 'We will take oral saline immediately after we get diarrhoea.'
>
> 'Ensure immunisation of children and pregnant women.'

Since concerned NGOs do not conduct further research on how this awareness raising impacts lives of beneficiaries, it is difficult to demonstrate that awareness raising is enabling beneficiaries to be engaged in development activities. However, I cannot claim that awareness raising does not have any impact on beneficiary engagement as the case of *Dalit* community (Box 6) reveals that communities from different religious and cast groups are interacting with *Dalit* people.

Awareness raising is critical in public sector development programs, such as health programs that target poor people and vulnerable groups, which was mentioned by a GO respondent at the UPZ health complex. Beneficiary engagement is the key focus of the government in the implementation of primary education projects in Bangladesh, including schools, students and parents (GO interview on 11/01/2015). The education sector is divided into various streams in Bangladesh, as discussed section 5.1.4, and the sectors that needs to address various types of requirements of beneficiaries and given their diverse needs and background, synchronised engagement of beneficiaries appears to be difficult (DP interview on 08/11/2016).

6.3.5. Engagement in monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Project monitoring is an ongoing activity throughout the project lifecycle, which occurs monthly, quarterly and annually. Project implementation agencies such as GOs including UPs and NGOs, donors (if foreign funded) and relevant institutions from service sectors participate

in M&E of projects. GOs and NGOs attempt to ensure participation of stakeholders in project M&E. Beneficiary engagement during the M&E phase of project management is guided by institutional policies, including financial resources, government implementation agencies, individual project management and the requirements of donors or project templates. GOs and NGOs need to comply with M&E requirements and templates as an integral part of the project management cycle. For example, an NGO that receives grants from PKSF is guided by its M&E tools and PKSF monitors project implementation. Government monitoring is also present when NGOs directly receive funding from government and implement projects (NGO interview on 23/01/2017). Engaging project beneficiaries is stated in the M&E guidelines of PKSF:

> *'The Monitoring Officer [MO] will be responsible for ensuring that community members, including local elected representatives, teachers and other socially regarded persons participate in the regular monitoring exercises. The MO will use the information provided by the community representatives to complete the monitoring framework shown above. The implementing PO [Program Officer] will seek participation of the community in its recurrent monitoring at different levels of results and will include the monitoring information from the community separately in the monitoring report to be sent to PKSF' (PKSF 2012b).*

M&E is integrated into projects undertaken by GOs and NGOs and is required for beneficiary engagement. For example, project management in the public sector adopts M&E tools and techniques of project monitoring and develops M&E templates to be used in project management, such as the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM), which is outlined in the DPP Manual (p. 22). Although the development literature advocates for participatory M&E, the tools are usually used for documenting progress, which fulfils the requirements of project reporting that aid agencies require (Crawford & Bryce 2003). The LFM or M&E outlined in DPP Manual is a reporting tool. Engagement is implied by 'network reports', although it is not spelled out in these monitoring tools (see GED 2014, p.25). It is equally ambiguous in the TA project implementation processes, regarding how beneficiaries are to be involved in M&E.

However, beneficiary engagement or involving community in M&E occurs during field-level implementation in certain public sector development projects. It appears that the local government development programs integrated communities in monitoring development programs. Box 7 demonstrates how communities are engaged in M&E.

Box 7. Engaging communities in public sector procurement

The development/infrastructure work is done by LGED, Health and Education departments at the UPZ level. The objective of this project is to identify whether the community is aware of development projects that various departments of government implement at the field level. Here NGOs link communities with the LGED. The community monitors whether people are getting medicines from the health complex or whether the construction work is going in line with the plan. LGED cannot change design of any infrastructure of the original plan because LGED needs to show the design to the people who need to agree to it. LGED also needs to declare the award of contract. This is as per the citizens' charter of the department. This is how the community is engaged and having this monitoring role, the community is empowered (NGO FGD, 22/04/2017).

Based only on the above case, it is difficult to claim that beneficiaries are engaged in project M&E in the public sector, because beneficiary engagement is subject to project type and component (see Section 6.1). It is not only about engaging beneficiaries in M&E but is also about the need to ensure the credibility of implementation agencies in reaching out project beneficiaries. NGO staff believed that technological development helped establishing the credibility of monitoring undertaken by donors:

> 'Donors have web-based monitoring. They have developed software to monitor people's participation, authentication of beneficiary selection. They have established Google Network where maps and photos can be uploaded to donor website. This allows donors to monitor the participation directly. So, sometimes donors can get to the beneficiaries on their own to verify authenticity' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

It is important for donors to monitor whether the right section of population is targeted for development initiatives, whether templates for beneficiary participation are followed and cooperation agreements made with government or contracts with NGOs reflect deliverables for beneficiaries. Donors are required to ensure their own M&E or quality assurance. When NGOs provide addresses of target beneficiaries, it is the digital device that facilitates donor monitoring

process because individual donors will go directly to beneficiaries to determine the authenticity of beneficiary inclusion (also illustrated in figure 5.8). When NGOs are the vehicle for donors to take project benefits to the beneficiaries, it is equally important for donors to have monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure that partnerships exist between donors and NGOs and between NGOs and beneficiaries.

This chapter has revealed critical issues that are relevant to beneficiary engagement in project management in the public and NGO sectors. The data distinguishes between strategies of GOs and NGOs in engaging project beneficiaries. The first part of the analysis demonstrated how research participants perceived beneficiary engagement to be a deeply rooted element in development project management associated with various conditioning factors. The second part of this chapter analysed several conditioning factors of beneficiary interaction within project contexts. GOs and NGOs need to address these conditioning factors to ensure the inclusion of beneficiaries in development programs. The data also revealed how multiple factors exist in addressing beneficiary engagement, ranging from GO, NGO and donor policies to project implementation practices. The data discussed in this chapter requires generating knowledge of organisational leverages in engaging beneficiaries as both GOs and NGOs engage beneficiaries in project management settings. Identifying comparative advantages and limitations of GOs and NGOs fulfils this requirement as presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 7. GO-NGO comparative advantages and limitations

In this chapter, I present a comparative analysis of the advantages and limitations experienced by GOs and NGOs in engaging project beneficiaries. Chapters 5 and 6 explored the scope of beneficiary engagement that was outlined in development planning and how projects were considered to be a development process to transfer policies into practices. Taking project interactions with organisations and beneficiaries into account, I investigated the extent to which GOs and NGOs experience advantages or limitations in the engagement of project beneficiaries. These organisations have generated much discussion regarding how they enhance people-centred development (see section 2.4). However, these discussions are incomplete without an analysis of the comparative advantages and limitations experienced by both these organisations in the integration of people in development. This gap is the basis for this chapter. The question is focused on whether GOs or NGOs are considered to be more advantageous in the engagement of project beneficiaries.

I have organised advantages and limitations under separate thematic codes for GOs and NGOs, which enabled me to identify the extent of data coverage of the advantages and limitations discussed by research participants during interviews. The analysis presented in this chapter is organised into three sections. The first section provides a visual display of the coverage of advantages and limitation of GOs and NGOs in project beneficiary engagement. The tables in this section highlight the core themes (see Tables 7.1 and 7.2) regarding what research participants think in terms of the advantages and limitations of GOs or NGOs. I have illustrated findings on the advantages of these core themes in the second part of this chapter. The final section of this chapter presents an analysis of the limitations and challenges experienced by

GOs and NGOs in project beneficiary engagement. Throughout the chapter, I link to secondary data sources to triangulate findings from primary sources.

7.1. Data coverage on GO–NGO advantages and limitations

In response to the research question regarding whether participants think either GOs or NGOs are advantageous in project beneficiary engagement, the answers included advantages and limitations of both GOs and NGOs. In some cases, the same advantages or limitations are said to be applicable for GOs and NGOs. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 display coverage of interview data in reference to advantages of GOs. Data regarding the advantages and limitations did not demonstrate an absolute view from participants in favour of GOs or NGOs.

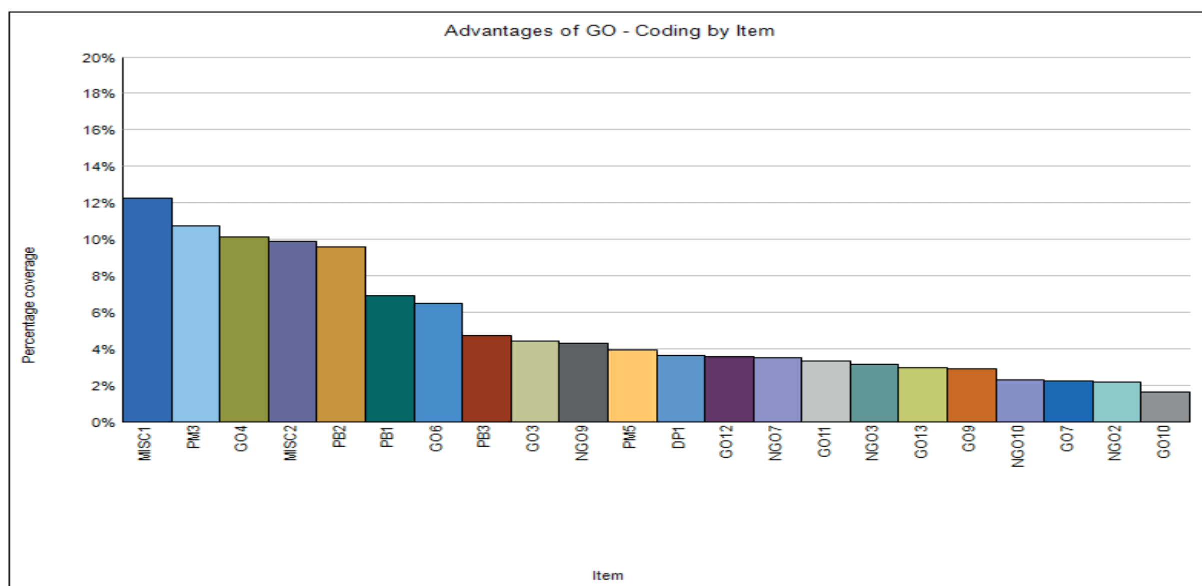

Figure 7.1. Data coverage on advantages of GOs in project beneficiary engagement

While the highest reference to data on the advantages of GOs is 12.27 per cent, it is 17.44 per cent for NGO advantages (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2). Different groups of research participants mentioned advantages of GOs and NGOs, which demonstrated impartial views on GO-NGO advantages (see Appendix 4). Data from a cross-section of research participants generated non-

biased information regarding GO and NGO advantages for beneficiary engagement that led to a comparison between these two, which is the focus of this study.

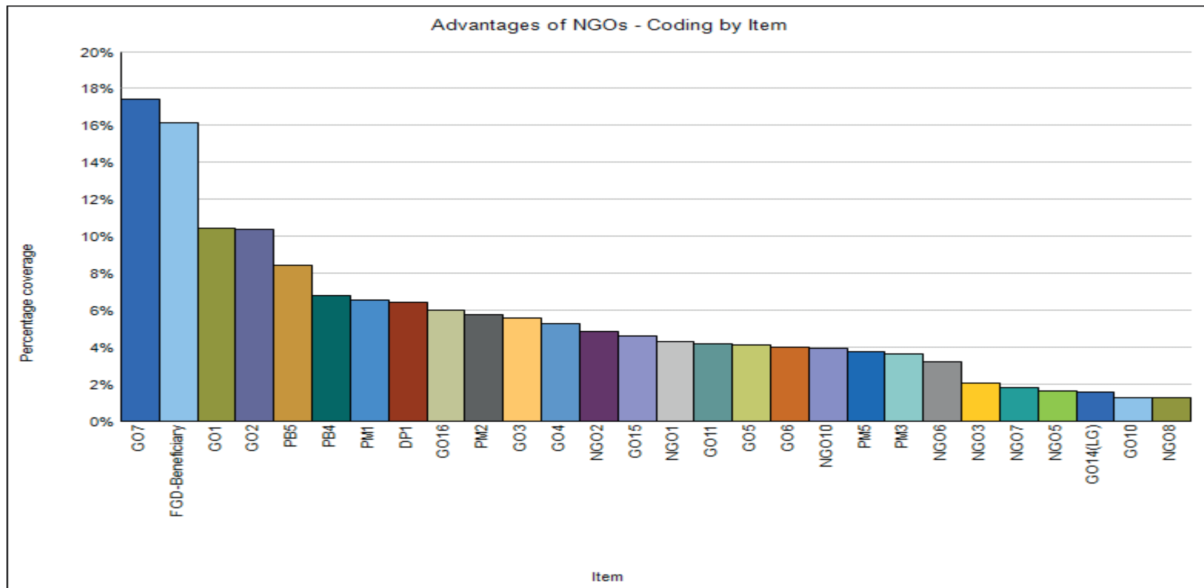

Figure 7.2. Data coverage on advantages of NGOs in project beneficiary engagement

In identifying advantages of GOs and NGOs, respondents noted critical factors that influence the scope of engaging project beneficiaries by GOs or NGOs. Such information enabled the identification of limitations and challenges that GOs and NGOs experience (see Figures 7.3 and 7.4).

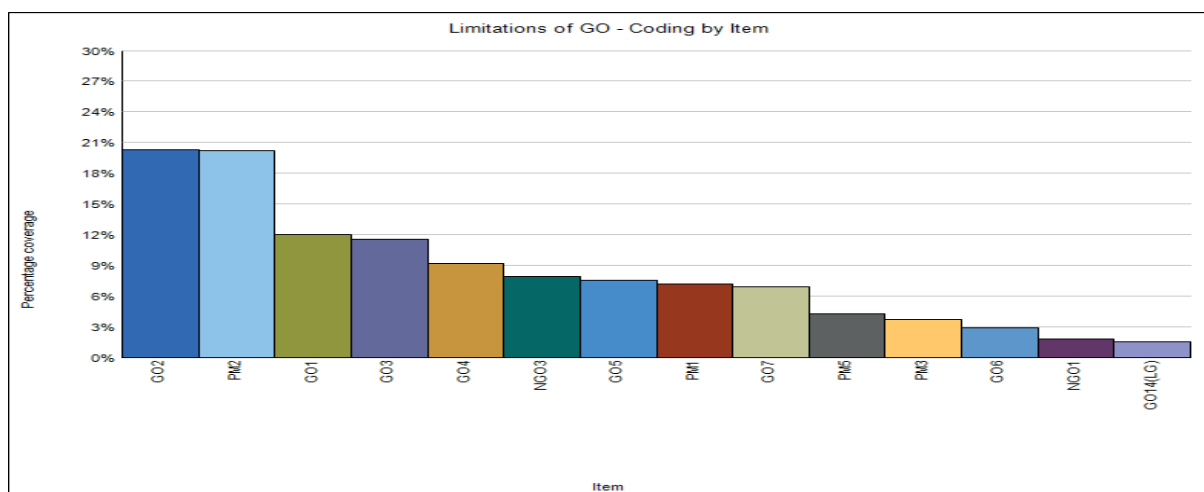

Figure 7.3. Data coverage on limitations of GOs in engaging project beneficiaries

Research participants spoke more about the limitations of GOs in engaging beneficiaries than those of NGOs (Appendix 5). The highest data reference to limitations of GOs stands at 20.31 per cent, whereas it is 10.70 per cent for NGOs. The gap of data references to limitations of GOs and NGOs is 9.61 per cent in comparison to 5.17 per cent for the data references gap for advantages of these two organisations in engaging project beneficiaries.

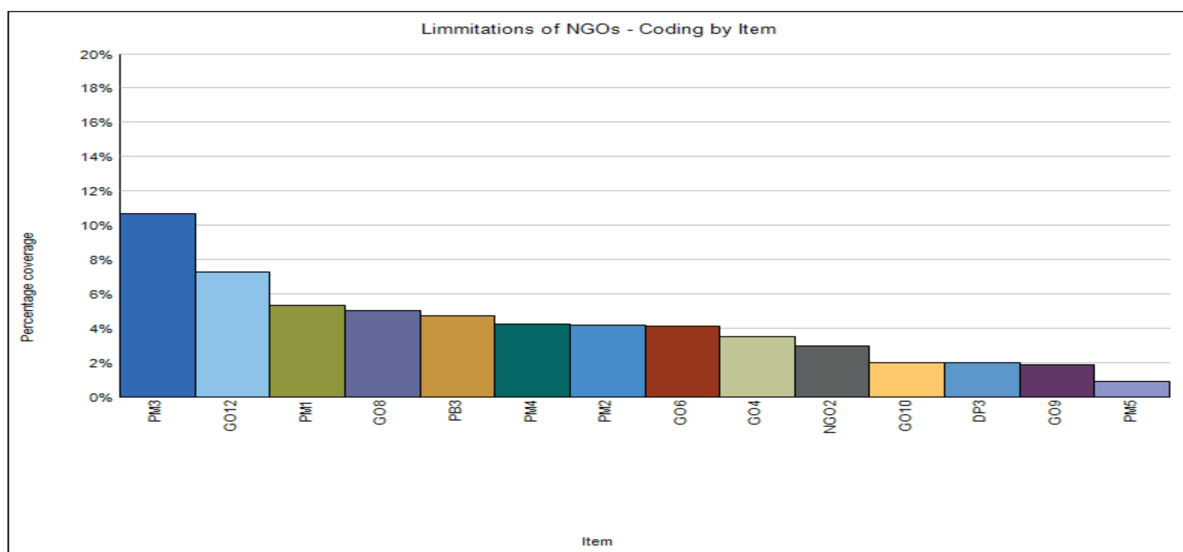

Figure 7.4. Data coverage on limitations of NGOs in engaging project beneficiaries

The primary data sources revealed some common elements of advantages and limitations that research participants perceived to be equally applicable to GOs and NGOs. Some research participants discussed the advantages and limitations for GOs and NGOs. However, when I compared limitations, it appeared that an equal number of respondents provided information on the limitations of GOs and NGOs.

7.2. Core themes of advantages and limitations

The primary data sources categorised advantages and limitations for GOs and NGOs into several parameters, which enabled or affected the GO–NGO scope of beneficiary engagement

in project management. These aspects of advantages and limitations enabled me to identify core themes under which I have coded individual data. Table 7.1 displays these core themes on advantages and brief data descriptions against each of the themes, which were mentioned by research participants during interviews and demonstrate the elements of advantages that were applicable for these organisations.

Table 7.1. Factors related to GO–NGO advantages for beneficiary engagement

Core themes of advantages	Sub-themes: Data description in brief	Advantages for GOs	Advantages for NGOs
Skills and expertise to engage	Training and skills specific to beneficiary engagement		√
	Specialised knowledge and skills like health professionals or agriculturists	√	
	Skills on beneficiary assessment, social mapping, communication/interaction		√
	Monitoring and evaluation skills		√
	Micro-credit management skills		√
Job requirements	Skill-based recruitment		√
	Beneficiary engagement affecting jobs		√
	Recognition for beneficiary engagement		√
Outreach to beneficiaries	Door-to-door visits to beneficiaries		√
	Engaging women beneficiaries		√
	Engagement through nation-wide LGIs	√	
	Project implementation staff in remote or difficult-to-reach areas		√
	Wider inclusion in service sector development	√	
	Communicating project benefits		√
Authority	Approval of funding and projects	√	
	Enforceability (issuance of letters/memos)	√	
	Leading management and coordination committees	√	
	Representation in the committees	√	√
Beneficiary confidence	Meant to be accountable to people	√	
	Main stakeholder for development	√	
Advocacy	Project launch and information	√	√
	Interaction with beneficiaries	√	√
	Mobilising beneficiary participation		√

The data descriptions of advantages against each of the core themes identified for GOs and NGOs demonstrated that one of these organisations is comparatively advantageous than the other in some areas to engage project beneficiaries. Table 7.2 displays data that revealed limitations for GOs and/or NGOs, which suggested that one of these organisations experienced comparatively less limitations against core elements in engaging project beneficiaries.

Table 7.2. Factors related to GO–NGO limitations to beneficiary engagement

Core themes of limitations	Sub-themes: Data description in brief	Limitations for GOs	Limitations for NGOs
Cost of beneficiary engagement	High unit cost		√
	Compensating beneficiary participation		√
	Meeting beneficiary requirements	√	√
	Logistics for engagement	√	
Target group for development	Beneficiary inclusion beyond project plan		√
	Presence beyond project locations		√
	Individual beneficiary attitude	√	
	Social barriers	√	
Bureaucracy	Orientation to people and processes	√	
	Change in project staff positions and transfer	√	
	Mindset to promote beneficiary engagement in general	√	
	Engagement as a core development principle	√	
Corruption	Non-transparency in fund management affects beneficiary engagement.	√	Not mentioned by any participant though scepticism about NGOs were evident in data.

Despite provisions of beneficiary engagement in the development plans and policies of these two organisation types (see Section 5.1), both GOs and NGOs experience limitations in beneficiary engagement and research participants identified these core parameters from their

practical experiences and knowledge working in the development sector. The following sections illustrate these core themes and findings from interviews, which revealed some advantages and limitations of these organisations.

