A Qualitative Study on The Community Development Initiatives of The People of a Village of Bangladesh

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Abstract
The article is an outcome of a research study undertaken in the field of community development, one of the leading concepts in third world countries where community participation ensures the developmental needs of the people. The local governance system and its organs work as a bridge between the community development initiatives and the people's proactive participation. The primary objectives of the study were to know the nature and extent of community development initiatives taken by the villagers and also to explore the ways of people's participation in community development initiatives in Hulhulia. Researchers used a qualitative research approach to fulfill the objectives of the study. They also used case study as a primary research method. In addition, qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments and data analysis systems were utilized in the study. The key findings of the study showed that the people of Hulhulia enjoy basic human rights. They directly participate in community development initiatives and local governance systems for their benefit in social life. Although ageing problem and women's non-involvement in village government raises questions, people collect funds by themselves from various sources. Villagers try to ensure the development and welfare needs by themselves. By reducing the vulnerabilities of disaster, community development initiatives can get a state of sustainability.

Key words: Bangladesh, community development, local governance, model village, people's participation, village government.

Introduction

Community development is a vital issue in third-world countries and people's direct participation plays an active role in development edges. The concept of development gets popularized after 1945 when American President Harry Truman made a global appeal to advance a lot of more than half of the world's population as they are living in impoverishment and poverty in 'primitive societies'. To save the poor and advance their living conditions, Truman proposed a 'democratic fair dealing'. He meant a society where nations will respect the rights of men, freedom of thought, and expression to achieve a common good (Manyi, 2007, p. 1). Moreover, development practitioners, government officials, and foreign donors are extensively agreed that local government plays an ever more proactive role in participatory community development

(Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo, 2013). Expansion of freedom should be the foremost means of development and it should be the principal end. A lot of researchers argued that human development is essential to swell people's independence and autonomy for empowering them in development practices (Alkire, 2010; Mallik, 2013). Community development primarily encompasses a series of engagements and decisions. This situation mends the state of a community, not just economically, but as a strong operational community (Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo, 2013). Community development as a domain influences the delivery of community development services. Generally, community development is a laborious task to measure.

Research Objectives

This research study was commenced to fulfill the following research objectives:
1. To explain the nature and extent of community development initiatives taken by the villagers of Hulhulia.
2. To explore the ways of people's participation in community development initiatives in Hulhulia.
3. To identify the factors that contributes to barriers in people's participation in community development initiatives.
4. To find out possible policies needed to ensure people's participation in community development initiatives.

Statement of the Research Problem

The twenty-first century is noticeable by the decentralized governance system. It is introduced as an important strategy and a philosophy for bringing about the modifications and changes in democracy and governance (Kumar & Mahesh, 2013). In the twentieth century, around the world, the study of village and peasant society became popular among sociologists and anthropologists (Roy & Syed, 2014). At present, decentralized local authority and responsibilities for rural development are a new trend. Decentralization is solidifying democracy and snowballing the potential for community-level interventions (Wijayaratna, 2004). Local development and community development partially via local institutions was apparently a scheme for a better understanding of rural communities. These are becoming more responsive to the apparent desires and constraints of the rural folk. The Constitution of Bangladesh (1972) in its chapter-3 and article-59 suggests the direct participation of the people in establishing local bodies and managing those bodies. Nevertheless, the spirit of participation in local bodies was not maintained properly after the adaptation of the constitution. The change in structure and shape of local government has created this situation (UNESCAP, 2012; Hasan, 2013). In 1980, the government amended the Local Government Ordinance. Then the Swanirvar Gram Sarker (self-sufficient village government) was introduced at the village level. But in July 1982, the ordinance was abolished by a Martial Law Order (Khan, 2014).

Hence, the example of a model village in Bangladesh with a full range of people's participation in community development and local governance is rare. But Hulhulia Adarsho Gram (Hulhulia Model Village), situated 12 Kilometers away from the Singra Upazilla of Natore District of Bangladesh can be an example of a model village in the area of community development, people's participation within a participatory governance system. In Hulhulia, people formed village government (VG), the constitution of the village, the local justice system, village court, village election system, diverse community development activities, welfare programs, etc. The present study seeks intense explanations about the community development initiatives and people's participation in the governance system of the village.

Research Questions
1. How do the people of Hulhulia village participate in community development initiatives?
2. Why do people participate in community development initiatives within a governance system?
3. What are the impacts of people's participation in community development initiatives?