7.3. Skills and expertise to engage project beneficiaries

While investigating the comparative advantages in engaging project beneficiaries in this study, research participants provided critical insights into GO and NGO staff skills, which can influence beneficiary engagement. My research findings corroborate with Petruney (2014, p. 437), who noted that any framework of capacity development 'outlines three fundamental levels within which capacity can be developed', including individual, organisational and environmental levels of capacity development. Research participants linked the capacity to engage project beneficiaries with the capacity at the individual level obtained through training and learning opportunities within organisations. They claimed that training and capacity development opportunities for staff in organisations influenced mobilising project beneficiaries more than it was influenced by the individual capacity of beneficiaries to participate in project activities. Interviewees noted that the skills and expertise of GO and NGO staff were essential to build capacity of beneficiaries and to ensure their participation in the project management. Therefore, the primary requirement of engagement was to have staff capacity within organisations to engage, which was followed by the individual capacity of beneficiaries to participate. In comparing the capacity of GOs and NGOs, research participants agreed that engagement skills are more evident in NGOs.

Oakley et al. (1991) noted that the objective of engaging beneficiaries in projects entails a process (see Figure 2.5). The process requires preparing people in organisations through training and this is evident in the public sector, in which officials receive administrative and technical training (Hoyle 1990, p. 165). As demonstrated in Figure 2.5, pre-conditions of

participation are related to the process of engagement. Participation in development can be said to be the 'end of spectrum', in which the 'voices of citizens are heard and integrated into state's machineries' and development policies and to reach to end of the spectrum requires 'pre-conditions for voices to heard which require awareness raising and capacity building' (Gaventa 2004, p. 30) of individual beneficiaries. In an analysis of a Bangladeshi NGO role to involve beneficiaries for participation, Harland (1991) claimed that staff responsible for engagement are the change agents who initiated participatory processes, which included dialogue, training and education for individuals, small groups and large groups.

The primary data sources in my study revealed that staff skills and ability in GOs and NGOs were critical to engage project beneficiaries. Further, NGOs have more advantages than GOs. The question is whether GOs in the development context of Bangladesh hold the skills and ability to engage beneficiaries or if it is attributed only to NGOs. In relation to skills and the ability to engage, research participants considered the purpose of training for GOs and NGOs, expertise in M&E, expertise in micro-credit management and access to financial resources to be the key factors that enable GOs or NGOs to engage project beneficiaries.

7.3.1. Staff skills specific to engagement

Interviews with participants indicated that NGO officials are comparatively skilled in engaging project beneficiaries because they are exposed to training specific to beneficiary engagement. Both GO and NGO interviewees believed that NGO officials receive hands-on training at the local level on different aspects of participatory methods which enable them to engage beneficiaries through interactions. In describing the success of NGOs, Sarker (2005, p. 260) argued that one of the strategies is investment in human resource development and recognising the significance of investment in staff expertise and systems required to 'support field activities'. Capacity development activities need to relate 'field-driven demand and interests',

which Petruney et al. (2014, p. 437) identified in their assessment of NGO capacity development in Uganda. An interview with NGO female fieldworkers revealed that training (local/in country) they received was specific to skills required to engage beneficiaries at the field level. An interviewee said:

> 'We received training on women's empowerment, early childhood care development, advocacy, how to engage private sector, disaster management, project implementation plan, human rights based approach, project management and sustainable development related training, data collection, Participatory Reflection Annexation (PRA) training, training on tools like social map wellbeing analysis and community action plan' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

'NGOs are more trained in participatory methods' (NGO interview on 25/03/2015).

Respondents from government departments agreed that NGOs' capacity development is different from that of public sector training and that NGOs are in an advantageous position due to their staff capacity and skills of beneficiary engagement. Research participants from GOs mentioned that NGO training is beneficiary oriented and in contrast, public sector training is 'opportunistic'. Training opportunities for GOs are higher than it is for NGOs because government officials can access foreign trainings. This implies that public sector officials obtained much scope to attend training, although these may not be specific to engagement in the development field. However, interview data revealed that having only foreign training did not make officials more skilled on beneficiary engagement because foreign training does not address local needs.

> 'Government officials have limited scope for specific project [or] issue-based training where NGOs have strong opportunities. Training abroad for government officials is not effective although they have significant opportunities but these are less focused on local needs. NGO training is local, based on local needs, officials are trained accordingly both at home and abroad' (GO interview, 11/01/2015).

Research participants supported the views that it was their exposure to training on participatory approaches to development that allowed NGOs staff to engage project beneficiaries, as evident in the interviews.

7.3.2. Technical expertise to engage beneficiaries

Although most of the interviewees agreed that the skills of beneficiary engagement mainly belonged to NGOs, a few responses during interviews revealed that GOs have more advantages than NGOs in engaging beneficiaries that require technical specialisation. This was evident in interviews with officials in the service sectors such as agriculture and health because building capacity of beneficiaries in these sectors requires skills to transfer technologies and specific knowledge. An interview with a project director of an agriculture project revealed that technology transfer is not possible without government because NGOs do not have skilled persons (GO interview on 18/01/2016). Officials in these sectors hold professional degrees and work experience in relevant fields (e. g. doctors, agriculturists), which is different from generalists across the public sector in Bangladesh. An interview with a senior official from DAE noted:

> 'The government owns more technical persons than NGOs. NGOs do not have technical professionals. In this respect, NGOs depend on government to a large extent and the government capacity is huge. NGOs have less capacity' (GO interview, 18/01/2016).

The requirements of professional and technical expertise are not only applicable for GOs to engage beneficiaries in the service sectors, but GOs' expertise is also beneficial for training conducted by NGOs. An interview with an official in the Directorate of Health revealed the following: 'Even training that is being organised by NGOs actually has government doctors who provide training' (GO interview on 18/04/2017).

Similar findings were revealed in interviews with beneficiaries. In response to the question regarding what skills they received from DAE officials, PB groups of research participants, who were farmers, mentioned that the government provided hands-on training, which was very helpful for them (PB interview on 21/01/2016). Another PB mentioned:

> 'I think government officers are more experienced. They go to different places, gather different experiences. They provide training and have knowledge about agriculture. Their experiences help me and other farmers a lot' (PB interview, 21/01/2016).

GOs are comparatively advantageous than NGOs in the specialised service sectors, in which professional and technical expertise are required to engage beneficiaries. For example, farmers obtain technical know-how from the DAE field staff. When it is a matter of providing training to beneficiaries on health issues, NGOs organise training under project activities, where public sector health professionals provide specialised training to project beneficiaries.

However, specialised and technical skills that interviewees claimed to be more from GOs are related to the capacity development of beneficiaries in service sectors. GOs fulfil a single component of beneficiary engagement process in the service sector. This finding is critical to determine whether technical expertise is sufficient to engaging beneficiaries. Hoyle (1990, p. 164) argued that technical knowledge and skills in the service sectors represents a limited context of engagement and the wider context involves addressing engagement beyond technical expertise, including social and economic aspects of development. In contrast, skills that interviewees mentioned regarding NGOs are related to engaging project beneficiaries, which covered a wide range of beneficiary engagement processes. Interviewees identified that skills NGOs obtained from training were required for categorising and assessing beneficiary needs, social mapping and monitoring beneficiary improvements against social and economic aspects. These are NGO skills specific to beneficiary engagement in addition to building beneficiary capacity in service sectors provided by GOs.

7.3.3. Scope of beneficiary engagement in training opportunities

While research participants mentioned training opportunities and expertise of GOs and NGOs as determinants of beneficiary engagement, I examined relevant secondary sources to

determine the extent to which capacity development of GOs and NGOs were related to beneficiary engagement in the development context of Bangladesh.

7.3.3.1 Scope of in-country public sector training

Bangladesh has strong institutional capacity to provide training to government officials, NGOs, private sectors and project beneficiaries (websites of training institutions). While interviews revealed that NGOs were more exposed to beneficiary engagement and participatory approaches to training, examining training courses of public sector training institutions (BPATC, NAPD, BARD and RDA and NILG) enabled me to observe how GOs, including UPs, were exposed to the concepts of beneficiary engagement in the development field. Table 7.3 displays the focus of in-country public sector training.

Table 7.3. People and development in public sector training

Institutions	Category of trainees	Development focus	People focus
Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC)	Civil servants from new entrants to Senior levels	• Project Management basics • Theories & concepts • Development planning • Public service management and governance, NPM • Development administration • Behavioural aspect of public service management • SDGs	Service delivery to citizens
National Academy for Planning and Development (NAPD)	Civil servants from Economic Cadre Other government officials Private sector employees	• Skills of development planning and implementation in public sector • Project management basics • Technical skills such as project M&E	Design and implement development programs for citizens
The National Institute for Local Government (NILG)	LG representatives LG officials from public service	• Relevant laws, rules and regulations to local-level planning and development • Social issue like anti-terrorism activities • Participatory approach to development	Integrating people in local development planning and implementation
Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD)	Civil servants, NGO staff and beneficiaries	• Rural development • Participatory approach to development • Social development • Agriculture development • Employment generation	Capacity building or project beneficiaries; inclusion of communities in development
Rural Development Academy (RDA)	As above	As above	Gender equality and women development; building change agent in rural development

Source: adapted from training modules available on BPATC, NAPD, NILG, BARD and RDA websites.

Given the wide range of training courses that focus on public sector management, development planning and project management at BPACT and NAPD, I found it difficult to identify whether beneficiary engagement has been considered to be one of the project management tools. Training courses for core public service focused on delivering services to citizens as the fundamental responsibility of civil servants rather than developing concepts of integrating people into development. In an interview with a senior civil servant who had worked in training institutions, it was revealed that beneficiary engagement was not included as a topic in training courses: 'Capacity development is different in GOB; there is no such modules [beneficiary engagement] at BPATC where key civil servants from entry level to senior staff are being trained' (GO interview on 09/01/2015).

However, BPATC training courses include poverty reduction and rural development, which is followed by field attachment, during which trainees conduct research studies on development interventions in specific rural locations. Training opportunities in BARD and RDA (including BPATC trainee attachment to BARD and RDA) indicate that civil service officials are exposed to rural development, entrepreneurship development, participatory approaches to development and capacity building of project beneficiaries. Training courses at BARD and RDA are offered to GOs, NGOs, project beneficiaries and people from the private sector. Therefore, public service officials are familiar with and exposed to participatory development and people orientation to development. However, the question is how many officials from public services and NGOs have the opportunity to attend these trainings, while a few officers or staff can reach these 'central training institution[s]' and at the same time there is a need for 'constant retraining' and 'on the job training' to relate development functions with education and training (Hoyle 1990, p. 165).

7.3.3.2 Scope of local government training

The NILG, which is situated in Dhaka, is responsible to make the LGIs the centre of local development activities through capacity development. NILG provides training to local government representatives and LGI officials on various issues, ranging from relevant laws, rules and regulations to local-level planning and development relevant to various services UPs provide. The training methods that NILG follows, such as group discussions, exchange of experiences, case studies, demonstrations and open discussions (NILG n. d.), involve participatory approaches to capacity development. It also demonstrates how local government training creates opportunities for UP representatives and officials to become exposed to the community engagement aspect of local development. The public sector training strategies in Bangladesh have been expanded to prepare LGIs so that they are familiar with beneficiary engagement in grassroots development activities.

7.3.3.3 NGO training and beneficiary engagement

As revealed in interviews and secondary sources, participation, facilitation and team building are the major distinctive features of NGO training. Unlike public sector trainings, which are centrally organised, NGO trainings are on-the-job and mostly provided at the local level for NGO field workers. For example, principles of BRAC training includes needs-based, participatory, results oriented, problem solving and experience-based (BRAC Learning Division n. d.). Ahmed and Rafi (1999, p. 3) argued that learning and development is one of the key features of BRAC, which is ‘constantly used in redefining the development strategies’ and has been the mode of policy planning within the organisation. Training content is based on program needs, such as MLAA working on access to justice for marginalised people, providing legal and human rights training to fieldworkers on various legal issues relevant to core programs and projects (MLAA n. d.). Similarly, some short training courses that Rangpur–

Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) provides, such as facilitation skill development, basic training on value chain development, community driven development, promotion of entrepreneurship, group dynamics, leadership development and team building, and savings and micro finance management are designed for NGO staff and project beneficiaries (RDRS n. d.). Training courses are relevant to everyday functions of NGO staff who work with project beneficiaries.

These NGO-led training activities appear to be different in terms of content and recipients from that of public sector training opportunities, which is identified in interviews. However, NGO training is designed for NGO staff, fieldworkers and development practitioners working in NGOs. While NGOs can participate in government training courses, as observed in BARD and RDA courses, it is not evident in the secondary or primary data sources whether government officials take part in these NGO-led training opportunities. This indicates a possible knowledge gap regarding beneficiary engagement between GOs and NGOs, which places NGOs in an advantageous position.

7.3.3.4 NGO advantage of M&E skills

In attributing advantages to NGOs, research participants considered M&E skills to be an essential element of beneficiary engagement because it requires continuous monitoring. Interviewees perceived that NGO staff skills are better in comparison to that of their government counterparts. Data from primary sources revealed that beneficiary engagement requires continuous monitoring, which can be ensured through the presence of staff at the field level, day-to-day interactions with beneficiaries and addressing beneficiary needs. Research participants believed that NGOs were advantageous to monitor project activities on a regular basis through their staff presence at the grassroots level and through interactions with beneficiaries.

> ‘A key challenge for government is its monitoring. For example, if a certain percentage of funding is invested on sanitation that NGOs are involved to implement, GOs lack in monitoring what has been achieved here. This achievement can be verified through beneficiary involvement, which is difficult for the government due to its system and way of doing things’ (NGO interview, 11/01/2015).

Being present in the field and having specialised M&E skills are required for reporting that is developed based on information from beneficiaries. An NGO executive mentioned that his NGO had an effective M&E tool and the reports that were developed on baseline data that staff gathered from interactions with beneficiaries (interview on 22/04/2017).

M&E guidelines for NGOs are focused on beneficiary participation, which interviewees claimed that NGOs were more capable of engaging project beneficiaries. For example, NGOs that are partnered with PKSF need to have M&E unit people with M&E professionals to monitor and report on project progress. This clearly outlines monitoring procedures at two levels: monitoring of project implementation process and monitoring of project results at the community level (PKSF n. d.). ‘In PKSF every project will collect the base line information of the beneficiaries as well as the targeted community’ (PKSF 2012b, p. 14). The M&E tools include baseline questionnaires, beneficiary profiles and community profiles, which would not be possible without engaging project beneficiaries.

NGO reports on project implementation include beneficiary feedback, case studies and individual stories, which were identified in sample reports, as available in websites. NGOs that receive grants from PKSF need to follow the M&E guideline and ensure that baseline data reflect profiles of beneficiaries and communities. M&E for NGOs is also subject to the M&E of organisations from which NGOs receive funding. For example, PKSF and GOs monitor NGO-implemented projects, funded by these organisations (NGO interview on 23/01/2017). Similarly, NGOs need to ensure beneficiary integration in M&E documentation when donor funding is received as Korten (1987, p. 155) noted ‘there may be a demand to satisfy donor requirements regarding project planning, monitoring and evaluation’.

7.3.3.5 M&E in development planning

Strategies of transferring development policies into practices include local administration, decentralisation and enhancing UP capacity to engage communities in local development (see Section 5.2). Data demonstrated that the availability of staff at the field level creates opportunities for GOs to ensure interactions with beneficiaries, which is evident in agriculture development. While discussing M&E, one of the agriculture officials mentioned:

> 'The presence of government agriculture staff at the filed level is very strong. They are responsible for door-to-door visits at the field level. As per demand of the farmers, they provide advice. This is the main reason for miracle advancement of the agriculture in Bangladesh. This physical presence helps monitoring at the field level' (GO interview, 18/01/2016).

However, the presence of government staff varies from department to department, which was revealed by primary data sources (see Section 5.2). In contrast, NGO fieldworkers are based in the project area, which provides an added advantage for NGOs to ensure beneficiary engagement in project monitoring and evaluation. In addition, M&E templates for reporting also vary from government, which was identified in the secondary data sources.

The government emphasised the need for strengthened M&E and improved project management, which has been detailed in the FYPs. The Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Department (IMED) was established to ensure M&E for project success. However, secondary data sources demonstrated that criteria to include project beneficiaries in the process of M&E have not been outlined as an essential element to report on project progress. I examined M&E templates, sample reports and a public memo to identify how far beneficiary engagement was a requirement for GOs.

The FYPs underscore the need to ensure M&E for achievement of development in different sectors. I evaluated FYPs and identified that M&E was incorporated to ensure the

implementation of development projects and to deliver project benefits to citizens. Figure 7.5 provides a list of M&E strategies that were outlined in the FYPs.

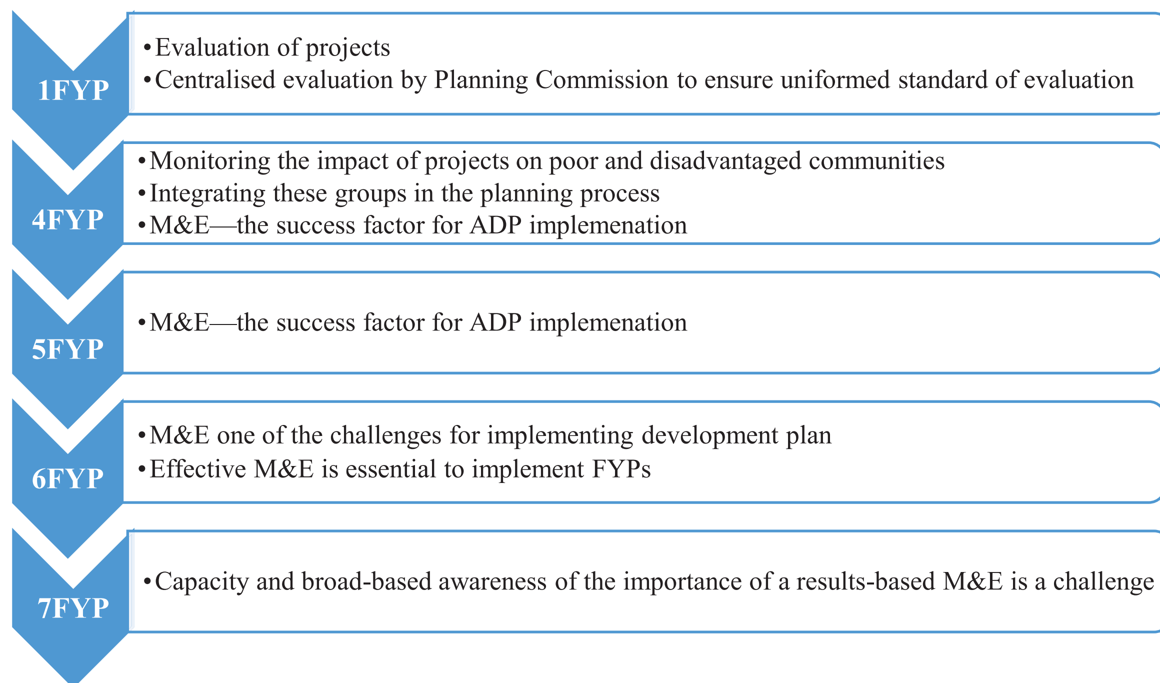

Figure 7.5. M&E in government development planning

Source: several FYPs.

The 1FYP integrated evaluation of projects and considered quality assurance (GOB 1973). The 4FYP directly linked M&E with beneficiaries (GOB 1995). The other FYPs recognised M&E as being a success factor for the implementation of development projects for citizens. Similarly, the Perspective Plan emphasised on monitoring of all sectoral development. Apart from the FYPs, the IMED's functions incorporates field inspections to oversee project implementation status, identification of implementation problems and to recommend solutions to problems for better project management. The M&E guidelines published in June 1995 (IMED n. d.) provided a template for officials who were responsible for on-site project inspection and outlined pre-inspection and inspection requirements. Sections 8.9 and 16 of the guidelines advised to provide inspection reports following discussions with project target populations. In an updated

2004 version of the guidelines, the template requires opinions from project beneficiaries to provide general observations on the project.

Despite this scope of engaging beneficiaries in M&E, research participants expressed concerns regarding whether beneficiaries are engaged in the M&E process. One PMS interviewee (interviewed on 27/01/2015) noted that in terms of project evaluation through beneficiary participation, it was important to observe how they received the services; however, concerns were raised whether beneficiaries were part of evaluations in the absence of required skills.

Given the scope of beneficiary inclusion in the project M&E, I examined reports that were available online and open to public access to understand how beneficiary opinions were reflected in project monitoring. These monitoring reports included the Maternal, Child, Reproductive and Adolescent Health project, the Women Computer Training project and the Primary Education Development Program (IMED n. d.). The reports did not detail interactions with beneficiaries, but some general comments implied that feedback was obtained from beneficiaries. For example, it was mentioned in the report on Women Computer Training project that women trainees suggested having a training manual would be more beneficial. However, how much project benefits have reached the beneficiaries, whether beneficiaries provided feedback on access to maternal and reproductive health services or whether beneficiaries provided feedback on access to primary education is not outlined in these M&E reports.

7.3.3.6 NGO expertise in micro-credit management and beneficiary engagement

Research participants noted that NGO expertise regarding micro-credits and small loans management enabled them to engage beneficiaries. Micro-credit is one of the major areas in which NGOs are involved in Bangladesh (Ahmed & Rafi 1999; Cons & Paprocki 2010; Haider 2011; Mallick 2002). It is not only with large NGOs such as Grameen Bank, ASA or BRAC

who are involved in providing micro-credit but now has become an integral part of most NGOs, who provide micro-credit to link these organisations with the communities, which was identified during interviews. An interviewee from NGO sector claimed that the ability to communicate with individual beneficiary enable NGOs to be successful in micro-credit management and to gain advantages of beneficiary engagement in comparison to GOs:

> 'If one project ends, engagement ends but it is evident that outputs are maintained by beneficiaries after two to three years, ….This is possible through [NGO's] personal communication that beneficiary engagement needs to have' (NGO interview, 23/01/2017).

Research participants interviewed from NGOs were mostly working in micro-credit management either as a partner organisation to PKSF or having funds from donors for the implementation of projects such as income generating or development of ethnic minority groups projects (see Figure 6.4). This is the advantage that research participants attributed to NGOs in engaging beneficiaries:

> 'NGOs have an important role in providing loans to farmers. Government and NGO credit systems are different. NGOs start recovery of loan interest after one week of the loan disbursement, whereas this time is one year for government loan' (GO interview 1, 18/01/2016).

> 'Loan or credit management is not possible without NGOs … Micro-credit management skills are very high in comparison to [that of] government' (GO interview 2, 18/01/2016).

The NGOs' expertise in micro-credit, small grants and loan management is instrumental for engaging project beneficiaries at the individual level, which connects NGOs to the households as Islam and Walkerden (2015) identified (see section 2.6.4). Research participants from GOs and NGOs considered this expertise to be an advantage of NGOs to engage project beneficiaries.

7.4. Beneficiary engagement: an NGO staff selection criterion

While research participants perceived NGOs to have advantages in training, skills in M&E and micro-credit management, they also considered selection criteria in NGO staff recruitment to

be the basis for their expertise in beneficiary engagement. Research participants claimed that NGOs are in an advantageous position in engaging project beneficiaries because this was a requirement of the fieldworkers' employment. Therefore, NGO staff already possessed the skills to engage beneficiaries in addition to their training and capacity development. In contrast, this is not a selection criterion for which government project officials, either from core civil service or development projects that they are appointed to. The National Project Director (NPD), appointed by the government from within the civil service, oversees project management, approves project implementation strategies including finance and is responsible to ensure quality of the process. The question is whether the selection or appointment of the project director or other project staff require skills in beneficiary engagement. One of the GO respondents reflected:

> 'There are no set criteria for appointing PDs. This is neither applied nor recruited on the basis of application. Ranks and positions matter for recruiting PDs. So, skills of engaging beneficiaries have never been considered at all … It does not affect their jobs. It is opposite for NGOs. If they do not engage beneficiaries, their jobs will be affected. NGO personnel are trained [on beneficiary engagement]. This is a requirement for NGOs' (GO interview, 10/01/2015).

Research participants believed that it was the responsibility of NGO staff to engage beneficiaries, which is part of their recruitment process (NGO interview on 08/01/2015). In addition, GO officials were not permanently in a duty station and their jobs are transferable. This tenured placement was considered as a limitation for GOs to specialise in particular areas, such as beneficiary engagement, which was revealed during an interview with a senior NGO official (interview on 25/03/2015).

However, both primary and secondary data sources revealed that there were some exceptions. Research participants mentioned that GO-led agriculture project staff remain in the field and maintain diaries to record interactions with and services delivered to project beneficiaries on a day-to-day basis (see Section 5.2). These exceptions indicate that project beneficiary

engagement may differ in different contexts of projects within the public sector. Projects and their components determine the job requirements of beneficiary engagement. In the case of UAO, engaging project beneficiaries affected their jobs, similar to that of NGO fieldworkers. This may be the same for NGO staff because the primary data revealed that NGO fieldworkers are more in touch with beneficiaries. The job requirements matter more for those who reach out to beneficiaries and not for those who are in management positions. However, the key difference is subject to promotion to higher positions. The NGO executives interviewed revealed that they have fieldwork experience ranging from 15 to 29 years and their careers began in NGOs. In contrast, government officials are promoted on the basis of merit to seniority following service rules that have no requirements to work with project beneficiaries, although they are responsible for the implementation of development projects.

7.5. Outreach to project beneficiaries

Most of the interviewees suggested that public outreach was important to engage project beneficiaries and involved going from door to door in project settings. According to research participants, the ability of NGOs to reach out to communities made them more effective in engaging project beneficiaries. However, this beneficiary outreach is also evident in the public sector in some development initiatives. The following section provides analysis of GO–NGO factors for beneficiary outreach, which were identified in interviews.

7.5.1. 'Door-to-door' visits

NGO project staff visit households of target beneficiaries on a regular basis. This begins during project design and continues throughout the project cycle. Going to individual households shapes up NGO project design as required data for social mapping come directly from beneficiaries. It is important for NGOs to conduct social mapping to identify what resources

are existing and what is required to link projects with government development initiatives. These door-to-door visits and social mapping enable NGOs to survey the area in detail and to consider local needs, beliefs, values and attitudes (Sarker 2005, p. 260). Interviews with NGO fieldworkers noted:

> ‘We have experiences of working in the NGO about 15 years. During this long professional career, we are directly working with beneficiaries at the field. We have to work with ethnic minority, *Dalit*, poorer ethnic community. People of our concerns are the beneficiaries. We are going to the field every day. There are day-to-day interactions with people’ (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).
>
> ‘NGOs spend 10–12 hours a day with beneficiaries’ (NGO interview on 08/01/2015).

Islam and Walkerden (2015, p. 1708) argue that there should be adequate ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ to build community and social networks, which require institutional support. NGOs are institutions that can establish ‘social networks’, which is important to engage communities. Interviews with government official revealed similar findings. One participant said: ‘NGOs are more engaged with beneficiaries at the grassroots level. NGOs can go door-to-door, which government cannot do’ (GO interview on 10/01/2015).

Project management staff held positive views regarding NGO advantages of beneficiary engagement. NGOs can reach target beneficiaries through courtyard meetings, inform people about development and projects because of their reach to beneficiaries. The discussion that started in 1990s on NGO connection with beneficiaries (discussed in sections 2.1.3 and 2.6.4) has still been continuing in the development context of Bangladesh. Outreach to beneficiaries was considered by PMS and GO respondents to be one of the success factors of family planning project:

> ‘NGOs worked very well in the field of maternal health, family planning involving beneficiaries which could be the test cases for NGO success in project implementation and beneficiary engagement’ (PMS interview, 24/01/2015).
>
> ‘Family planning projects are successful as NGO officials go door-to-door and the success rate is better than neighbouring countries’ (GO interview, 10/01/2015).

The same aspect of reaching beneficiaries has been reflected in interviews with FWVs working under the union health centre. They felt the benefits of having NGO workers in family planning projects to reach beneficiaries for a wide coverage. NGO workers used to be with them, but now it is difficult for FWVs to cover all areas without NGO field workers (GO interviews on 20/04/2017). It is important to note that beneficiary engagement in the health sector is not only about family welfare services and family planning program in the past, but it covers a wide range of objectives and activities in the sector-wide program for the overall improvement of health, population and nutrition sub-sectors (MoHFW n. d.). Therefore, having skilled fieldworkers for each of the sub-sectors is critical for GOs to engage beneficiaries. In reviewing the nature and extent of community participation of the family planning program of five countries including Bangladesh, Askew and Khan (1990, p. 131) argued that community based service provisions are dependent on having full-time individuals that provide services at the community level, such as FWVs in Bangladesh.

Direct contact with beneficiaries is important for GOs or NGOs in project management and having staff to talk to them is something that beneficiaries value. Direct interactions connect people with development activities irrespective of which organisation is implementing projects. The above data demonstrated how going from door-to-door makes NGOs expedient in beneficiary engagement. GOs have the same advantage, in that project staff are working in the field and beneficiaries can reach them. Beneficiaries mentioned the following:

> 'I come to UAO and he also goes to farmers. Government people come to us; they ask us about our problems. They remain in the field. When we irrigate land, they come to us and ask us about cultivation' (PB interview 1, 21/01/2016).
>
> 'UAO lives nearby; he often comes to *bazar* (local marketplace) and we meet the officers in the marketplace often' (PB interview 2, 21/01/2016).
>
> 'I have been cultivating dragon fruits for the last three years. I also get help from Horticulture and Department of Agriculture Extension. Officers from these organisations go to our house to provide advice and help' (PB interview 3, 21/01/2016).

These statements demonstrate that GOs can reach beneficiaries when project staff or department officials are based in the field with specific functions of connecting beneficiaries, such as DAE. These findings reiterate the importance of having staff to transfer policies of beneficiary engagement into practice at the field level (discussed in section 5.2.1).

7.5.2. Engaging women beneficiaries

Interviews with GO respondents demonstrated that engaging women beneficiaries is sometimes difficult for them and NGOs are of significant help to this issue. Interviews revealed that with assistance from NGOs, it was easier for DAE to ensure women's participation in training and crop production demonstration programs. This is because NGOs have more women staff than GOs and women field staff are in an advantageous position to reach women beneficiaries. For example, one of the NGO executives interviewed mentioned that the NGO has 220 field staff of which 70 are women, who have portfolios because most of the work is with women beneficiaries (NGO interview on 23/01/2017). In the field of health and family welfare, FWVs (from GOs) interviewed were women who interact with women in households in rural areas, which enhances women participation in public health awareness programs. However, I did not get any female employee at DAE at the UPZ and union level to interview.

Engaging women is an important aspect of beneficiary engagement for which interviewees stated that NGOs were doing comparatively better than GOs in project beneficiary engagement. Research participants from GOs recognised this, although the question of engaging women was not asked separately during interviews. NGO contributions to women's mobilisation was important as evident in interviews with officials from the Women and Children Affairs Directorate. NGOs' work with women beneficiaries also encourage DAE to have more women participants in agricultural demonstration events. One of the agriculture projects comprises

53 per cent men and 47 per cent women beneficiaries and while interviewing the PD, this opinion was emphasised:

> '[An] important issue is to have NGOs is that NGOs can integrate women in these projects and in many other projects. NGOs have gender projects and women staff that bring them (NGOs) closer to women' (GO interview, 18/01/2016).

Therefore, it is not only having staff in the field but there is a need to ensure the presence of women staff, which make it easier to engage women beneficiaries and thus the advantage is attributed to NGOs.

7.5.3. UP to connect communities

Research participants mentioned that having service delivery provisions at the UP is more advantageous for GO to engage project beneficiaries. Chapter 5 (Section 5.2.1.2, Figure 5.9) discussed how government policies have made UPs the hub of service delivery. Interviews noted that UPs can play a significant role for GOs to engage project beneficiaries. Strong UPs at the grassroots level can create significant opportunities for beneficiary engagement, which was identified during interviews with DP:

> 'Having a partnership with both GOB and NGOs has advantages. GOB is better placed to work with the community; to this extent, the strong local government can be instrumental to engage communities, which is the reality in the context of Bangladesh' (DP interview, 08/11/2016).

UPs bring communities closer to local development. When UPs are the implementing partners for projects, it becomes easier for NGOs to engage communities. This appears to be obvious in a project like Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh, for which UP has the village court infrastructure and service provisions. Interviews with the project staff revealed that having UP as the host organisation of this project at the grassroots level has enabled NGOs (implementing partner) to have access to beneficiaries without resistance because the local community was more familiar to UP members than they were with NGO staff (PMS interview on 27/01/2015).

7.5.4. Engaging beneficiaries in difficult-to-reach areas

In addition to the beneficiary outreach that research participants attributed to NGOs, engaging communities in difficult-to-reach areas is another area that NGOs are advantageous in comparison to GOs. Despite GOs' country-wide administrative networks, plain land geographical locations and UPs at each of the unions, there are regions in Bangladesh where logistical support is inadequate for GOs to deliver services at the grassroots level. In addition, it requires understanding of diversity in the communities. This factor appears to be more applicable in regions where the country has tribal populations or ethnic minorities, for example, Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Interview with a project staff with working experiences in this region explored that due to its geographical location and ethno–cultural differences, it is difficult to have long-term placement of government staff, so local NGOs have more advantages to engage project beneficiaries.

> 'There is a lot of staff shortages [in CHT] since it is a very remote region … What we have in the urban areas is not [available] there. As a result, any career government staff do not want to work longer in such a remote area … NGOs have one strength that they are local people, they know the geo-political background better and know the community background well. NGO staff capacity is good, they can reach any community at any remote areas—they have that access' (PMS interview on 29/09/2017).

The role of GOs in integrating people of remote regions to the national development is more persuasive at the national level. For example, the government of Bangladesh implemented development projects to promote development in CHT, in which communities of ethnic and cultural diversity are spread over 25 UPZs in mountainous areas. In this context, policies and project implementation strategies require significant considerations for engaging beneficiaries and delivering services in these remote areas. In such context, local NGOs were preferred to engage communities. NGO respondents perceive that GOs have limitations in reaching beneficiaries in remote areas, but NGOs are successful because of their ability to engage beneficiaries in difficult-to-reach areas (NGO interview on 11/01/2015).

7.6. Authority to engage project beneficiaries

In identifying advantages of GOs and NGOs, research participants discussed beneficiary perceptions and attitude towards these organisations that affected their engagement in the development process. As revealed in interviews, engagement needs to build beneficiary confidence, which is a prerequisite for beneficiaries to be involved in project activities or development initiatives. Research participants mentioned that the presence of GOs enhanced that confidence. Section 2.5 illustrated how engagement needs to consider the requirements that beneficiaries need to witness prior to be engaged, which was identified in relevant literature. In investigating advantages of GOs and NGOs, I came across views on the authority of GOs, which had a positive impact on beneficiary engagement. There were several factors why research participants thought the authority of GOs made it easier for NGOs to engage beneficiaries.

7.6.1. Enhancing '*aastha*' of beneficiaries

The reasons identified in interviews include the authority of GOs, beneficiary's scepticism regarding new initiatives and opportunities to raise concerns to higher levels of GOs make development initiatives more acceptable to beneficiaries as they have '*aastha*' (reliance or trust) on GOs. Their scepticism is intensified if they observe only NGOs or only private companies advocating for project activities. Beneficiary engagement does not depend on what the project intends to deliver or what methods NGOs or GOs follow; it depends on how beneficiaries perceive the project or services or what benefits they will receive from the project. The primary data sources provided several reasons for which beneficiaries felt confident in the engagement process.

7.6.1.1 Important to convince project beneficiaries

If it is a matter of introducing a new variety of crops, maintaining health and sanitation or to encourage beneficiaries on social issues, convincing beneficiaries seems to be prerequisite for engaging beneficiaries. This task of convincing becomes easier in presence of GOs, which was identified in interviews. Even government people found it difficult to convince project beneficiaries to adapt to new technologies or services. According to a DAE official, 'the great task is to convince the farmers' (GO interview on 18/01/2016). This confirms Aworti's (2013) findings that engagement requires management, which is the ground where beneficiaries need to have their confidence.

7.6.1.2 Making benefits realised

While research participants identified being 'convinced' as an essential requirement for engagement, data revealed that communicating project benefits with beneficiaries and demonstrating concrete benefits prompted practical application. If beneficiaries own the resources, they would like to receive maximum utilisation and benefits from their resources, which for farmers are their land and labour. Unless they are informed and convinced of the benefits, it is difficult for the DAE to ensure their involvement in the project. Demonstrating project benefits matters to beneficiaries and they felt encouraged to participate in development activities (see Box 8).

Box 8. Demonstrating project benefits to engage beneficiaries

A farmer who is a beneficiary of DAE agriculture project in *Jessore* district is now 39 years old. He completed secondary school certificate, has five members in the family and owns six acres of land for cultivation. He has been personally involved in agriculture profession for the past 18 years. He had never cultivated gourd (vegetable) before. Being a member of the small farmers groups, he was advised by DAE to try cultivating this vegetable. He was not confident in the beginning, could not believe UAE and had doubts whether it would yield any good production or profit. However, he finally tried it four years ago although he was still sceptical. He used his own land and the union office gave him half of the cultivation costs. After cultivation, it yielded a very high-quality vegetable. All officers from the district and Dhaka came to see the gourd production. Foreigners were also there. Everyone was very interested in his gourd production. Since then he has been cultivating gourd every year' (PB interview, 21/01/2016).

The above data suggests that 'self-interest' is an important factor for beneficiaries to be involved in project activities (Purvis, Zagenczyk & McCray 2015). For service delivery, beneficiaries need to understand and observe the tangible benefits of their participation in projects. According to Oakley et al. (1991, pp. 28–29), farmers tend to participate in such projects if the 'actual benefit is tied with participation' and the benefits need to be 'obvious and tangible' and demonstration and trial is effective in this sector. Engagement is not guaranteed here unless beneficiaries are convinced and DAE cannot impose anything although they may have the authority. The added finding is that understanding benefits also require presence of GOs as revealed in my interview with the UH&FPO (see Section 5.2.1, viii).

Research participants categorised GOs as expedient entities to engage project beneficiaries and mentioned that the presence of GOs makes beneficiaries confident because they know where to go or whom to complain if anything goes wrong. This was evident when a private seed company wanted to demonstrate new variety of crop for farmers:

> 'The government is invited during demonstration phase. Farmers are sceptical if private companies directly market seeds. But when government people are there, it enhances confidence and trust among farmers or beneficiaries and it becomes easy to engage beneficiaries' (MISC interview, 18/01/2016).

> 'It is easy to convince farmers or beneficiaries if the government is involved. The level of trust and confidence is enhanced if beneficiaries see the presence of government officials' (GO interview, 18/01/2016).

Research participants claimed that GOs enhance trust because accountability to people ultimately lies with the government and it is the owner of development. Therefore, the responsibility of enhancing beneficiary confidence lies with GOs and not with NGOs (NGO interviews on 11/01 and 25/03/2015). This finding is related to the administrative context of Bangladesh and its gradual development of the administrative system. According to Zafarullah (2007), bureaucracy in Bangladesh obtained 'acceptability and stability in the society' and frequent changes in political regimes and leadership 'unwittingly compelled the people to rely on the more "durable" bureaucracy' (p. 166).

7.6.2. Enforceability and beneficiary engagement

Another reason identified during interviews was related to the NGO role of project implementation and project approval by GOs. Research participants claimed that NGOs were the implementation partners to GOs and that the authority to implement development programs remains with GOs. Comparing these two essential elements of NGOs and GOs in project management, interviewees perceived that GOs have more advantages in beneficiary engagement in comparison to NGOs.

7.6.2.1 Enforceability as an engagement tool?

Research participants felt that the decision-making authority of GOs makes it easier for NGOs to engage project beneficiaries. In distinguishing public organisations from the non-public sector within the discussion of organisational theories, Gortner, Nichols and Ball (2007, pp. 3–4) argued that organisational structures influence functions and that both structures and functions are critical to achieve goals. Therefore, the 'bureaucratic' structure of government was thought to be less effective in comparison to NGOs, which was perceived as being flexible.

However, provisions of enforceability in the development field provided GOs with authority, which is important for beneficiaries to rely on, as identified in this research investigation. Respondents from NGOs felt that the authority of GOs through administrative networks in the field level was often helpful for engaging project beneficiaries because when invited by a Deputy Commissioner or UNO, citizens cannot deny coming to the event or joining consultation (NGO interview on 25/03/2015). It is because 'public oversight and accountability are prominent and necessary features' of governments, which was 'created by law to administer law' (Gortner, Nichols & Ball 2007, p. 5). However, while NGOs take advantage of GOs' authority to obtain beneficiary consents for coming to the event, it cannot be claimed that beneficiaries are engaged in disseminating their opinions or able to make a decision in the development process. GOs' authority is an administrative or procedural requirement for NGOs to involve people in the development process instead of engaging them.

Research participants noted that engagement within the authority was related to the administering power of GOs, which enabled agencies to implement development programs and engage beneficiaries. According to Gaventa (2006, p. 23), development in terms of participation and inclusion, realising rights or changing policies, has resulted in practitioners 'becoming aware of the need to engage with and understand the phenomenon called power'. Given its role in development, research participants from both GOs and NGOs expressed their views on authority that was instrumental to engage beneficiaries in the context of Bangladesh. However, in relating authority to beneficiary engagement, research participants felt that the authority of GOs is positive when it is used and shared with NGOs and beneficiaries.

7.6.2.2 NGOs engage beneficiaries as agreed by GOs

The primary and secondary data sources demonstrated that beneficiary engagement by NGOs is subject to their role in the implementation of projects as agreed by GOs. Data showed that it

is government counterpart who lay out conditions and guidelines on how to engage beneficiaries, such as guidelines for FWVs in health projects or diaries for UAOs in agriculture projects. When NGOs were responsible for implementing government projects or donor funded projects in these sectors, they also follow the same guidelines. NGOs do not have much scope to introduce anything new: 'Projects in health or madrassa education are sensitive, beneficiary engagement needs to be aligned to [government] policies' (NGO interview on 25/03/2015).

NGOs remained in the implementation of projects and obtained funding from government or donors. However, which NGOs to partner with for project implementation was subject to procurement decisions of GOs or donors. When donors worked through the government for foreign funded projects, NGOs remained in the implementation as agreed between donors and the government (GO interview on 10/01/2015). Perceptions on the authority of GOs do not vary much in the findings from GO and NGO respondents. It was more obvious in these data that beneficiary engagement followed guidelines that were applicable for both GOs and NGOs in its process.

7.6.2.3 Having a letter from government matters for NGOs

Reaching beneficiaries becomes easier for NGOs if they have agreements from GOs or if GOs as implementing agencies have permission from the top. Several interviews revealed that beneficiary engagement became easier for NGOs when formal agreement was obtained from GOs. For example, a letter works as a safeguard to engage beneficiaries, which was noted by a PMS respondent: 'Government officials depend on high-up's orders to obtain contribution from beneficiary participation. NGOs try to generate office orders [from the ministry] then able to engage beneficiaries for participation' (PMS interview, 19/01/2015).