Rationale of the study

A good number of studies have been conducted across the world on community development, the village community, people's participation in community development, and local governance systems. Although a few researchers focus on local self-governance and local democracy, many researchers conducted research studies on community management, rural development paradigms, good governance, decentralized local government, etc. As far knowledge goes, a very insignificant number of studies have been done in Bangladesh on people's participation in community development initiatives. Apart from that, the existing research articles could have not been reviewed because of their unavailability and the little scope of the survey. So, the researchers tried their best to go through many research works, but most of the reviewed research did not meet the objectives of the present study. Therefore, the present study sought the knowledge gap in the field of village community development initiatives.

Literature Review

Concept of community development

Development is a route of escalating the liberties that people enjoy (Sen, 2000; Mallik, 2013). Development generally requires the subtraction of sources of 'un-freedom'. It includes poverty, tyranny, poor economic prospects, organized social deprivation, and the abstraction of public conveniences (Mallik, 2013, p. 37). In the arena of development, as a 'natural' social unit, a community is generally supposed as identical to a neighborhood (Huq, 2012, p. 42). Five core characteristics of a community are discussed by Ife (2013), Stepney and Popple (2008) are "size of the population, the commonality among people, identity and belonging, primary relationships and attachment, and local culture" (Ife & Fiske, 2006; Stepney & Popple, 2008; Pawar, 2014, p. 39). The concept of community development is directly related to the concept of community. A community is "a set of people with a common interest and implies that there are more commonalities than differences, there is homogeneity and the concept of standardization is indispensable in the peoples' setting"(Godfrey & Siraje, 2019, p. 9). Hillery (1955) analyzed 94 definitions of community. She found the three most common components of the concept of the community were area, common ties, and social interaction (Hillery, 1995; Pawar, 2014, p. 39).

Community development is a concept where a community takes part in upgrading its social, economic, and environmental situation (Mallik, 2013, p. 73). According to Bell and Reed (2021) "community development often involves organizing participatory decision-making processes" (Bell & Reed, 2021, p. 1). The United Nations (UN) defined the conceptual framework of community development as: "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems" (United Nations, 2014). Earlier the United Nations (UN) defined 'community development' as "the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities. The further aim is to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to the progress of the nation" (UNDP, 1996).

On the contrary, Ife (2010) described community development as an approach of the communities. This approach is based on valuing and validating the knowledge and expertise in the community itself (Ife, 2010; Kenny, 2016). From a normative perspective, community development is defined as "a participatory people-centred process. It involves bringing together, mobilizing, or organizing people, keeping them together, and enabling them to work together. These address their needs and issues to facilitate their own, their communities' and society's comprehensive development within the social development approach" (Pawar, 2014, p. 41). Finally, it can be said that community development is a process conducted by community members. It is a process where local people can create more jobs, income, and infrastructure. It also helps their community become primarily better able to manage the change (Cavaye, 2015).

Participatory governance (PG) and community participation (CP)

Participatory governance is almost re-altering the traditional margins. It is building a new connection between the state and citizens by creating transitional spaces and new forms of social and political connotations. In PG participants from both sides can intermingle in a new way (Huq, 2012). Participation of citizens is frequently described as a key effort for corroborating the quality of democracy as well as public policies in the "era of growing uncertainties" (Giovanni et el., 2021) and "as an antidote to polarization and democratic decline" (Bussu et el., 2022, p. 1). On the other hand, Cornwall and Gaventa (2000) define participatory governance (PG) as an approach toward citizen participation beyond the balloting and electoral process. It pulls on community participation in recognizing "local priorities, planning and implementing programmes". In PG citizens become "makers and shapers" (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2000, pp. 50-62). Bishop & Davis (2002) identified the key elements of participation in a participatory governance process: firstly, a degree of citizen participation in decisions; secondly, a promise to pursue the views of those pretentious by a decision; thirdly, some handover of power from government to citizens; and finally, a translucent process which guarantees citizens are well-versed about policy practices and processes (Huq, 2012, p. 52). Being an operative and real, participatory governance necessitates durable, strong, and comprehensive participatory procedures and processes at all levels of the government. Besides, a distinct ideological and policy basis, intelligible 'joined-up' programs, and approachable and friendly institutional foundations are also important (Forde, 2020, p. 1).

According to Huq (2012), "community participation is a process wherein people in the community have access to decision-making, implementation, and benefit-sharing" (p. 44). Shields, et al. (2021) highlighted that "fostering community participation requires intentionality" and they also recommended for the implementers need to use combined and collaborative planning for involving intra-community assortment and inequalities (p. 937). Paul Samuel has identified some objectives of the community participation process. In the widest sense, community participation may be believed as a device of empowerment. According to his point of view, development should advance to an impartial sharing of power as well as lead, particularly the weaker groups and create political consciousness and strengths (Huq, 2012).