The authority of the GOs appears to be inevitable for beneficiary engagement; however, the objective is more like facilitating beneficiary engagement functions within the boundaries of

GOs' agreements. This is a functional aspect of beneficiary engagement, which NGOs cannot exercise but depend on GOs to reach beneficiaries and to coordinate with other agencies to implement projects. For example, NGOs implementing the village courts project need to work with UPs that are under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) and office orders from the ministry help NGOs and the project management to coordinate with UPs and engage beneficiaries (PMS interview on 27/01/2015).

> 'Government issues letter that is more effective for institutions that NGOs work with' (NGO interview, 25/01/2017).
>
> 'Following government policies and memos, there is an NGO Emergency and Humanitarian Support Board and mobile numbers are provided to people' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

These statements confirmed how the authority of GOs is advantageous for NGOs in engaging project beneficiaries. The scope of beneficiary engagement for NGOs appears to be limited or difficult in the absence of GOs.

7.6.2.4 Leading committees connects beneficiaries

Data from secondary sources demonstrated that it was the GOs that led project management committees when GOs sponsored or hosted projects. Leading committees by GOs results in decision-making in consultation with implementing partners, for which interviewees believed that GOs have more advantages over NGOs. Apart from project committees at the national level, officials from field administration lead GO–NGO coordination committees at the field level, in which NGOs reported to the GOs in monthly meetings on project progress and development activities implemented by NGOs. For example, the UNO is the head of the UPZ Coordination Committee. At the UP level, development committees are headed by the UP chairperson. According to research participants, the representation of GOs in various committees reassured NGO access to beneficiaries. For example:

> 'Village Development Committee helps partnering with government organisations. For example, Union Land Officer is the member of the Village Development Committee. Government staff in the Committee helps expedite service provisions, helps establish linkages, raise awareness. Beneficiaries understand that government officials, schools and [government] funds go to beneficiaries through *Upazila* office. So, they are also comfortable to be in touch with government offices' (NGO interview, 22/04/ 2017).

These committees, mainly at the union level, included NGOs and representatives from local communities that enabled beneficiaries to interact with GOs, NGOs and project team. This was identified in an interview with a project staff member, who worked in the CHT region:

> '*Para* (Village) Development Committee (PDC) consists of at least 7 to 9 members from each village or *para* and there had to have one third women representatives and poor farmer representatives. Beneficiaries take their own decisions about what they need in the *para*. We did not impose anything on them. They discuss among themselves, prepare the meeting minutes and tell us their needs and what the shortages are then we assist them' (PMS interview, 29/09/2017).

The interview also revealed that government officials joined these village committees when these were government run projects and interact directly with beneficiaries. Communities also benefited from the presence of GOs in these committees because they could directly talk to GOs through these PDCs.

7.7. NGO advocacy and beneficiary engagement

While the GOs' presence matters for convincing project beneficiaries, interviewees admitted that NGO advocacy includes the task of convincing and NGO advocacy is significant in mobilising project beneficiaries. The NGO role of advocacy is considered as a critical factor of beneficiary engagement, which has hardly been attributed to GOs in the existing literature (see Section 2.1.7). In analysing practices from Bangladesh on NGO roles in development and democracy, Rahman (2006) identified political tensions of NGO advocacy when parties in power who are elected to form government, perceive this advocacy to be politically driven or patronised by the opposition party. The author argued that despite this perception, NGOs hold 'considerable room' for social mobilisation and advocacy programs, through which NGOs like

BRAC and *Nijera Kori* proved their potential (Rahman 2006, p. 467). Research participants identified that NGOs' advocacy role had multiple dimensions for beneficiary engagement, which ranged from advocacy events and sharing information to individually conveying project purposes to beneficiaries.

7.7.1. Project launching and information sharing

It is important to inform people about projects and NGOs organise project launch events that have more public outreach than what GOs can achieve. Information sharing on projects is the gateway to beneficiary engagement, which is conducted in a more formal and professional way. The presence of GOs (discussed in Section 7.5) is an important factor for NGOs' information sharing. However, NGO expertise in organising such events is essential to conduct project advocacy. Moreover, NGOs' advocacy helps GOs making informed decisions as NGOs provide information received from beneficiaries:

> 'Project launching is an important event to communicate the project objectives with the target beneficiaries. Officials from government departments, UP and different stakeholders help communicating project purpose, following which NGO fieldworkers go to beneficiaries, form beneficiary groups, which is followed by awareness raising. NGO does the advocacy for awareness raising and that also helps policy making. The best example is the case of the district hospital that now has special counter for tribal and *Dalit* people led by the government on the basis of NGO advocacy' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

Although the presence of GOs is crucial for beneficiaries to participate in such events, the ability of NGOs to reach individual beneficiaries is helpful in mobilising people to participate in GO-led advocacy events, such as health awareness programs. The UH&FPO in his interview mentioned: 'NGOs are involved in providing logistic support to observing a Day and campaign. NGOs come to Health complex, inform us that they can provide support, we agree' (GO interview on 20/04/2017).

7.7.2. Engaging requires going beyond advocacy

Data also demonstrated that engaging beneficiaries required individual interactions with beneficiaries (see section 6.1.7). This is important for beneficiary engagement and NGOs appear to be in a more advantageous position than GOs. It is important to determine whether GOs have any flexibility to undertake extra efforts that are beyond project provisions or fall outside project activities required for beneficiary engagement. Jamil (2002, p. 110) noted that bureaucrats in Bangladesh are more concerned with rules and there was not 'enough flexibility and room to adjust goals and procedures'. An interesting practical experience was noted during an interview with a PMS respondent, formerly a civil servant. Although more than a decade ago, his experience suffices that being flexible and going beyond traditional roles may not be always an acceptable attitude in a bureaucratic environment.

> 'Being a UNO, once I took tea in a local tea stall that gave me opportunity to talk to people and obtain views on different issues from the local people, being one of them. But that had become a huge problem with the officials and highly discouraged by my senior colleagues' (PMS interview on 24/01/2015).

Having the administrative networks and infrastructure of GOs present in remote rural areas may not be adequate or logistically convenient to reach beneficiaries, mainly when engagement activities need to be implemented. Activities are not simply workshops or stakeholder consultation but involve different methods and techniques to engage beneficiaries. The interviews revealed the local base in the community and access to individual beneficiary helped NGOs utilise different techniques for engaging communities.

7.8. Limitations and challenges in beneficiary engagement

While discussing the advantages of GOs and NGOs, research participants also highlighted limitations (see Figures 7.3 and 7.4). The above discussions highlighted advantages of both GOs and NGOs that enabled these organisations to engage beneficiaries in projects. However,

in comparing these two institutions for beneficiary engagement, research participants also revealed limitations that these organisations experienced that make beneficiary engagement challenging. The following sections illustrate findings obtained from primary data sources.

7.8.1. Inclusion is limited for NGOs

According to research participants, GOs can ensure inclusion of wider communities as policies do not limit GOs to focus on any target groups, which is a reality for NGOs. Interviewees from GOs claimed that in comparison to NGOs, they are better placed in terms of engaging wider communities. The primary data indicated that when it is a matter of engaging large scale beneficiaries beyond projects, GOs have more advantages as NGOs need to implement projects and engage beneficiaries as stated in the project documents and are limited within target populations. It is not only for project beneficiaries that GOs implement development activities rather involving beneficiaries across the community is more convenient for GOs. This is mainly evident where NGO presence is limited, such as in the agriculture and health sectors. In both these sectors, primary data sources revealed that NGOs did not have enough coverage in these sectors. For example, findings from an interview with DAE official at the UPZ level revealed:

> 'Since this is a government organisation, everyone is our beneficiary which ranges from those who plants on the roof top to those who cultivate on 50 bigha land … NGOs work in a specific area with a target group so the coverage is limited. In contrast, government coverage is of wide range. Government staff are available even at the union level' (GO interview, 21/01/2016).

BRAC is an implementing partner to manage the micro-credit component of an agricultural development project. Therefore, engaging beneficiaries in the specific area was limited to only those who received loans. Likewise, interviewees from the health sector claimed that the role of NGOs was limited as they did not have wide coverage and NGOs were the implementing partner of health projects. For example, the government funding for the tuberculosis program was disbursed to NGOs like BRAC to carry out development programs (GO interview on 20/04/2017). According to a senior official in the Directorate of Health and the UH&FPO, the

NGO role was to assist government health agencies and to provide logistical support to government activities on health issues. They perceived that NGO roles are now limited as evident in the interview with the Directorate official:

> 'The role of NGO is limited. NGOs do not have enough coverage. NGOs seek permission from directorate to start working. NGO programs are finished, their participation has ended up. GOB carries out program development mandate' (GO interview, 18/04/2017).

These findings are critical to examine the extent of beneficiary engagement in the health sector. The previous section examined data from interviews with FWVs that experienced difficulties in reaching out to all people in the community because NGOs are not much involved in this area now a days. Therefore, considering NGOs to be providers of logistical services to health programs shows that GOs' perceptions on NGO roles in beneficiary engagement are limited to logistical support. However, these findings do not confirm that NGOs are not required for beneficiary engagement in this service sector. Rather the data indicates individual perceptions about NGO contributions that restrict NGO activities to the implementation of project components.

7.8.2. Cost of beneficiary engagement

Interviews demonstrated that unit costs for beneficiary engagement for NGOs was higher than it is for GOs. The events and strategies that NGOs undertake to engage beneficiaries require more resources. More importantly, resources are critical to deliver project benefits. Government funds, foreign development assistance and internal resources enable NGOs to plan, formulate, implement and evaluate projects. At the same time, obtaining individual skills and the ability to engage project beneficiaries are essential to deliver project benefits. The view of GOs on this is reflected in the following:

> 'Management cost is very high but they are not contributing to infrastructure development' (GO interview, 18/04/2017).

However, the cost is not only associated with NGOs' management. The process of beneficiary engagement to ensure their participation is a resource-intensive task, which was described by an NGO interviewee. There is a cost of participation if events or ways of participation are to be meaningful:

> 'When beneficiaries are mobilised for an event, it has a 'negative impact' on their daily wages. NGOs need to subsidise or compensate this negative impact as beneficiaries will not participate without incentive. Opportunity cost and time are associated with this engagement process. The return should be bigger than his or her daily wage. In addition, there might be mismatch between demand and supply. When beneficiaries are engaged, the expectation wish list grows quickly. It is not possible to meet all in the wish list. Engagement is focused on supply and it becomes tricky at that point. NGOs subsidise or compensate negative impact as beneficiaries will not participate without incentive. Opportunity costs and time are associated with this engagement process. The question is whether it is different if done by the government. It is not possible by government either, not even government officials can do without incentives' (NGO interview, 25/03/2015).

An important finding is that it costs NGOs to engage beneficiaries, which is equally true for GOs because it is not only to pay incentives to beneficiaries but government officials also require incentives, such as honoraria for their participation in events or consultation meetings. The above quote brings out a critical aspect of costs associated not only to beneficiary engagement but also associated to expenses that are made in terms of honoraria for GOs or other stakeholders of engagement event meant for beneficiaries.

7.8.3. Selection of committee members and beneficiaries

Representation in committees creates opportunities for communities to participate in development activities. However, primary data sources identified that this approach is not easy at the UPZ level, where the government nominates committee members (NGO interview on 22/04/2017). Moreover, it also has the risk of politicisation that can divide marginalised groups, which was identified in an interview with a GO respondent (interview on 11/01/2015). In the recent past, NGO workers experienced challenges to access UPs as noted in another interview:

> 'It was challenging in 2006 when UP chairperson and officials were not accepting NGOs. UP even wanted to influence volunteer selection. NGOs were not respected and had no access to UPs' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017).

It is challenging even for GOs to engage project beneficiaries. Research participants from a government directorate described beneficiary selection in the past being a challenge when they experienced political pressure. UP chairpersons and members used to mobilise beneficiaries under VGD program to ensure their votes during UP elections (interviews on 12/04/2017).

7.8.4. Process vs people orientation to beneficiary engagement

Research participants mentioned that GOs are more process-oriented, whereas NGOs are people-oriented because they learned from people (GO interview on 09/01/2015). Government officials have transferable jobs, which causes frequent changes to project staff, such as the position of PD. Moreover, if beneficiary engagement or people orientation was not a criterion for future promotion or opportunities, government officials might not consider their placement in projects to be important for their career path. The system of administrative procedures affects approaches to work in projects. Data revealed that there was a need to recognise project management roles at the government's end to ensure beneficiary engagement:

> 'Bureaucracy weakens engaging beneficiaries. Frequent transfer of PDs affects project implementation. PDs are also not very keen to remain in the position as this position deprives them from many other benefits like going abroad for training. When PDs perform well, there is no recognition. If anything goes wrong, PDs are the only ones to be blamed and there is no team approach to find out why things go wrong. This is a matter of official culture. Why should PD take risk to engage beneficiaries if that is not written or required anywhere in the project?' (GO interview, 10/01/2015).

Administrative procedures must be convenient for implementing partners to ensure beneficiary engagement. The study identified how a memo from a government office makes it easier for NGOs to carry out beneficiary engagement. However, if there is no initiative of providing letters or formal concurrence, engagement activities are delayed:

> 'Once tried to send letters through District Education Officer. It was discussed in the district coordination meeting but not actually actioned as it is out of their routine work. They say that

> they will cooperate but they do it in a traditional way like government official task—does not help much' (MISC interview, 16/04/2017).
>
> 'Government follows rules and regulations and there is delay in changing rules and procedures based on the beneficiary demands. Government strategy differs from NGOs. Government has bureaucratic procedures' (GO interview, 18/01/2016).

This 'bureaucratic procedure' might affect how GOs engage beneficiaries. An interview with an NGO official revealed that GOs invite beneficiaries or the UP chairperson to a big forum held in Dhaka. There were doubts regarding whether beneficiaries are engaged in such hierarchical and bureaucratic events (NGO interview on 25/03/2015). The above data confirms to the findings from FGDs as displayed in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 where research participants from GOs and NGOs aligned beneficiaries to process and people respectively.

7.8.5. Outlook on beneficiary engagement

Primary data sources demonstrated that a positive and pro-people outlook is important to ensure beneficiary engagement. Interviewees identified the outlook of GOs on this as being a shortcoming to some extent. The history of bureaucratic culture has a 'colonial legacy', which does not align with the government's pro-people policies. Beneficiary engagement is a kind of relationship building that was identified by research participants. Engagement is providing information and obtaining feedback through monitoring and evaluation. In a bureaucratic environment that originated from the colonial era, this quest for information or 'search behaviour' is limited within the boundary of organisation (Jamil 2002, p. 96). When engaging project beneficiaries requires building community relationships and day-to-day interactions, this limited 'search behaviour' may make the engagement process difficult for GOs.

As revealed in section 2.6.1, influence of colonial legacies in administrative culture creates obstacle for integrating people in development as it is a limitation for GOs to become people-oriented. The realisation of its impact to make development people-oriented is not new. Following independence in 1971, the aspiration was to make administration appropriate for the

new state through a political commitment and 'concerns for rural development became a dominant' development agenda in the following years (Hakim 1987, pp. 7, 279). This realisation might have impacts on pro-people policies because GOs remain responsible for policy formulation and implementation. It is not only important to have pro-people policies but pro-people implementation processes are equally critical in the process of beneficiary engagement, for which NGOs are better placed than GOs. Interview with a PMS noted:

> 'The government set up is mixed up with colonial regime and war of independence. The historical background of colonial era influences government attitudes towards people. It is a huge struggle to come out of this attitude and colonial influence. Therefore, beneficiary engagement is difficult. Government policies are pro-people but the implementation tools hold colonial influence, which cause malfunctioning of beneficiary engagement' (PMS interview on 24/01/2015).

It has been argued that the administrative reform that encouraged pro-people policies resulted in an 'increasing role of NGOs in community development activities in many developing countries including Bangladesh' (Jamil 2002, p. 99). It is important to have engagement as a core implementation strategy:

> 'NGOs have approaches to engage beneficiaries—empowerment or participation. NGOs have taken these as core principles, which is different from the government. In contrast, these are not the core principles of government functions' (PMS interview on 19/01/2015).

The GOs' authority seems to be beneficial for NGOs to engage beneficiaries; however, when it is combined with bureaucratic attitudes or colonial influence, it becomes difficult for NGOs to ensure beneficiary participation:

> 'Sometimes, government offices are rigid. For example, the land office was initially unwilling to help NGOs, unwilling to give information about land records or *Khas* land' which makes engagement difficult for NGOs because one of our strategies is to link project beneficiaries with government service departments. Some departments are rigid (NGO interview on 22/04/2017).

7.8.6. When beneficiary choices matter

However, data also demonstrated that bureaucratic cultures or individual attitudes were not the only limitations for GOs or NGOs that affected beneficiary engagement. Several interviews

noted that sometimes the attitudes of beneficiaries make it challenging for GOs and NGOs to ensure beneficiary engagement throughout project life cycles and beyond. To some extent, it depends on how beneficiaries perceive this engagement, whether being engaged was convenient for their personal and social aspects. For example, the DWA officials believed it was challenging to have women participate in training given time and duration, because women might not be able to attend given their household responsibilities. This required substantial involvement of the department to continue with women participants and contacts were made to their families and courtyard meetings were organised (GO interviews on 12/04/2017).

Similarly, it can be challenging for other service sectors in the government. For example, DAE officials felt that beneficiary attitudes made engagement challenging. Despite having the knowledge, skills and financial resources, beneficiaries did not want to test or receive new things. Therefore, beneficiary engagement required categorisation of groups depending on how beneficiaries acted on engagement:

> 'There are different types of beneficiaries, such as beneficiaries who have early motivation, some wait and see and then will try, some of them want to do after seeing others and some are too lazy who never want to do anything. Another challenge is to engage women farmers due to social and cultural context of rural areas, which is mostly conservative. It is difficult for government to reach them although things are changing slowly' (GO interview on 18/01/2016).

Even if strategies are in place, engagement may still be difficult for GOs or NGOs because individual attitudes to involvement in development activities are subject to beneficiary orientations to development. People-centred development has been much discussed in development literature; however, when it is a matter of engaging beneficiaries, it appears that strategies need to be in place to make people development-oriented.

7.8.7. Corruption: a barrier to public engagement

Two research participants from GOs and PMS groups mentioned that beneficiary engagement can be hindered due to corruption. As discussed above, beneficiary engagement requires financial resources and to this, the flow of financial resources such as government grants to the UPs need to be transparent. If UP needs to pay any percentage of allocated grants to any organisations concerned, it makes difficult for UP to implement government development projects hence the question on its role in engaging beneficiaries arises. The PMS respondent said that institutionalised corruption needs to end to engage beneficiaries. Though only two participants mentioned corruption, this is important as it adds value to the 'information power' of the data obtained through primary sources.

This chapter has drawn a comparison of GO-NGO advantages and limitations in terms of project beneficiary engagement based on findings from primary and secondary data sources. Interviewees provided important parameters for beneficiary engagement, which demonstrated comparative advantages of GOs and NGOs. Limitations, as identified, make engagement process challenging. There are no absolute advantages for NGOs in comparison to GOs. Moreover, limitations were associated with beneficiary perceptions and attitudes, which affected engagement for GOs and NGOs. In view of these limitations, I investigated whether GOs and NGOs had opportunities to maximise project beneficiary engagement through partnership with each other, presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 8. GO–NGO partnership for engaging beneficiaries

Partnerships between GOs and NGOs are largely influenced by individual country context and the extent to which governments exert control over their non-government counterparts (Clark 2006; Batley 2011). As such, this part of the study aimed to identify issues relating to GO–NGO bonds, which directly address engagement within the development context of Bangladesh. This chapter presents findings on the final research question tackling whether such ties can enhance beneficiary engagement in project management. Investigation provides understanding on the existing relations that GOs and NGOs hold when attempting to connect with project recipients, and further reveal any opportunities to foster viable partnerships that support beneficiary engagement in the development context of Bangladesh.

During interviews, data on GO–NGO ties generated findings at three levels. First, research participants focused on existing partnerships in the form of implementation, coordination and donor preference. Second, the findings inform participants' experiences with the emerging private sector in Bangladesh as well as UPs, which can lead to cross-sector relationships aimed at engaging people. Finally, respondents outlined a few development issues they believed require close attention to improve GO–NGO bonds with each other, and with project beneficiaries. Based on the findings, this chapter is consequently divided into two sections. The first provides analysis on how existing partnerships are currently addressing engagement in project management and national development initiatives. This is followed by examination on arising opportunities that research participants deemed most appropriate for expanding GO–NGO relations.

8.1. GO–NGO partnership: a desired condition for beneficiary engagement

Research participants across different groups shared the view that coordination between GOs and NGOs is an inevitable and desired condition to and for engagement. Given the noted advantages and limitations that both sides present, participants considered GO-NGO partnerships essential to enhance public participation in national development initiatives. For example, one respondent explained how a 'coordinated approach is … expected for better beneficiary engagement' (NGO interview, 11/1/2015), while another said that 'for both [the] GOs and NGOs, it is important to have [the] ability to work together' (DP interview, 8/11/2016).

Most research participants acknowledged that partnership exists in various forms when managing development projects. Notably, strategies on organisational coordination, agreements between GOs and NGOs, and enlisting non-government bodies as implementing partners in development projects are just some forms that administrative collaboration takes place in Bangladesh. Interactions between GOs and NGOs generally occur at the organisational level, which research participants otherwise interpreted as coordination at different levels. That is, organisational interaction exists at the central level in Dhaka and expands to field administration at the district, UPZ and union levels. Participants wholly believed that coordination is and remains a 'mandatory' task in government policy with which both GOs and NGOs must comply.

8.1.1. GO–NGO coordination leads to beneficiary engagement

Coston (1998, pp. 361–2) identified different types of GO-NGO relationships that can be characterised as either of rivalry or competition or of complementarity or collaboration. This

influences the extent of partnership between the two and further determines NGO linkages with GOs. Unlike these forms of connection, research participants in this study identified ‘coordination’ between GOs and NGOs as a contributing factor for beneficiary engagement, whereby interaction occurs for the purpose of involving beneficiaries and to addressing their requirements in project implementation. Essentially, then, GO–NGO partnership in the development context of Bangladesh are primarily driven by organizational coordination, as demonstrated in most respondents’ answers. As mentioned by Coston (1998, p. 370-371), this GO-NGO coordination is based on ‘information sharing, resource sharing and joint actions’ which are equally applicable to ‘cooperation’. Figure 8.1 shows how research participants linked beneficiary engagement to coordination as a formal approach to interactions incorporated into government function, as well as coordination procedures identified throughout discussion.

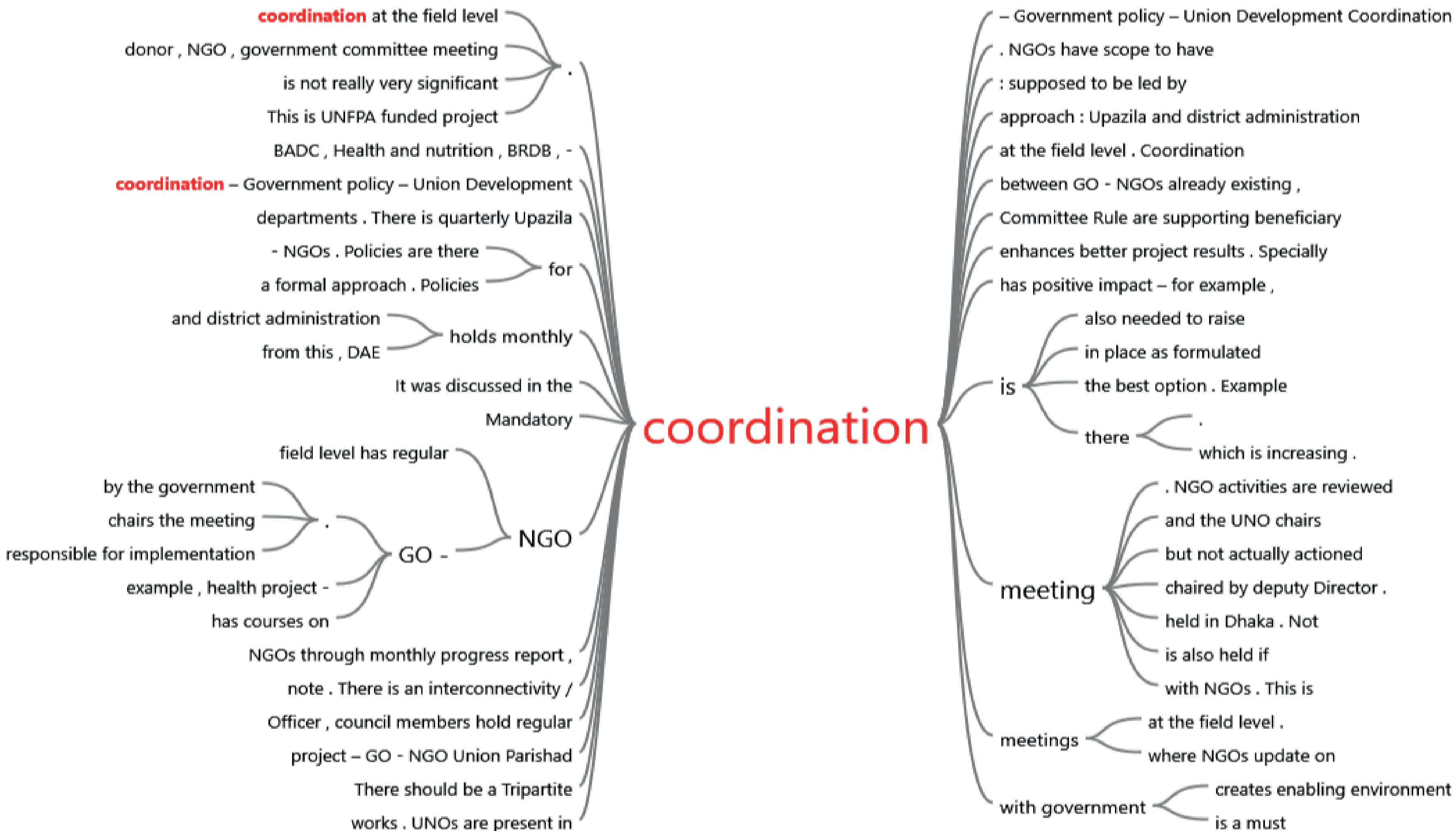

Figure 8.1. Institutional interaction through formal coordination

An approach to coordination, in this case, seems to represent formal interaction between GOs and NGOs. These are mainly conducted through monthly and quarterly meetings at the district and UPZ levels, with development coordination meetings at the union level, and through NGOs reporting to government bodies on project progress. Importantly, NGO activities are reviewed in these approaches-to-coordination meetings, which are usually chaired by the government department heads (e.g., UNO in the UPZ Development Coordination Committee). At the central level, coordination meetings involve project-management groups, donors (if foreign funded) and implementing agencies, including NGOs. At both the field and district levels, government agencies are responsible for holding NGO coordination meetings. There are also quarterly UPZ coordination meetings with NGOs chaired by the UNO, and ones held at the local level where interaction involves GO, NGOs and the UP. Importantly, the UP chairman, UNO and UP members conduct these meetings where NGOs implement projects in rural areas. Essentially, regular consultation ensures that institutional interactions occur between government officials of different service-sector departments in each UPZ.

Coordination meetings serve two purposes. Although they house the accomplishments of routine departmental work, they also facilitate monitoring of project implementation. However, this interactive approach is less effective for beneficiary engagement if project initiatives are not formally coordinated between GOs, project management and the implementing agencies (such as NGOs) involved. While interviewing an evaluation officer of a fully foreign-funded project, it was found that lack of coordination certainly affects engagement efforts in development projects and further complicates ability of staff to implement various components of a project (see Box 9).

Box 9. Engaging is difficult if not coordinated well

Coordination with government does not seem to be a part of the project work plan (which is directly funded by a bilateral aid agency) so the project management does not need to coordinate with any government department. The project creates value chain for mango growers and project staff work directly with farmers who produce mangoes. As a part of food safety program, government initiated destroying fruits that are adulterated with chemicals and having no information about the beneficiaries of that particular project, mangoes were destroyed across the area. Project beneficiaries lost their production and creating value chain was stalled. Eventually, the project had to contact district administration for a coordination meeting with other departments so that proper screening is in place and project beneficiaries are not affected. Coordination meetings were held and campaign was launched jointly by government departments, NGOs and project that ensured destruction of mangoes that were adulterated. (PMS interview, 21/1/2016).

Essentially, NGO activities are reviewed in these coordination meetings for potential overlaps, and government officials provide suggestions and further observe progress of NGO-run events. Interaction between both groups also takes place through monthly progress reports and in quarterly and annual reports on project progress. However, in this process, direct interaction with beneficiaries is limited. It is expected that reportage on project progress is instead based on beneficiary requirements obtained through interactions and social mapping.

That said, coordination is not solely limited to meetings. Rather, it accumulates through regular contact between GOs and NGOs to address issues of engagement and service delivery. One interview with an NGO field worker revealed that the government is one of the major stakeholders with which the NGO works. The respondent further detailed how they also need to coordinate with various government departments depending on the program or project at hand:

> We coordinate with [the] UPZ Education Office so that there is regular communication with schools on Dalit students having access to education, equal rights and access to basic services. NGO gives demands to [the government] through [the] UPZ Education Office. Every year, NGO receives books and distributes among students in NGO schools. NGO reports help government department reporting on local development. For example, we provide report[s] to the livestock department that uses NGO coverage in reporting the overall livestock status in the local area. NGO has visual outputs of the development that [it] gives to [the] government and contributes to its reporting system (NGO interview, 22/4/2017).

This example represents the informal coordination that takes place beyond scheduled meetings, such as visiting departments and talking to officials. This kind of interaction is directly related

to beneficiary engagement: that is, an NGO will receive feedback and knowledge directly from beneficiaries and convey that information to GOs; in return, this enables NGOs to provide services to the people and placate their needs.

Interviews also revealed that GO–NGO coordination in reporting not only aids government reportage, but also influences its communication with UN bodies and in different international forums. This is exactly why NGO involvement in government programs is necessary—so that development reporting is based solely on information gathered at the local level (NGO interview, 25/3/2015).

8.1.2. GO–NGO partnership for beneficiary engagement

Research participants also shared their views on another formal approach to GO–NGO partnerships. This comes in the form of defining the latter's role in project agreements, either between GOs and NGOs or between GOs and donors, which involve NGOs for project implementation. In this approach, the partnership continues, as is agreed in the development cooperation agreements established between donor agencies and GOs. While interviewing one government official from the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, I noted that the 'agreement between [the] ERD (representing [the] GOs), ADB and WB' defines how best to involve NGOs. Essentially, this 'depends on what type of projects are undertaken' and 'whether NGOs are to be engaged or not' (GO interview, 11/1/2015).

It is important to note that projects must be centred on recipients to properly define the nature of GO–NGO partnerships in corresponding agreements. Thus, cooperation (from an engagement perspective) seems to be a preconditioned and guided strategy of the government and/or donors. Under such agreements, NGOs function as implementing partners to GOs, whose trust is built on the basis of contractual pacts that dictate project management, as agreed upon by the respective government and/or donor involved. Highlighted in one interview:

> 'When there is an agreement, no significant problems between GO[s] and NGOs occur. For example, *Bishwa Shahityo Kendro* is responsible for developing reading habits under [the] SEQAEP project [Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project] … it has been selected through a bidding process' (GO interview, 11/01/2015).

Conversely, when projects are donor funded, agreement between donors and governments decides if NGOs are to be selected as implementing partners. Alam (2011) cited that donor preference, terms and conditions have also been considered as enabling factors in said partnerships, evidenced in ADB-funded urban health projects across Bangladesh. It is again required under formal agreement and government provisions that NGOs are chosen and made responsible for engagement efforts.

This approach to partnership is reflected in documents that authorise NGOs to formally engage project beneficiaries. Here, Alam (2011, pp. 275–7) identified that government conditions and donor preferences shape GO–NGO relations when delivering public services, whereby GOs maintain relations with NGOs through the terms and conditions outlined in a 'pre-fixed contract paper'. Evidently, interviews with respondents highlighted that under contracts, provisions of developmental partnership evolve around service delivery that incorporates beneficiary engagement. For example, public health and family welfare, education, training, microcredit management, awareness and advocacy, and capacity building for income generation all attribute their advantages to NGO practices (see Chapter 7).

8.1.3. Partnership as a complementary endeavour

Despite contractual obligations, it is a desired condition that both GOs and NGOs engage in non-confrontational and cooperative relations. For government bodies, partnerships with NGOs seem to welcome collaborative strategies in project management. This notion was reflected in participants' responses, which did not emphasise any institutional or policy barriers that hinder the development of such ties. For example, one respondent noted how the 'government has provision of PPP and collaboration with other agencies', as national 'policy allows NGOs to

partner with … government institutions' (GO interview, 12/4/2017). Similarly, another found 'no problem' in these 'complementary' partnerships because the 'government [also] agrees to receive support from NGOs' (GO interview, 20/4/2017). However, from a non-government perspective, this bond might not be that convenient for engaging beneficiaries. That is, the government is the main stakeholder of development. The support it receives from NGOs is like technical support; the implementing agency is the government, and NGOs are the implementing partners (NGO interview, 25/1/2017).

When participants then discussed the notion of 'partnership', they provided a general overview of GO–NGO relations in Bangladesh, rather than identify individual NGO partnerships or ties with GOs. For both organisations, the bond is expectedly spawned from 'complementarity', even in a controlled environment where the government remains responsible for providing operational and legal frameworks for NGOs. This 'complementarity' consequently allows for close interactions, information and resource sharing; increased NGO participation in planning, as well as mutual contributions to development; and adherence to the roles of GOs (Coston 1998, p. 362). Indeed, there are instances of success in development programs in which NGOs are implementing partners to government agencies. According to Sansom (2011, p. 290), both government initiative and commitment facilitated NGO success in effecting a sanitation program in Bangladesh. In this case, formal partnership between both organisations facilitated public engagement in a 'non-confrontational' and 'evidence-based' manner.

That said, respondents verified the existence of collaboration between government and non-government agents in Bangladesh, and that development policies have created scope for the administrative cooperation required for beneficiary engagement to occur. These findings are also supported by data from secondary sources. Notably, the 6FYP expands the opportunities for GO–NGO collaboration, especially where the private sector is not specifically interested in

not-for-profit development projects. Partnership with NGOs is also well recognised in the 7FYP (GOB 2015, p. 156) which highlights their outreach efforts to deliver education, health and training; encourage female empowerment; and provide both micro credits and social protection—thus, establishing them as effective development partners with the government. NGOs have also been considered as one of the driving forces behind the nation's GDP growth, improving human development and reducing poverty, in turn. The National Technical Co-ordination Committee (NTCC) has even been amended to include NGO representatives. In all, these findings demonstrate a change in perspective, which formerly deemed GO–NGO relations as confrontational or 'antagonistic' (Sanyal 1991).

8.2. Partnership for beneficiary outreach

Past FYPs have recognised NGOs' ability to reach beneficiaries and create joint opportunities for themselves and GOs to engage communities in national development. This is one key advantage that non-government bodies hold (see Section 7.5.4). Research participants likewise found that GOs often depend on NGOs to engage service recipients, resulting in administrative partnerships during project implementation. GO–NGO bonds develop on the basis of a given project's demands and under contractual agreement. Therein, the latter's ability to reach beneficiaries is considered an important criterion for initial selection.

Next, community outreach is an important factor to consider when delivering public services such as, for example, primary education, primary healthcare services or community capacity building. Here, establishing a connection with people is instrumental to forge engagement in the development process. Likewise, facilitating strong GO–NGO partnerships streamlines achievement of prospective development targets. According to one GO representative:

> 'Projects like primary education and health require engaging beneficiaries. NGOs partner with government as implementing partners. Here perhaps NGOs engage beneficiaries rather than government does. GO-NGO coordination has positive impact, for example, GO-NGO

> coordination in health project enhances better project results especially in the area of family planning. It is NGOs doing better to engage beneficiaries and these projects are having higher success rates.' (interview on 10/01/2015)

Further considering the advantages of public outreach in remote areas or reaching out to ethnic minorities (e.g., *Dalit* communities in the northern part of Bangladesh) emphasises, above all, the benefits of NGO involvement in government projects. According to another participant, NGO 'project implementation … is also a way out for government' organisations and a 'common method' to shift responsibility onto non-government bodies 'to reach the community directly' (PMS interview, 29/9/2017).

That said, working with diverse communities in remote areas typically enhances GO–NGO relations, as recognised in development planning. For example, the 6FYP creates scope for NGOs to work with *Dalit* communities. The government recognises the need for adequate institutional mechanisms with which to establish linkages and coordination with both NGOs and private sectors to address issues of ethnic community development. The same strategy is outlined for the development of people with disability. Essentially, NGOs are known to act as the primary entity through which communities are mobilised and beneficiaries are targeted (GOB 2012, p. 164). In addition, the institutional power exercised over NGOs is regarded in the 7FYP as one of the main drivers of 'creating capacity for the poor and marginalized' (GOB 2016, p. 46). Tasked to make and measure practical changes in underprivileged communities, NGOs are essentially used as information vehicles to relay data and feedback to the government, detailing a multitude of results collected across different sectors.

8.3. Mutual dependence in engaging beneficiaries

Partnership between GOs and NGOs develops because of mutual dependence. Interviews revealed that both entities rely on each other to carry out development activities, and that this interdependence creates opportunities for prospective engagement.

8.3.1. NGOs are the valued partners for GOs

The Perspective Plan of Bangladesh recognises NGOs' role in supplementing and promoting development at the grassroots level, for which delivering services to communities is considered critical. As stated in the 6FYP, the government perceives GO–NGO collaboration as a way to enhance efficiency in the management of public services, going beyond traditional service sectors to water supply in slum areas and municipalities, waste management, rural energy supply, and creation and development of service and recreational facilities (GOB 2012, p. 232).

Generally, the purpose of these partnerships range from direct focus on service delivery to social empowerment and human development in many developing countries (Haque 2004; Batley and Rose 2011; Alam 2011; Sansom 2011)—here, Bangladesh is not an exception. Batley and Rose (2011) discussed how governments and NGOs collaborate on the provision of different services. They argued that NGOs are considered primary alternatives to state-service facilities, where public service is otherwise considered weak (Batley and Rose 2011, p. 232). To this, McLoughlin (2011, p. 241) added that many NGOs work in collaboration with government bodies either to improve public services or to complement them. This was repeatedly mentioned in interviews mainly with government officials, wherein NGOs are consistently deemed as essential implementing partners in service-sector development. Several respondents also emphasised the importance of developing approaches that encourage GO–NGO collaboration geared towards service delivery and to improve capacity development of project beneficiaries. However, participants focused more on expanding service provisions to cover the wide range of citizens in Bangladesh, rather than identifying the weakness of service delivery itself.

As explained by a senior official at NGOAB, agreement and formal arrangements between both groups ensure interconnectivity and coordination, and generally exist in projects for which

implementation is entrusted to NGOs. In addition, this interaction is structured from needs realisation to public service provisions, followed by NGOs providing services to people through public outreach (GO interview, 11/1/2015). This is illustrated in Figure 8.2.

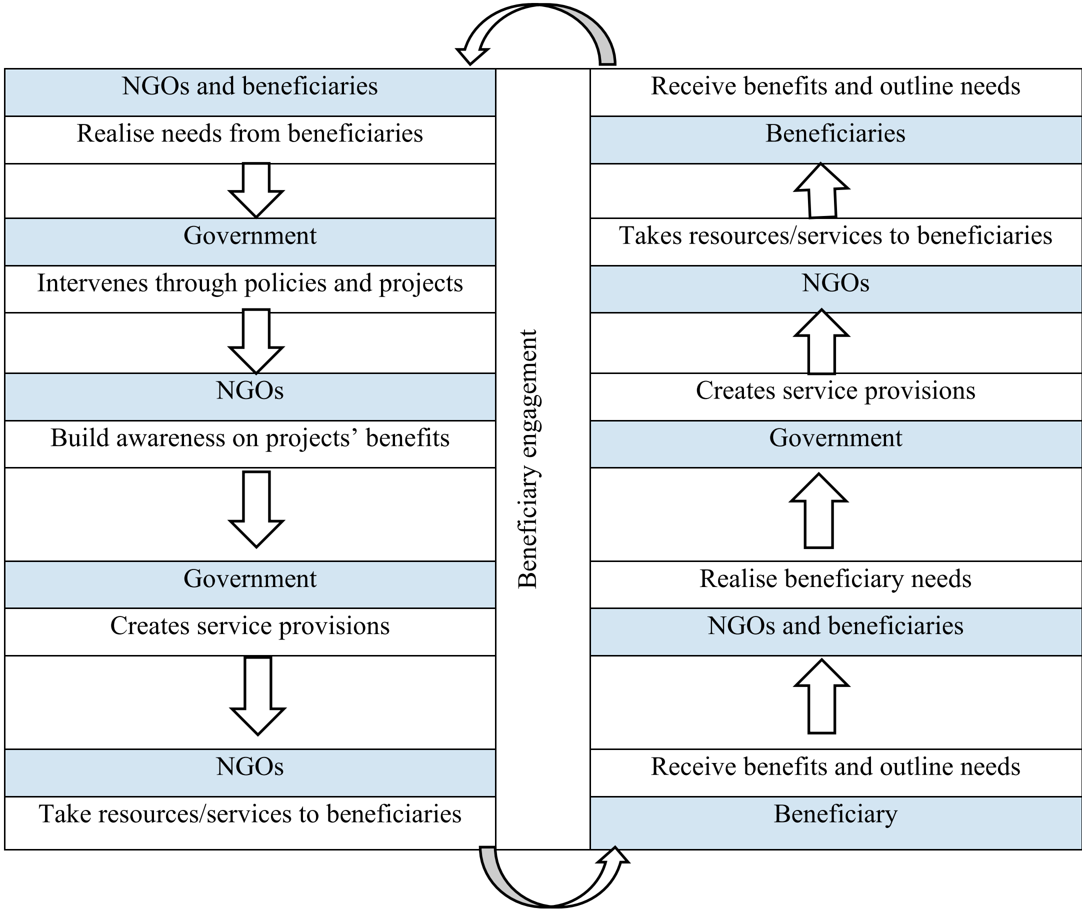

Figure 8.2. GO-NGO partnership in engaging and service delivery

Source: based on GO interview on 11/01/2015.