Finally, it can be defined that the participatory governance system and community development are the interwoven concepts that are primarily vested to develop the community from the economic, social, political, cultural, and spiritual needs of the people. These two concepts are also vital in the cases of ensuring human rights, justice, and people's basic needs.

Community development initiatives in Bangladesh

Bangladesh got independence in 1971 from Pakistan aiming to achieve major goals of political, economic, and cultural freedom. It was expected that Bangladesh would get full political freedom, and achieve a dream country named 'Sonar Bangla' a country free from poverty (Lopa, 2013). However, after more than four decades, a large number of populations are not literate in its accurate sense. As Bangladesh is a country of villages and its development truly depends on the development of villages. The villages are playing a key role in the country's development. The country has immense practices in rural community development strategies and policies. Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Rural Development Academy (RDA) and Bangladesh Cooperative Academy (BCA) conveyed and developed diverse rural development models for developing the country. Currently, the concept of people's mass participation in community development activities has proven very effective in the rural development of Bangladesh (Asian Productivity Organization, 2004). Facing worsening conditions in national life, in the early 1980s, the Bangladesh government took CP as a new development remedy (Peter & Robert., 2007; Lopa, 2013). In the decades of the 1980s and 1990s Bangladesh government took various types of development projects prioritizing the rural infrastructures, fisheries, water, sanitation development, etc. But most of the projects could not fulfill the development goals and sustainability was not ensured (Mobin, 2003; Lopa, 2013).

Methodology

Research design

Study design "is the blueprint for conducting the study that maximizes control over factors that could interfere with the validity of the findings. Designing a study helps the researcher to plan and implement the study in a way that helps the researcher to obtain intended results, thus increasing the chances of obtaining information that could be associated with the real situation" (Burns & Grove, 2001, p. 223). According to John W. Creswell, "qualitative researchers choose from among five possibilities, including Narrative, phenomenology, ethnography, case study, and grounded theory" (Creswell, 2009). The study is primarily a case study based on qualitative research. In the current study, researchers used case study design as the primary research approach to reveal the nature and extent of community development (CD) initiatives and the ways of people participate in the CD process. As supportive methods, researchers also used qualitative survey and narrative discussions.
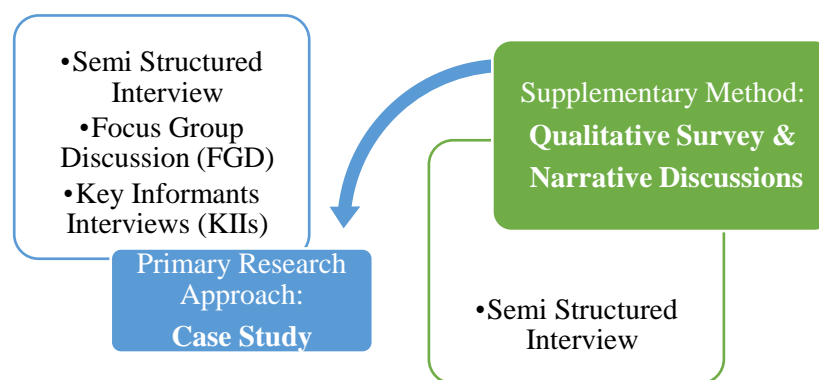
- Semi Structured Interview
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
- Key Informants Interviews (KIIs)

Primary Research Approach:
Case Study

Supplementary Method:
Qualitative Survey & Narrative Discussions

- Semi Structured Interview

Figure- 1: *Research design of the study*

A case study is 'an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution or system in a "real-life" context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods, and is evidence-led (Simons H., 2009, p. 21). Bruce L. Berg explained a case study as 'systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions' (Berg, 2001, p. 225). Pauline V. Young describes a case study as "a comprehensive study of a social unit be that unit a person, a group, a social institution, a district or a community" (Young, 1956, p. 247).

Area of the study

This study was confined to Hulhulia, a small village in Natore district in Bangladesh which is situated in the North-Western part of 'Chalan Beel' (the largest lake comprises a series of depression of water channels with an area of 364 square kilometers) and a 15 kilometer away from the Singra Upazilla of that district.