Evidently, internal coordination and integration exist between GOs and NGOs that creates a scope of interaction with beneficiaries and roles of GOs, NGOs and beneficiaries become interactive, complementary and supportive. In turn, this partnership creates coordination between all three groups and encourages ongoing maintenance, as demonstrated in the data. One NGO executive expressed a similar view, which deemed mutual dependence as a tripartite linkage to successful engagement. He also used the example of Bangladesh's 'Comprehensive

Disaster Management Programme', which saw the DMB enlist 'community preparedness program volunteers'. Here, 'engaging beneficiaries in the field of disaster-management involves NGOs to obtain funds from donors who complete procurement of equipment such as umbrellas and megaphones' and 'deliver these to volunteers'. Importantly, the DMB also forms the 'Union Disaster Management Committee', which 'develops contingency planning' and whose capacity is developed through NGO enquiry (NGO interview, 8/1/2015).

8.3.2. Partnership with GOs is a requirement for NGOs

While GO–NGO relations are subject to the latter's reach out to the public, interviews also explored that NGOs must actively build partnerships with governments to ensure that engagement occurs. According to one NGO participant, coordination with GOs is necessary when projects are implemented at the field level and where it is a matter of rules, regulations and policy formulation. To Fowler (1997), NGOs need to maintain relationships with stakeholders not only at beneficiary and donor levels, but also with government, mainly because they operate 'along national lines'. Thus, maintaining 'open space' to function largely depends on what type of 'sensitivity' a government has over NGOs in each country context (Fowler 1997, pp. 116, 121). Most interviewees seemed to view the need to establish a relational partnership as both logical and purposed on a few key reasons, explicated in the following sections:

8.3.2.1 Partnership: a prerequisite for NGOs

NGOs are selected through a competitive process that determines whether they can become implementing partners in either government or donor-funded projects. Overall, research participants in this study thought that NGOs with previous working experience with GOs had a competitive advantage when it comes to selecting project partners:

> It is important that NGOs coordinate with government agencies. When the government partners with NGOs, [it examines] the prequalification assessment to see if NGOs [have] previous work experience with the government. Donors also prefer [that] NGOs have good relations with [the] government. (NGO interview, 22/4/2017)

Rather than engaging beneficiaries in isolation, NGOs prefer to maintain relationships with GOs, as this proves their worth to prospective financiers in the competitive selection process. Respondents in this study did not mention whether selection could invite any bias or preference into one's decision.

8.3.2.2 NGO independence is not desired without GOs on board

Section 7.5.2 illustrated how GOs' authority impacts NGOs in engaging beneficiaries. While the section presented interview findings detailing how government authority and endorsement influence engagement, there are some instances exampling successful NGO programs, independent of government affiliation. For example, one GO participant cited the success of the 'BRAC education project' and the 'Grameen Bank projects', implemented without government intervention. Having said that, it seems lone endeavours are not entirely viable for NGOs, as they tend to create 'tension' if the 'government is not involved' (GO interview, 10/1/2015). This may threaten the political system at hand or see beneficiaries become tools for political gain.

Respondents also identified NGO malpractices where government involvement was either limited or absent. However, while advising against potential misdeeds, they still maintained emphasis on NGO coordination:

> There had been risk of having too independent NGOs like Proshika or GSS. These organisations abused beneficiaries, compelled them to engage in political campaigns, [and] misused assets and fund[s]. NGOs should supplement and [be] complementary to [the government] but should not be an independent entity. For GO–NGO collaboration, it is important to see what value is added for engaging NGOs. If beneficiary engagement is to be sustained, government [involvement] is needed and GO–NGO collaboration can be enhanced. (PMS interview, 27/1/2015)

This confirms Hashemi's findings (cited in Fowler 1997, p. 119) deeming both Proshika and GSS as 'indigenous giant' organisations interfering in the work of smaller organisations 'squeezed out' by bigger NGOs. Upon researching four NGOs in Bangladesh, Ahmed (2002, p. 120) later graded each group based on field worker–client relationship, putting Proshika at the top for its work in motivating and organising landless peoples. Here, Karim (2008, p. 92) termed the group's activities as part of a 'non-party political process' leading to grassroots mobilisation and eventually 'putting up candidates for local elections', which worsened GSS–GO relations (Hashemi 1996, p. 127). The then Grameen Bank chairman wished to form a political party in 2007 while Bangladesh was ruled by a military-backed, caretaker government. Consequently, these NGOs were brought under government scrutiny, which saw both Proshika and GSS deemed dysfunctional entities and the Grameen Bank's leadership into question (Schwittay 2016, Ahmed 2002, Hashemi 1996). Irrespective of research participants' views, GO-NGO partnerships are, thus, still regarded as desirable opportunities through which NGOs can continue working with project beneficiaries in the development field. Instead of placing them under government scrutiny and creating political tension, NGO participants interviewed typically preferred to continue their involvement in national development sectors where GOs are inextricably bound.

8.3.2.3 Information on development activities

Regarding service-sector development for subdivisions such as health, agriculture or education, NGOs need to coordinate with government departments at the field level to avoid duplication of works. Given the role that field administration and UPs play in implementing federal development programs at the grassroots level, NGOs also need to coordinate with these organisations to gather information on projects and align their programs with government initiatives. More specifically, in the agricultural sector, it is important that NGOs work with the

DAE so that subsequent engagement initiatives do not overlap. According to one UPZ agriculture officer, NGOs keep in touch with the department to avoid duplication of services:

> 'NGOs actually come to us to obtain services. NGOs communicate with us to obtain information, seek advice on project plan before implementation. This is extremely important for NGOs to get the first-hand information from the government to avoid duplication and redundancy of services provided. If NGOs do not obtain information from government offices, NGOs will not be able to adjust project plans.' (GO interview, 21/01/2016)

8.3.2.4 Channelling development funds through GOs

Interviews also revealed that GOs own resources that NGOs need for project implementation, inclusive of beneficiary engagement. As shown in Figure 8.1, both agents partner on service delivery initiatives. However, to successfully engage people in this regard, NGOs strongly believe that GOs' collaboration is both necessary and inevitable, as they are responsible for disbursing project funds. According to participants, this is because donors prefer funding to the government rather than NGOs' because the former has greater 'credibility' (GO interview, 12/4/2017). In addition, even UN organisations and other donors are providing more project funds to the government than ever (NGO interview, 11/1/2015).

Indeed, this was not the case in the 1980s and 1990s when most, if not all, donor funding flowed directly to NGOs. Donors played a far more significant role in providing financial support and directly backing these activities in exchange for grassroots contacts in Bangladesh (Hashemi 1996, p. 123). This has changed following the Paris Declaration in 2005, which saw increased donor coordination with GOs purposed for national development. In addition, donors are increasingly providing budgetary support (see Unwin 2004; OECD 2015) that directly funds government-run development programs in the public sector. Evidently, then, it appears that development relations between donors and the government are an unavoidable reality that NGOs cannot ignore as noted in the interview with an NGO executive:

> ‘Apparently implementation could be speedy minus bureaucratic structure. But it is not right to implement project in isolation. Donors can’t fund NGOs. Ultimately government is accountable – parent the fund and project. Projects are aligned to government policies. Important to have government on board.’ (NGO interview, 25/03/2015)

Despite dwindling support, beneficiary engagement needs superior project infrastructure to continue developing recipients’ skills, for example, initiatives around vocational education or technical skills development programs. Here, the research participants believed that GOs represent an essential entity that NGOs must engage with to run these programs. According to one respondent, ‘if NGOs do not get fund for education projects, they cannot run … organisations’ where GOs are not directly involved. For example, note the ‘Underprivileged Children Education Program (UCEP)’; if is not connected to the ‘government’s vocational education program, it is difficult to sustain’, as it is a ‘resource-intensive project’ (PMS interview, 27/1/2015). UCEP Bangladesh partners with the DWA to develop skills training for women across Bangladesh. It is also linked to the Skills and Training Enhancement Program under the GOB’s Technical Education Board. Effectively, this partnership not only provides financial support, but is also critical for ‘further expansion of partnership through networking, brand promotions and having credible references’—all of which NGOs need to fuel their routine functions (UCEP Bangladesh 2016, p. 17).

8.3.2.5 NGO concerns over emerging private sectors

Research participants from NGOs expressed concerns over whether emerging private sectors in Bangladesh are making NGO activities more competitive. Similarly, concern looms over UP responsibilities for program implementation at the grassroots level, which might be limiting NGO involvement in beneficiary engagement within rural communities. NGOs seem to be strategically expanding partnerships not only with GOs but also with private-sector agents, particularly as beneficiaries require different products and services from a range of organisations. NGO field workers mentioned in interviews that they need not only liaise with

GOs but also with private companies through which they connect people to various services. Notably, when beneficiaries undertake activities to generate income (such as farming, poultry or livestock), they buy materials such as food and technology to maintain their businesses. From this perspective, NGO partnerships with private sectors yield more benefits for the people:

> We also link beneficiaries with private companies like ACI, Renata [and] ACME [private industries in Bangladesh] for poultry feed [and] medicine so that beneficiaries get materials at a cheaper rate than market price. Partnership with private companies ensures cheaper rate for [the] *Dalit* community. Through [the] private sector, [the] required technology is also provided to the community (NGO interview, 22/4/2017).

As one NGO executive noted, the emergence of private sector instigates a sense of competition among NGOs. This inevitably heralds the belief that such agents need to expand their relationship with the private sector in the process of engaging beneficiaries:

> 'Coordination should be between GO-NGO-private sectors and not only between government and NGOs. During the last two decades private sector in Bangladesh has become a competitive force. Like RMG sector, government subsidies are provided to ensure the optimum benefits. Education area is also the same – competitive. For policy compliance I think GOs, NGOs and the private sector are to be coordinated.' (NGO interview, 22/04/2017)

Development planning, which significantly recognises the role of the private sector in national development, has been increasing compared to that of NGOs as identified in FYPs and confirms the data obtained in interviews.

8.3.2.6 UPs as essential partners for NGOs

Research participants also emphasised coordination and partnership between NGOs and UPs, given the government policies that grant increased responsibility for local development unto the latter. Interviews demonstrated that there should be tripartite coordination between each group, supposedly led by UPs representing the local government at the grassroots level (where beneficiaries are to be engaged in development). Importantly, though, UPs receive block grants from the government because of conducting activities funded by an open-budget system geared towards their direct engagement with project beneficiaries through participatory budgeting

(PMS interview, 27/1/2015). Here, it is equally critical that NGOs have access to UPs while engaging rural communities in project management. Referring to an NGO that had been working on village courts and public access to justice for the past 25 years, one respondent mentioned that instead of seeing NGOs function independently in the field, current GO–NGO–UP coordination efforts have witnessed improved engagement practices following the 'Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh Project'. This is now institutionalised in national program to facilitate rural access to justice:

> 'This establishes the fact that NGOs alone cannot be a change maker. Now Village Courts project, where the implementing partner is the Ministry of Local Government, is making differences. UPs are convinced and allow access to NGO workers for beneficiary engagement as the project is implemented by the Ministry.' (PMS interview, 27/01/2015)

In Bangladesh, this LGRD ministry actively guides UPs. This means that when development is owned and implemented by ministry, it becomes mandatory for UPs to deliver project benefits to local communities. Uphoff (1992, p. 3) said that the term 'local' in Bangladesh does not necessarily suggest independence at the local level, but rather 'it is a national government with its own system of local government operating at lower levels'. Though decision-making takes place at different stages, the UP retains importance (and authority) because participation in local institutions focuses on groups, communities and the locality in which UPs are situated (Uphoff 2014, p. 4). Evidently, then, NGOs need to work closely with these UPs to properly engage project beneficiaries.

Above all, analysis has revealed that different roles and functions determine the nature of GO–NGO relations when beneficiary engagement is attempted, and that mutual cooperation is inevitable. Data from both primary and secondary sources demonstrated that NGOs are not the only organisation responsible for integrating people into development. Instead, UPs are already based in grassroots activities and private-sector agents are likewise increasing their engagement efforts. As such, NGOs must compete against a range of organisations in joint pursuit to involve

communities in national development. In view of these emerging changes, research participants identified new areas in which partnering GOs and NGOs can enhance beneficiary engagement at the local level.

8.4. Opportunities for beneficiary engagement

Interviews demonstrated that GO–NGO partnerships depend on a joint history of collaboration developed over decades. In an environment swayed foremost by governmental control, wherein both regulatory and institutional frameworks determine NGO operations, participants generally believed that significant opportunities still exist for GOs and NGOs to work together towards beneficiary engagement. While Section 8.3 outlined the existing approaches both agents require to secure public involvement in development, interviews also revealed that new opportunities are emerging, which can enhance GO–NGO partnership for engagement. Research participants categorised this into two groups. First, it is the changes in the role of GOs that is more development focused, and second, emerging changes in the field of development for which people should be engaged more effectively. The following sections offer analysis of the findings.

8.4.1. Civil-service orientation to development and people

Participants mentioned how they routinely experience positive changes in the public sector, and further noted the new-found realization of civil-service officials open to development. At the same time, interviews also revealed that such enthusiasm also enhances GOs' positive attitude towards NGOs—which is characterised by acceptance and recognition in the latter's contribution towards development. Notably, one participant explained that 'there are opportunities for GO–NGO collaboration', and that 'changes in government' are occurring, making their functions increasingly 'pro-people' (PMS interview, 19/1/2015). Another

recognised that opportunities for GO–NGO collaboration exist, and that the 'new generation of civil service is more open' (GO interview, 9/1/2015). An NGO participant noted that there is a development thrust among government officials which was previously ornamental. Now government is more development oriented which is a big change he believed (interview on 25/01/2017).

Moving forward, digital governance will continue to prove its worth in informing the public about government functions. Now, government policies, rules and regulations are available online. For example, a full transcript of the *Right to Information Act* is accessible on multiple government websites, and digital portals provide information on development activities, funds and projects available to people, NGOs and private sectors across Bangladesh. Yet, the question remains about whether public queries are actually addressed. During my seminar presentation at the BPATC, a senior civil servant commented that although the *Right to Information Act* is in place, it remains unclear whether people know what rights are outlined for them, and this is where beneficiary engagement is concerned. Moreover, the issue of a 'digital divide' in Bangladesh needs due consideration. Willis (2011, p. 215) mentioned that it is important to consider the digital gaps between people, countries, communities, and between those in urban and rural areas. Thus, using technology to engage beneficiaries should acknowledge its relevance to those of whom it affects, as well as the contexts in which it is applied (Cooke and Kothari 2001, cited in Willis 2011, p. 217).

8.4.2. Thinking positively about NGOs

There are different perceptions on GOs and NGOs in the development context of Bangladesh (Section 2.6.5). In contrast to the negativity that typically shrouds public perception, this study revealed that both agents view each other positively when development and beneficiary engagement matter. For example, one senior NGOAB official revealed that the organisation is

comparatively more inclusive and encouraging of partnerships with NGOs, as they want to better understand their contributions towards beneficiary engagement. At the same time, the NGOAB wants to overcome challenges that non-government agents typically experience when implementing development programs with GOs and project beneficiaries at the field level. He explained that 'GO–NGO coordination' and 'understanding of NGO functions' are increasing 'within government environment and organisations':

> For the first time in the history of [the] NGOAB, workshops were held in seven divisions to enhance trust, confidence and understanding of NGO activities. Mutual understanding is a must. Mutual respect of each other's work is also to be enhanced. (GO interview, 11/1/2015)

The pioneering workshops to which he refers were conducted in 2013, known as 'The Role of NGOs in Socio-Economic Development of Bangladesh'. The report published concluded that the government primarily build developmental relationships with NGOs on trust:

> *NGOs in Bangladesh now have everything; bank, insurance, university, shopping centre, industry and what not. The question is whether NGOs have been gradually becoming business organisations. It is not a problem if [NGOs] continue working as a trusted development partner. (Translated from NGOAB 2013, p. 41)*

Government officials working in the service sector also agreed that having NGOs as implementing partners increases beneficiary involvement, especially with women (detailed in Chapter 7). One district agricultural official noted that NGOs are supplementary to government agents and play a critical role in facilitating government responsibilities. That is, work intensity (i.e., beneficiary engagement) increases if NGOs are involved (GO interview, 18/1/2016).

Research participants from NGOs also provided similar information, noting that GOs' attitudes towards NGOs have significantly improved. In turn, this has forged opportunities for non-government forces to partner with the GOB on campaigning for greater public involvement. After comparing both organisations' advantages in Chapter 7, the study showed how NGOs, in particular, benefit from GOs in enhancing people's *aastha* (trust). Upon investigating the

dynamics of developmental partnership (relative to public involvement), NGO research participants appeared more confident to identify the positive changes in the government:

> 'Ten years before, [the] government had [a] negative impression about NGOs. Now there is … development trust among government officials. Previously, it was ornamental. Now, [the] government is more development oriented. This is a big change, which is visible.' (NGO interview, 25/1/2017)

> 'There is a huge change during [the] last three to four years, and government officials are now more development oriented. Earlier, NGOs were not respected: there was no access to UPs. There were meetings to convince them that [the] government cannot do development alone.' (NGO interview, 22/4/2017)

Further, NGO officials in this study believed that they are actively implementing government policies to minimise discord between both groups. Changes in government perceptions about NGOs were again highlighted in one interview with an executive, who recognised that past 'GO–NGO distance' has since 'been minimised because NGOs are implementing' rather than contradicting government policies (NGO interview, 23/1/2017). Essentially, the data revealed that change is both visible and strongly realised in Bangladesh and is regarded by NGOs as a phenomenon through which to improve relations for beneficiary engagement.

8.4.3. Changes in beneficiary understanding

Public positivity regarding development facilitates and enhances GO–NGO partnerships. The study identified through interviews that change has occurred not only at the institutional level, but also in people's attitude towards development programs. Participants from GOs group seemed to recognise NGO contributions in raising awareness on social issues and, thus, increasing beneficiary acceptance of development activities. One NGO executive described his experiences of engaging women and how it has changed over time:

> In the recent past, social barriers were high. NGO staff used to sit outside and women beneficiaries used to sit inside behind the curtain to communicate. Now it is different. [The] NGO also integrates men in the family, [which] makes the work [a] lot easier. (NGO interview, 23/1/2017)

According to one DWA official, female positivity particularly benefits GOs attempting to implement development programs across Bangladesh:

> ‘A lot has been changed now in the field. It was quite difficult to have women participation in any event but now it is as usual – they spontaneously come to the events; the Department does not have to do any hard work to ensure women participation. Credit goes to all ministries …. as women participation has been integrated into all ministries’ activities. There is a process of integration in the policies of all ministries and development policies which is why it is possible to mobilize women beneficiaries.’ (GO interview, 12/04/2017)

Government field staff (FWVs) also acknowledged changes in beneficiary attitude, streamlining engagement efforts, in turn:

> Thirty years back when we used to go on field visits, people used to laugh at us. People did not understand anything about contraceptives. But now if the visit is not done in a month, people—both men and women—keep asking for FWVs. (GO interview, 20/4/2017)

Further, both socio-economic and cultural context matters in recipients’ perception of participation (Tosun 2000; Kenny 2016), including the rural context of Bangladesh. Data from the interviews confirmed that people must feel positive about development, not only to rationalise engagement but also to maximise the extent to which administration can make positive changes. Without proper GO–NGO coordination, parties with vested interests may affect public attitude and be detrimental to beneficiary engagement in the development process. Hence, during interviews, NGOs expressed concerns over the recent past rise of extremism currently hindering beneficiary engagement, particularly from women:

> In the northern side, the religious extremism increased. This has been a negative change. There [is] tremendous economic opportunity for women participation. But if women are pulled back due to this rise of extremism, it will affect development. (NGO interview, 22/4/2017)
>
> NGOs faced big challenge with the rise of fundamental groups. (NGO interview, 23/1/2017)

Overall, the data demonstrated that GO–NGO partnerships will be limited in situations where NGO–beneficiary relations are affected by any negative trends.

8.4.4. Changes in the development field

Although respondents highlighted emerging issues in the development field that currently affect engagement, addressing this creates scope for improvements in GO-NGO partnership. NGO executives in this study strongly felt that achievements in development over the last 40 years have been significant. The country has witnessed a multitude of shifts occurring throughout Bangladesh. These range from receiving food aid to readymade garments (RMG) development, and from experiencing a drought or lean period (known locally as *monga*), to mobilising a diverse labour force employed following mass migration to cover economic security, and further educating underprivileged women about their rights, and, finally, securing the GOB's commitment to increase public access to information. Overall, respondents perceived these changes as prime opportunities for cultivating development across a diverse range of social, cultural and political spheres, and further enhancing GO–NGO collaboration for the people:

> 'I see a lot of differences in working with beneficiaries. When I started working in the field level the change in 1980s was about basic services like food, shelter, and the concern for food insecurity was high. Main objective of field work was to ensure food security. During last 20 years all these sectors have experienced major changes and now no need to focus on food security. What is concerned to engage beneficiaries is to ensure access to services and matters of rights. There are pockets of human poverty. There are governance issues, issues of women empowerment, ensuring women contribution to decision making, development of vulnerable groups, Char dwellers, and urban poverty issues are to be focused now. For example, there is a need for training on workers' safety, security and employers' positive attitude which needs to be conveyed to workers. NGOs can convey this message to RMG sector employees and the government for compliance. For rural entrepreneurship and development, it is quite important to tag ICT business branding and linking with bigger institutions. NGOs can contribute to that extent. For governance, certification on VAT and TAX are required for rural entrepreneurs where transparency can be ensured if GO-NGO and the private sectors are linked together.' (NGO interview, 22/4/2017)

Another NGO executive revealed that the scope of NGO work has been extended to include safe labour migration, which is an important area for beneficiary engagement. Remittance reception by rural communities, development of microfinance entrepreneurship and usage of mobile phones is each creating opportunities for NGOs to work with the government to engage beneficiaries (NGO interview, 23/1/2017). Together, these emerging issues, identified

throughout the course of discussion, are critical to consider when addressing engagement efforts and determining the relational dynamics (and opportunities, in turn) between GOs and NGOs.

8.4.5. Partnership strengthens GOs' monitoring of beneficiary engagement

Interviews also revealed that NGOs could potentially partner with GOs to help strengthen its M&E roles. Generally, participants thought that government involvement in any matter attaches greater significance to a project (or otherwise) and further enhances the M&E capacity needed to ensure quality management of development. Data from secondary sources support this view and mostly recognised the value that GOs invest into M&E as one essential parameter for implementing development policies (highlighted in Figure 7.5). Here, discussion revealed that M&E can be jointly conducted by GOs and NGOs specifically for the purpose of improving beneficiary engagement:

> [The] government's monitoring is required to ensure NGO accountability; though, NGOAB provides approval to NGOs to receive foreign fund[s]. [A] program's success or failure depends on monitoring [and] identification of problems, [which] could also be done through GO–NGO monitoring. (NGO interview, 11/1/2015)

Further, participants believed that government monitoring of engagement and information on project beneficiaries could offer significant prospects for elevating GO–NGO partnerships. Yet, at the same time, many thought that M&E in the government should be strengthened to ensure that NGOs effectively engage the public during development initiatives. Overall, interviews revealed that NGO activities in this regard are not questioned if GOs' monitoring is ensured.

Governments tend to value the M&E skills that NGOs bring to development, as they likely wish to integrate these assets into their own management systems. Subsequent deficiency in monitoring the effect of development on poor and disadvantaged communities (in particular), as well as failure to gauge improvement of ADP implementation, is repeatedly mentioned in past FYPs. The need for an effective M&E system is also required to monitor implementation

of these five-year reports themselves. As such, the 7FYP dedicates a separate chapter on results-based M&E and outlines (GOB 2016, p. 129) initiative to formulate a Capacity Development Results Framework (CDRF) on the basis of stakeholder consultation, which includes NGOs along with other organisations. The plan also recognises the importance of GO–NGO relations to strengthen the CDRF process:

> *This [partnership] is of special importance in an environment of limited capacity to do M&E at the government level. NGOs involved in sectoral programs can provide very helpful information and feedback on results on the ground that can substantially improve the quality of concerned sectoral M&Es. (GOB 2016, p. 131)*

Hence, NGOs' M&E skills are not only recognised in GOs' development planning, but also desired for practical use. However, research participants seemed to believe that partnering with non-government bodies on M&E development presents an opportunity for GOs to reflect on the extent to which government services are reaching beneficiaries through engagement at the grassroots level.

8.5. Factors affecting partnership on beneficiary engagement

Research interviews identified a few key issues that affect partnerships and approaches purposed for engagement. Notably, participants believed that cross-sectoral ties between private-sector groups or business organisations coupled with the government's approach to maximise national development will inevitably affect how (and if) people are engaged.

8.5.1. Different development objectives

Section 8.3.2.5 explored how emerging private-sector groups create scope for tripartite partnerships with GOs and NGOs geared specifically towards beneficiary engagement. However, interviewees expressed concerns about whether private companies will share similar objectives with that of GOs and/or NGOs. For development to ensue, it is critical that stakeholders have common interests. If engagement is defined as a process hinged on total

participation, it is critical to understand how the private sector will meet this common objective, given its intention to accumulate wealth. Discussion with one staff member working on a donor-funded project in Bangladesh, which partners with private organisations to create beneficiary access to markets, noted:

> 'Managing partnership is a big challenge. Concept, hypothesis, [and] vision are not same with partner organizations. Business organizations follow ethics, principle and business targets in an informal way, driven by mainly local needs and attitude which is different from international strategies on these issues. For example, [donor] has obligation to address gender and nutrition issues and project has component on awareness raising. But business organizations do not have obligations for this.' (PMS interview, 21/01/2016)

This is precisely how GOs and NGOs differ from the private sector. The way that NGOs function—for example, by emphasising a need to empower rural communities, link beneficiaries to public services through direct engagement and raise fund for community development—wholly contrasts how private sectors work (Gortner, Nichols and Ball 2007, p. 25). McLoughlin (2011, p. 246) stresses the importance of GO–NGO cooperation and the need to share a vision for addressing national development—even when neither group connects via common values or practices. 'Fragmentation of meaning between actors' can otherwise impair the prospect of establishing any professional relationship. The above discussion does not necessarily confirm that research participants undoubtedly believe NGOs are exclusively non-for-profit organizations in Bangladesh as identified in section 7.8.2. However, the common ground of data in this study revealed that partnership is effective when the development objectives are similar in different organizations. In absence of similar development visions and objectives of relevant organizations, partnership becomes difficult for engaging beneficiaries.

8.5.2. Development trends and GO–NGO partnerships

GOs do not solely undertake development initiatives for service sectors. The more a country grows in terms of its economy, the more its development initiatives are inclusive of mega projects, including private-sector interventions and infrastructure. Importantly, NGOs are

typically not cast as implementing partners in these projects. Given this recent trend in country's development, research participants believed that the scope of GO–NGO partnerships can be constricted. Upon analysing secondary sources of data, it is evident that FYPs have emphasised public investment projects wherein partnerships were routinely established with both local and international private sectors.

This is also a concern for development partners when any change in regulatory framework creates prospects that affect GO–NGO relations. In addressing recent development on the *Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act 2016*, research participants expressed concerns (though not asked any question on this) over the provision of punishments to NGOs, outlined in Sections 14 and 15. As one stated, 'recent development of the *Donation Act*' needs 'critical' examination regarding 'whether it creates any barriers to [establishing] complementary relations between [the] GOB, development partners and NGOs' (DP interview, 8/11/2016). However, it is too early to comment on the Act just yet, as amendments occurred in 2016 when I, at the time, was only halfway through completing my field work. Thus, questions relating to its effect were not included for interviews.

8.6. An integrated approach to partnership for engagement

Analysis on primary and secondary sources of data revealed that GO–NGO partnerships on beneficiary engagement contain multiple dimensions. Beneficiary engagement is not wholly limited to government and non-government interventions, but also expands to and incorporates other organisations covering the private sector and UPs. It is evident that GOs, NGOs, donors, private-sector groups, UPs and beneficiary each plays an important role in establishing partnership and coordination for engaging beneficiaries. It is not a matter of independently securing resources and gaining funding approval or further establishing the capacity and authority for project implementation and public outreach. Rather, a coordinated approach

between each entity and asset involved is critical to foster viable partnerships between organisations and beneficiaries. Evidently, administrative relations seem to be based on well-defined and well-orchestrated organisational roles that are complementary to and supportive of engagement in project management. As such, interviewees consider an integrated approach which posits how individual functions of a concerned organisation are linked to other institutional roles in engaging beneficiaries in development projects as described in Figure 8.4:

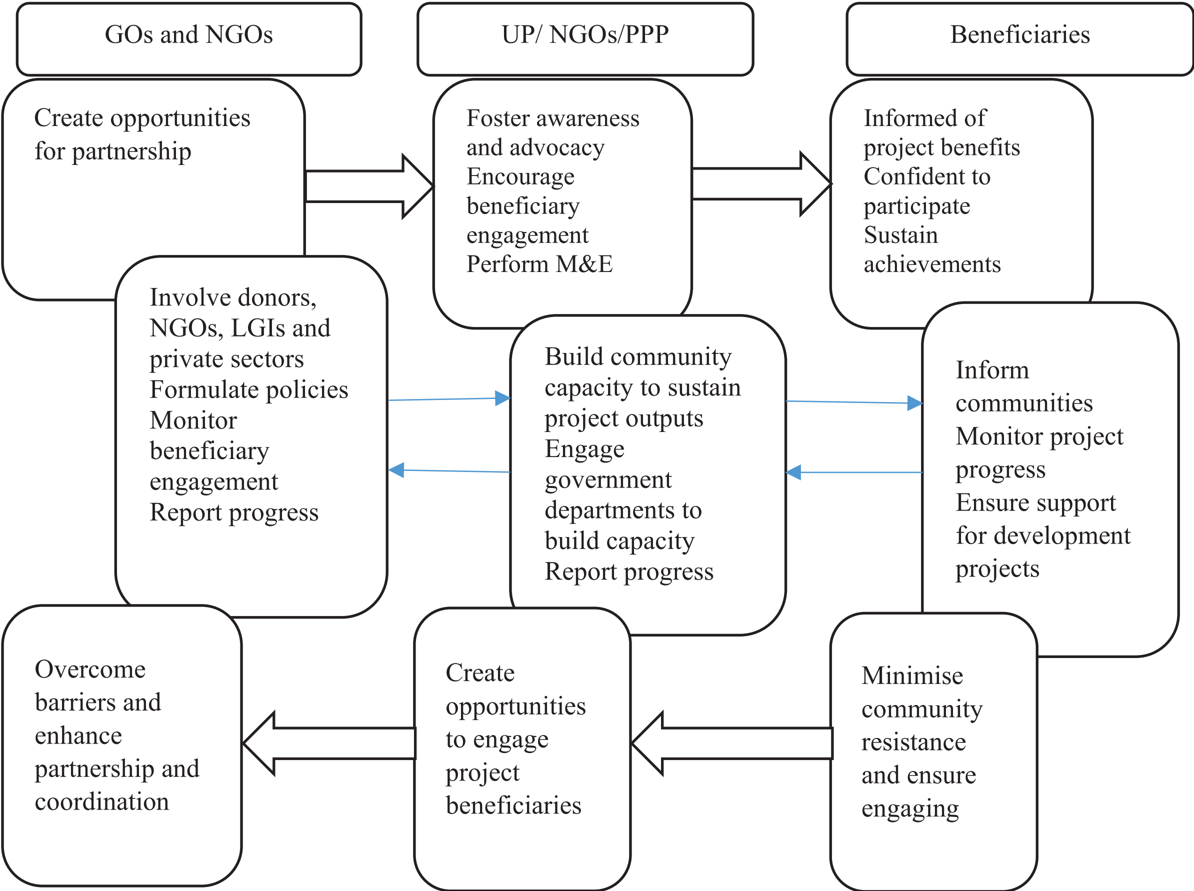

Figure 8.3. Coordinated partnership for beneficiary engagement

Overall, given the obvious interdependence and interaction occurring between organisations and project beneficiaries, data from primary and secondary sources in this chapter demonstrated that an integrated approach needs to be considered across institutions to transform policy into practice for due engagement in Bangladesh's prospective development. However, it is critical

to identify the scope of individual contribution that can be integrated to maximise engagement. Research participants opined that integration is important to link cross-sector institutions to beneficiaries. While GO–NGO partnerships are essential in this regard, participants do consider monitoring as an equally important element to ensure accountability in the wider prospects of beneficiary engagement. This chapter revealed that dynamics of GO-NGO partnerships which is existing or can be fostered upon requirements of beneficiary engagement. These findings contribute to the understanding of GO-NGO partnership beyond the discussion of relationship, power and government's control over NGOs, as discussed in section 2.6. Along with this, multi-level coordination and monitoring involving GOs including LGIs, NGOs, private-sector and beneficiaries together are also desired given their roles in connecting people to development. Together with these partnerships Bangladesh seems to adopt and enforce a development approach that facilitates institutional partnerships for effective beneficiary engagement.

Chapter 9. Discussion on research contribution and conclusion

This study aimed to generate knowledge on the roles, practices and functions of GOs and NGOs attempting to include people in development. Comparative analysis of both organisations' roles enabled me to narrow the scope of research on the policies, practices, opportunities, advantages and limitations that GOs and NGOs experience when tasked with boosting public engagement in development initiatives. Above all, the research investigation sought to unpack how people are (or become) engaged, and what roles, experiences and practices both GOs and NGOs have in pursuing (or attempting to pursue) individuals within the development context of Bangladesh.

In a comprehensive review of the literature, I have identified that the concept of 'engagement' was closely connected to notions around 'development', its relation to people and their participation, both theoretically and geographically. Importantly, development must be, above all, focused on people. Just how this is assured in practice is subject to the development planning that a State undertakes and implements through its various agencies. Besides, non-state actors, such as NGOs, were proven in this study to play active roles in implementing not only national development agenda, but also that of donors and of their own regard.

However, discussion on beneficiary engagement and GO-NGO practices are limited in development literature. Literature on GOs and NGO roles and involvement in development planning and implementation in Bangladesh tends to focus on a number of key issues. First, most research identified that NGOs initially expanded in Bangladesh to mitigate government bureaucracy and the top-down approach in place—which, as history dictates, limited people's involvement in national development. Thus, NGOs were deemed as a worthy alternative to government rule with added potential to empower the nation's people. Second, donor

preference and aid do support NGO expansion, but government forces still exercise operational control over their functions to mitigate threats to national power structures. Finally, studies identified that opposing relationships still exist between GOs and NGOs, and further highlighted the negative perceptions each tend to hold against the other. In view of this perception, I strongly believe this comparative analysis between GO and NGO policies, practices, their advantages and limitations, and opportunities for partnership generates a country-specific knowledge on public 'engagement' in Bangladesh's prospective development.

To fulfil the objectives of this study (defined in Chapter 1, Section 1.2), I addressed the research queries through face-to-face interviews and FGDs, and further examined secondary sources to help triangulate the data and crosscheck information. Given the nature of this work, it proved necessary to craft a methodology on phenomenological analysis of social science and using qualitative research methods to generate knowledge. Further, these methodological concepts and their practical application helped me interpret why individuals provided the information they did and how different research groups perceived the research questions, as such. Thematic coding, data triangulation, use of data analysis software and qualitative presentation together enabled me to interpret the findings and draw a comparative analysis.

Based on the data retrieved, I have been able to conclude my research and provide a number of findings that reflect on many practical aspects of beneficiary engagement in GO-NGO contexts of development interventions. The following section recapitulates the major findings and implications for future research on both groups' initiatives for beneficiary engagement.

9.1. Summary of research findings

Following data analysis, I categorised the major findings under three broad themes. First, beneficiaries are engaged when policies are supportive, projects are specifically geared towards

engagement, and when GOs and/or NGOs comply with donor conditions. Second, the findings detailed comparative advantages and limitations between GOs and NGOs, which proved critical once considering their effects on beneficiary engagement. Having said that, none of the organisations examined have absolute privilege to engage the masses. Third, GO–NGO partnerships primarily exist in project implementation, and this creates scope for prospective engagement. At the same time, certain emerging issues and factors of organisational leverage enable development-based partnerships to expand beyond that of line ministries and departments to UPs and private sectors. Overall, these broad thematic findings helped illuminate a significant number of issues available in the data. This helps understanding GO–NGO practices and further generate knowledge on beneficiary engagement in Bangladesh.

9.1.1. Systematic review of development planning and its focus on people

In comparing GO–NGO practices on engagement, this study generated a systematic review of past FYPs, relevant service-sector and NGO policies that align with the concept of linking individuals to development. Throughout analysis, people remained at the centre of planning in Bangladesh, whereby the State and its various agencies typically push the national agenda forward in partnership with non-state actors. FYPs, Vision 2021, the Perspective Plan and a range of service-sector policies are all well documented by the GOB. However, how these documents spell out people and development required systematic review—which I believe this study successfully covered. The comparative analysis presented generates a new dimension on development discourse that confronts how public sector policies, in particular, incorporate the concept and implementation of ‘people-centred’ development accordingly.

While research participants agreed that national policies are inclusive of people (thus, creating some scope for beneficiary engagement), they also expressed their thoughts on why that is the case. The first reason they identified regards donor influence, as they provide aid and budgetary

support to the government. Further, donors work closely with NGOs where beneficiary engagement is mainstreamed in projects. Second, respondents thought that instances of engagement were attributable to projects with specific components on engagement. I understood, from interviewees, that after development planning, the creation of specific agreements between donors and GOs, NGOs and donors, and/or GOs and NGOs, was subject to influence—a factor that is undeniably instrumental in engaging project beneficiaries. In this sense, 'engagement' becomes a guided activity that implementing agencies like GOs and/or NGOs engage in at the field level. Although the task of connecting with people is acknowledged in most agreements and projects, I found that the level of engagement varies in different service sectors. Success depends on the approach(es) used in addition to the availability of staff, resources, skills, one's connection to individual beneficiary and whether individuals themselves realise the potential of a given program or project. Despite having all parameters in place, engagement can still vary in the same country context. Thus, every individual factor is critical and requires due consideration in project management, despite guidance from government-endorsed policy documents.

9.1.2. Engagement entails a process that results in participation

Analysis revealed that participation comes later in the development process, but it cannot be guaranteed unless beneficiaries are engaged in the first place. This finding fills the gap identified in Section 2.3.4 and explained in Figure 2.5. Essentially, success rests on project context and further entails a process of engaging that results in participation. Across the study, I demonstrated how information about a range of aspects needs to be in place to ensure beneficiary engagement. This includes projects and their supposed benefits; financial and technical support; additional efforts to engage women; face-to-face interactions to explain project activities; and coordination between GOs including UPs, NGOs, and the private sector.

Indeed, a number of methods are available to generate public interest in development activity. Examples may include participation in courtyard meetings and local budget processes, attending events at the local and national levels, and getting involved in capacity development and income-generation activities. However, the thorough background work required to mobilise participation also marks the exact point at which engagement takes place. All these activities must (and do) function on the periphery throughout the development process. Yet, without this groundwork, engagement may consequently garner perception as a mere formality outlined in agreements and accomplishments or befit a by-product of donor influence disguised as a form of incentive (i.e., an honorarium). This study also contributes to the understanding of 'beneficiary engagement' as defined in development literature and its practical applications in the country context within the development settings of GOs and NGOs. Thus, the findings encouraged me to investigate whether GOs and/or NGOs hold comparative advantageous roles to carry out this groundwork and connect with people.

9.1.3. Engaging beneficiaries differs at different phases of project management

Neither GOs nor did NGOs confirm that beneficiary engagement is addressed equally in all phases of managing development projects. Methods of establishing a connection also differ between groups. When NGOs submit project proposals, beneficiaries are typically contacted (or engaged) through baseline surveys or social mapping. This implies that target groups are involved in the planning phase. However, when NGOs are contracted out by the GOs for project implementation, it cannot be claimed that the planning stage involve beneficiaries unless GOs consider gathering data from the field through its administrative units or conduct survey to measure the updates and requirements of a specific development need like health, education or women development. That said, involving beneficiaries or target groups in project planning is dependent on gathering information rather than engaging people in development activities. This

reasons why the data collected in this study confirmed that beneficiary engagement mainly occurs during the implementation phase in comparison to other stages of project management.

Thereafter, monitoring becomes a continuous process that occurs throughout a project's lifetime and is significantly documented in all development-planning strategies in the public sector. Observing data becomes a mandatory responsibility for government officials (and NGOs) to ensure that project progress is recorded. In both cases, documentation covers financial and physical progress of implementation.

When NGOs have specific requirements to report on beneficiaries, it is not clearly outlined in progress reports whether that feedback should be incorporated in the government report template. However, public perception seems to claim importance at the project evaluation phase to quantify or qualify a given project's achievements. That is to say, engagement evolves within project management when implementation is outlined in agreements between concerned institutions on the basis of a given project's very nature.

9.1.4. GOs: an entity for engagement

Having identified government agents as entities tasked to engage beneficiaries, this finding establishes a new argument that refutes NGOs' reign as the only group responsible for reaching out and integrating people into development. Rather, they recognise the expanded role of UPs in engaging rural communities at the grassroots level. I found that both organisations set specific expectations of the other, which define how people are integrated into development. From the research findings, it remains difficult to conclude that NGOs are comparatively better in this regard; but, at the same time, I can neither confirm that GOs consistently struggle to engage beneficiaries. Instead, I was able to highlight common grounds of dependence, wherein both GOs and NGOs show potential for successful engagement. For the most part, each yields its own advantages and this attracts the prospect of mutual dependence. Hence, the roles and

capacity of GOs and NGOs seem to (or at least should) be hinged on interdependence, rather than total independence. Furthermore, the expanded role of UPs has been recognised as an essential strategy to integrate people into development and confirms what Blair (1985) predicted that the long term continuation of local government roles in promoting development can be effective in enhancing participation.

9.1.5. Complementarity of GO–NGO relations

Given that interdependence is seemingly instrumental and coordination is desired in maximising institutional leverage, the research findings demonstrate that NGOs prefer complementarity to conflict in enhancing their relations with the government agencies. A few elements of complementarity suggest acceptance of institutional pluralism, information and resource sharing, NGO participation in planning and policy, mutually beneficial to each other's contributions and the relationship is based on comparative advantages (Esman and Uphoff 1984, cited in Coston 1998). The GO-NGO relationship in terms of beneficiary engagement in the development context of Bangladesh entails these elements. In this sense, GOs are perceived as the owner of development and is accountable for its services to citizens.

FYPs explicitly outline the GOB's strategies to achieve constant economic growth and, increasingly, detail how the private sector (for example, RMG sector) plays a vital role in reaching this target. Linking people through UPs is also important to connect central and local administrations of development, and further convey the government's development initiatives nationwide. At the same time, donors are channelling funds through government and private sectors, with particular emphasis on their own objectives to establish cooperation with the national government and enhance ownership of State development. Importantly, too, NGOs consider GOs' presence as an advantage to earn *aastha* from beneficiaries. However, government agents still strive to maintain absolute control over their non-government

counterparts and prefer instead to enlist their support as '*trusted'* development partners. In this study's development environment (Bangladesh), the relationship between each group seems to be more complementary than confronting. The complementarity of GO-NGO relationship results in less tension in the development field which is much desired to reach out beneficiaries and enhance partnership between these two organisations.

9.1.6. Emerging changes

Development in Bangladesh is not static. Certain key indicators of national progression are hinged on changes in perception of government development; recognition of NGO contributions and increased understanding of GOs' roles in development; decentralised service provisions at the field level; greater rural inclusion in local development through UPs; and changes in beneficiary context.

Typically, NGOs will operate within a controlled environment, but mounting emphasis on development creates opportunities for government collaboration. Development planning in the public sector also incorporates conceptual progression in global discourse—from poverty reduction to sustainability, from centralised to decentralised service delivery. These changes have continued for several decades despite political instability, and are further realised by officials, practitioners and development beneficiaries alike—thus, enhancing the need for continuous engagement in the country's development initiatives.

9.2. Contribution to future research

I cannot claim that this study has identified the broad spectrum of issues relating to people and their integration in national development across both public and non-government sectors. Instead, I focused on four thematic areas when analysing the research findings, based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Within this limited scope of study, I was able to make

a two-fold contribution to the discussion on development, public engagement and the roles that GOs and NGOs play in Bangladesh. As the research progressed, I identified that, relative to this study, people-oriented development remains crucial but requires strict and unceasing engagement from citizens who are expected to benefit, in turn. To this end, the study creates scopes for further research, discussed as follows.

9.2.1. Cross-sector analysis on beneficiary engagement

It is difficult to confirm that beneficiaries are engaged across public service or in all NGO interventions. Though changes are emerging, one cannot conclude, whether these are *ad hoc* or subject to individual staff in an organisation or leadership role. In addition, whether UPs across the country undertake same approaches to beneficiary engagement or it also depends on individual leadership (and/or political affiliation) affecting NGO-UP partnership, a potential area for further research. Thus, as overarching understanding (as developed in this study) on both GO and NGO roles in beneficiary engagement creates scope for further research, which examines how individual service sectors can and do address public integration in development. This will contribute to comparisons between sectors and, thus, aid in generating strategies that more closely address context-specific opportunities and limitations to beneficiary engagement. The findings and analysis provided here can also be used to draw a cross-country analysis that observes how approaches to engagement and GO–NGO roles are defined and practised in similar contexts within or beyond the region.

9.2.2. Information on recent trends in NGO work

I identified concerns regarding whether NGOs are pressured due to increasing private-sector involvement in development activities. I mentioned in this study how government institutions are connecting beneficiaries and perceiving NGOs as a means of providing logistics for increased participation. At the same time, NGOs are in favour of maintaining complementary

relationships with the government. However, whether these approaches limit their roles in policy advocacy or in raising awareness among the masses on different social issues (such as environmental sustainability, social safety or sustaining development achievements) still warrants further research. I do believe the research findings in this study create enough scope to acknowledge the extent of NGO involvement in national development, considering the country's overall economic and social progression. This will again contribute towards redefining GO and NGO strategies and functions when addressing the concept of beneficiary engagement in development.

9.2.3. Can engagement occur in the absence of financial assistance and projects?

This study found that microcredit provisions, small grants or loans are instrumental tools used to engage beneficiaries. This is because they foster income generation and illuminate and make tangible the development benefits on offer. In relation to this, projects form the basis of engagement. GOs have also created institutional frameworks for providing grants to rural populations as a way of boosting income. At the same time, beneficiaries need to understand the benefits of their engagement in these development activities. This raises questions concerning whether beneficiaries (or citizens at the macro level) can be engaged in the absence of tangible benefits or financial assistance, or if no specific project is planned. If not, does this mean that beneficiaries cannot be engaged? Not all development benefits—such as climate change and environmental sustainability—pertinent to twenty-first century growth are readily perceptible. Hence, the appropriate strategies that GOs and NGOs should undertake remain a matter of further research.

9.2.4. Digital engagement

Upon investigating different strategies and insights, I found that both GOs and NGOs consider usage and coverage of mobile networks and internet instrumental to public engagement. Even

communities located in remote villages have access to mobile networks due to significant private-sector investments in mobile phone operators. Further, all government-run development activities are conveyed through websites. Hence, in this study, I identified the range of digital resources (e.g., websites and national portals) being used to inform the public about development activities as well as the government's daily functions. Although the research participants considered this as a way of engaging beneficiaries, just how well these digital provisions can engross people across Bangladesh remains subject to further research.

9.2.5. Private sector and engagement

Findings revealed that the private sector in Bangladesh represents a potential development partner with increasing value for economic growth. In this regard, NGO representatives in this study generally perceived their approach to development as changing. For example, there is pressing need to build partnerships with private organisations, increase entrepreneurship and coordinate with GOs to carry out development activities. Secondary sources of data also revealed that development planning increasingly focuses on capital investments from private sectors. In this regard, it remains important that one's objectives align with the concept of people-oriented development. I believe the findings in this study can be categorised as a baseline to further investigate whether emerging private sectors are narrowing the scope of NGO functions or creating opportunities to expand public involvement in the country's development (which is not economic in nature).

9.2.6. Engagement within the changing context of development assistance

This study identified donor influence or preference as a significant determinant of beneficiary engagement. Although both GOs and NGOs seem to (increasingly) comply with donors' requirements, further research must determine whether all fiscal patrons to the country's development share the same preferences—particularly as the country receives aid not only from

the democratic nations of the Western world, but also from countries in the region. Development assistance is also provided to mega projects such as the creation of power plants, bridges, infrastructure, and in building roads and highways. Whether donors routinely consider engagement in relation to these forms of development remains unanswered.

9.2.7. Engagement from purely beneficiary perspectives

I addressed the research questions mainly from GO and NGO perspectives, and obtained information from beneficiaries to triangulate the available data. I believe the findings from interviews and FGDs form the basis for future research, which further examines the extent of public knowledge and awareness on GO, NGO and private-sector interventions. Findings from this study can also be used as a starting point to develop knowledge purely from a beneficiary point of view. This can more closely observe how people-centred development has evolved in Bangladesh over the last four decades and, thus, affected people's involvement (or lack thereof) in development.

9.3. Conclusion

The contributions of this study and scope of further research flow from the gaps in existing literature identified (figure 2.6) and the methodology used to investigate the research questions and further analyse data. I have presented data pertinent to GOs, NGOs, beneficiaries and practitioners who carry out activities that align with the concept of people-oriented development. At the same time, I provided comparative analysis on the roles, practices, experiences and relationships that government and non-government bodies have in engaging project beneficiaries. Together, this information adds to the existing body of knowledge and literature in the development field.

Overall, I attempted to present a comparative analysis that assessed key research questions against three broad categories, covering current policies and practices, comparative advantages and limitations, and opportunities for partnership between GOs and NGOs (geared towards public inclusion in development projects). Data collected on these objectives allowed me to compare the institutional roles, advantages and limitations that institutions experience, as well as the trends in (and informing) GO–NGO collaboration. This helped me to outline the multiple influencing factors that are critical to beneficiary engagement, specifically within the context of Bangladesh.

To conclude my research, I wish to emphasise that participation in development usually follows engagement and generally transpires in the implementation phase of a given project (which further specifies the provisions of engagement). Importantly, connecting with project beneficiaries is not a standalone process. Rather, it involves organisations, policies, provisions (outlined in development agreements), projects and (most importantly) a duty to address the needs of *people* for proper engagement. At the same time, no single strategy can be effective, despite fulfilling every supposed prerequisite. The strategies, roles and beneficiary interests may also vary, not only in different geographical contexts but also in different projects and development services within a country. Practitioners and institutions that are responsible for ensuring engagement also need to consider various factors, ranging from policy provisions to specific organisational and societal contexts before people are on board. Hence, despite posing unique advantages to link and connect with people, both GOs and NGOs experience limitations that must be addressed. In this sense, project management is simply a means through which to carry out engagement, and not the end of all means. As long as development continues, new dimensions of national progress will evolve but one fact remains critical that successful engagement depends on and for the people to whom it centres and aims to benefit across a nation.

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Appendix 1. Semi structured interview questions

Introductory questions (includes research participants from GO, NGOs, DP, PM, MISC)

1. How long have you been working in this area?
2. What the areas that your organisation work? / Which are the areas that your organisation is providing development assistance to the government of Bangladesh?
3. Would you please let me know your experiences and overall impression about development projects, its management and beneficiaries in Bangladesh?

Research question 1: Scope of GO-NGO policies for beneficiary engagement

1. Do you think it is important to have policies for beneficiary engagement?
2. Are you aware of any GO-NGO policies on beneficiary engagement?
3. Is there any government policy for beneficiary engagement?
4. Are you aware of any NGO strategies to engage beneficiaries?
5. How do GOs and NGOs transfer policies into practices of beneficiary engagement?
6. To what extent you think influencing factors are instrumental for project beneficiary engagement?
7. Is there any expectation from donors for beneficiary engagement?
8. How do donors consider beneficiary engagement while provide project aid?
9. Are strategies for engaging beneficiaries considered by donors to channel fund to NGOs?
10. What is donors' impression about beneficiary engagement? Do donors prefer providing fund to NGOs?
11. Between GOs and NGOs in Bangladesh, who do you think your convenient partner to provide development assistance? Why?
12. How far engaging project beneficiaries is important for your organisation to provide development assistance to Bangladesh?

Research question 2: Practices of beneficiary engagement

1. Are there any particular strategies that government follows to engage beneficiaries?
2. How are beneficiaries participating in project activities and contributing to planning and implementation?
3. How does this differ from beneficiary engagement by NGOs/GOs?
4. How do you reach beneficiaries?
5. How do you contact people in your locality? Do you work with NGOs?
6. How do the staff engage beneficiaries?
7. What about NGOs? Do you think NGOs are engaging beneficiaries when they manage/implement development projects?
8. What are the strategies of beneficiary engagement that your organisation follows?

Research question 3: Comparative advantages and limitations

1. Do you see any differences of GO-NGO capacity in engaging beneficiaries? Who do you think is in a better position to engage beneficiaries? GOs or NGOs?
2. What about the capacity of government and NGOs regarding beneficiary engagement?

3. What are capacity development opportunities for government/NGOs to engage beneficiaries?
4. Do you think the capacity development skills are adequate to address beneficiary engagement in project management?

Research question 4: Opportunities and challenges for beneficiary engagement

1. Do you think GO-NGO partnership is possible in the area of beneficiary engagement?
2. Do these departments (government departments) also work with NGOs to engage beneficiaries?
3. Are there any opportunities for GO-NGO partnership?
4. Do you think absence of either GOs or NGOs and coordination of these organizations have any impacts on beneficiary engagement in projects?
5. Do you see any challenges to engage beneficiaries? Do you see any challenges to engage beneficiaries by GOs or NGOs?
6. Do you foresee any challenges for officials, project personnel and practitioners to engage beneficiaries in project planning, design and implementation?
7. Do you think there is any scope for GO-NGO coordination?

Interview questions for beneficiaries

1. What do you do? Did you study? How far?
2. Do you cultivate on your own or with help from others?
3. Do you know government officials?
4. How do you contact the agriculture officer?
5. Does his advice help you?
6. Do you come to the officer or he also goes to you?
7. Do you need to pay anything to the officials?
8. Can you tell us any of your experiences where you got help from others?
9. Who else helps you in this profession?
10. Are you involved in any activities to help your family apart from household things?
11. Is it easy or difficult to find the NGO staff?
12. Can you tell me what you have achieved after joining the NGO activities?
13. How does getting micro-credit from the NGO help you?
14. How do you know about the NGO and the NGO staff?
15. Does your area have any government community clinic? Does the clinic have staff?
16. Do you experience any problem at home for getting in touch with NGOs? (female beneficiaries)
17. On what basis you get loan from NGOs?

FGD questions

GO & NGOs

Introductory/ brainstorming question

1. What does the term 'engaging' suggest to you? How would you like to define it?
2. Do you think it is important to engage people in development process? Why?

Group work

3. What are the management requirements for beneficiary engagement? How to engage communities in resolving development issues, if any?
4. What is the importance of engaging project beneficiaries? Can you please identify any achievement that beneficiary engagement helped?

Beneficiaries

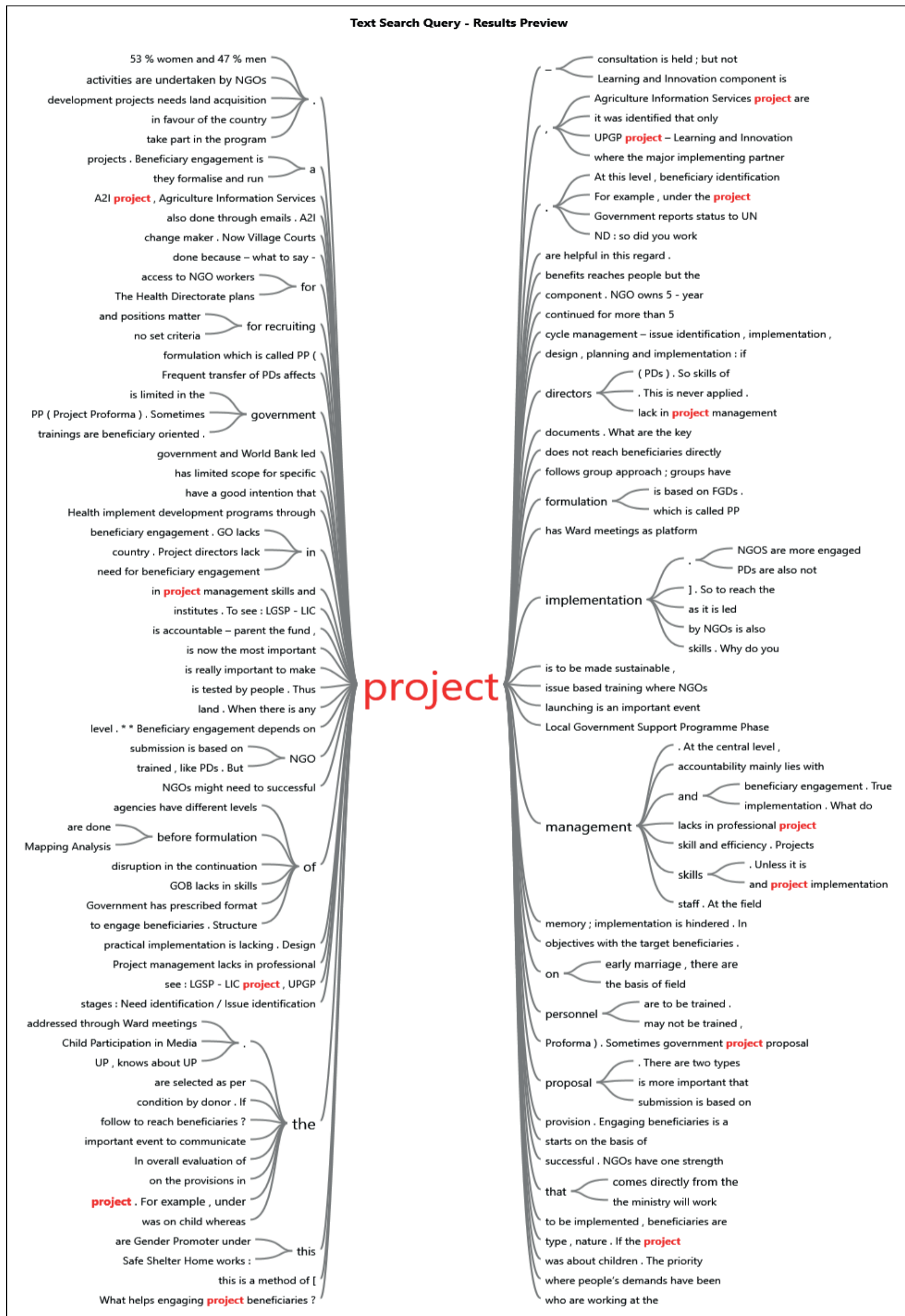
1. Can you please tell me what you have achieved after joining the GO/NGO projects? Does it help? How?

Appendix 2. Scope of NGO activities according to the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act 2016

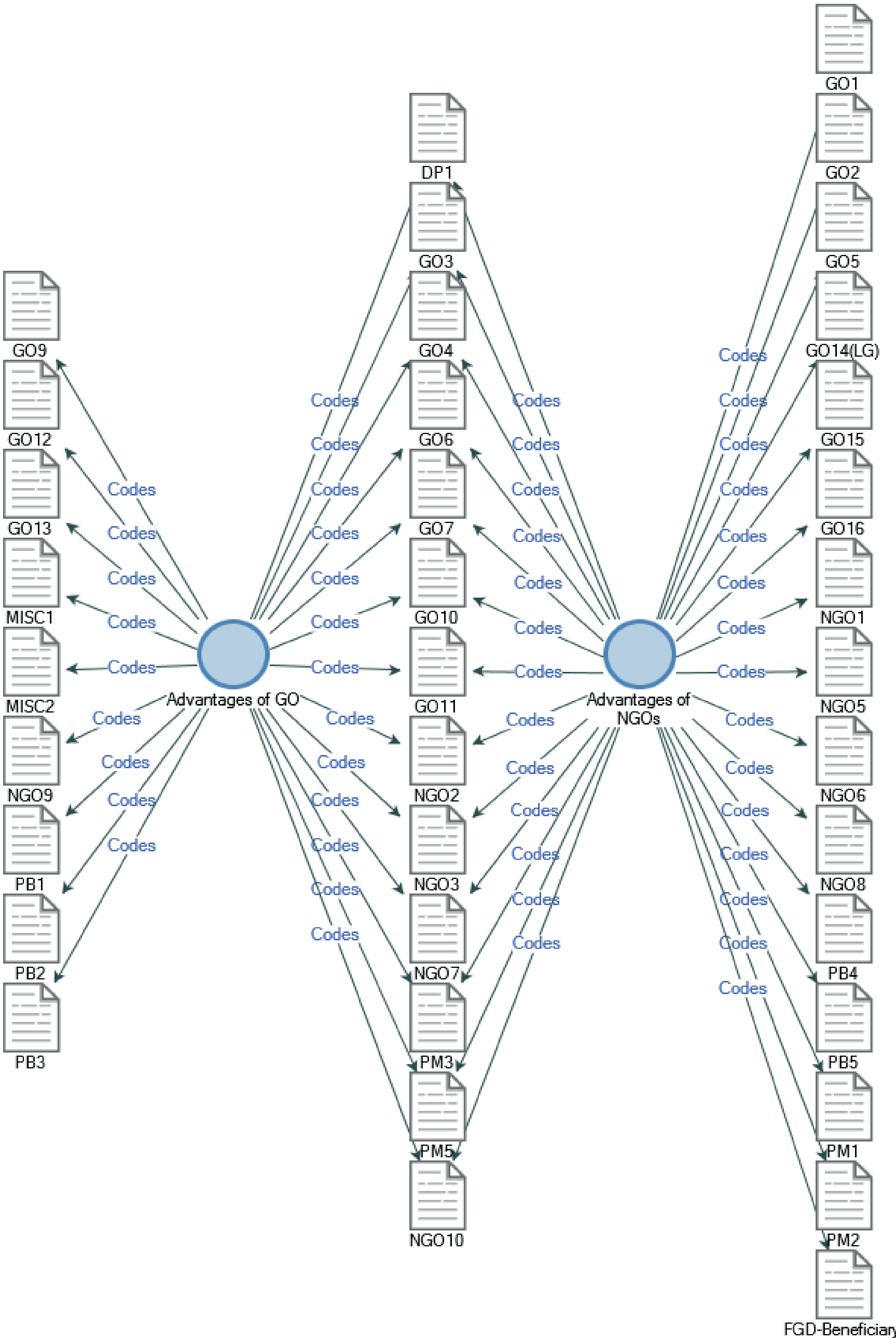
Clause 10 of the Act includes following areas that create scope for NGOs undertaking development initiatives and receive fund from GO or donors:

- Social
- Religious
- Cultural
- Economic
- Educational
- Health services
- Safe drinking water and sanitation
- Relief and rehabilitation
- Agriculture and agricultural development
- Infrastructure development
- Public awareness building
- Poverty alleviation
- Women empowerment
- Democracy and good governance
- Human rights
- Secularism
- Empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised people and upscaling their rights
- Upholding rights of children, aged people, disabled people, equal rights and participation
- Conservation of natural resources
- Adaptation to climate change
- Human resources development
- Science and technology
- Providing scholarships
- Social welfare
- Research works
- Development of tribal groups
- Land rights and development activities

Appendix 3. Relations between project and beneficiary engagement



Appendix 4. Primary sources data on GO-NGO advantages



Appendix 5. Primary sources data on GO-NGO limitations in beneficiary engagement