Population and sample

According to Kothari (2004), "all units in any field of inquiry constitute universe and all elementary units (on the basis of one characteristic or more) constitute population" (p. 153). The population of Hulhulia village is about 3500. About 50% of them are living in towns, cities, and abroad. So, half of the population of the village was not found during the study. Moreover, the village is located in a remote area. Reaching the female segment of the population is very difficult due to cultural barriers (i.e. religious conservativeness). Only the male population of 12 'para's (units of village community) who were accessible

and agreed to provide information were communicated for the study. Sixty (60) villagers were selected as samples for the study from them. In addition, 15 key informant interviews and 12 participants for an FGD were conducted for getting in-depth information. In this study, in selecting samples a purposive sampling procedure was used even though bias in selecting samples could be aroused but the researchers were very much careful in selecting the samples, taking the issue of non-bias and representative selection of the sampled population.

Data collection instruments
Qualitative case study research … appeals to subjective ways of knowing and to a primarily qualitative methodology that captures experiential understanding (Stake, 2010, pp. 56-70). It follows that the main methods of data gathering to access this way of knowing will be qualitative. According to Simons (2014), "interviewing, observation, and document analysis are the primary three, often supported by critical incidents, focus groups, cameos, vignettes, diaries/ journals, and photographs" (p.461). In the current research, qualitative data was collected through the use of the following instruments of data collection such as:
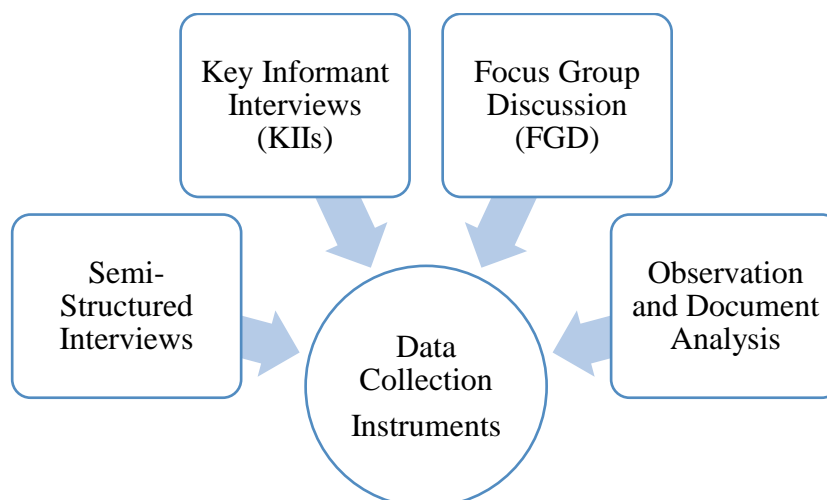

Figure- 2: *Data collection instruments*

Data analysis
A data analysis plan is "a detailed document outlining procedures for conducting an analysis on data" (Jablonski & Guagliardo, 2016, p. 3). Although this is qualitative research, quantitative data was also used here to support the qualitative data. As a baseline survey, semi-structured interviews were also used in this research. Quantitative data is "data that is expressed in numerical terms, in which the numeric values could be large or small numerical values may correspond to a specific category or label" (Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Technical Assistance Center, 2006, p. 8).

"The survey is an appropriate means of gathering information under three conditions: when the goals of the research call for quantitative and qualitative data, when the information sought is specific and familiar to the respondents and the researcher has prior knowledge of the responses likely to emerge" (Polland, 2005, p. 2). For analyzing the quantitative data, researchers use descriptive statistics for having first-hand data. For categorical data, researchers calculate counts, proportions, rates, and ratios. On the contrary, for quantitative data, measures of distributional shape, location, and spread are labeled (Singh, 2007, pp. 131-132).

"Frequency distribution of data can be expressed in the form of a histogram, frequency polygon and ogive, depending on the frequency or cumulative frequency. Graphic representation of data is another very effective way of summarizing data in two-dimensional space"(Singh, 2007, pp. 131-132). On the contrary, "graphical representation of data is a better visual medium of representing data, not only because

of its visual appeal but also for interpretation by users. There are various ways in which data can be represented, like bar graphs, line graphs, and pie graphs" (Singh, 2007, pp. 131-132).

In this research, frequency distribution and graphical presentation of data were used for analyzing the quantitative survey data. In the present research, qualitative methods of data analysis have been used for analyzing data collected from KIIs and FGD as a systematic work. Researchers also used verbatim and thematic approaches to analysis. Description, explanation of themes and concepts, and verbatim quotations from the respondent's oral statements are presented in a narrative way to seek the answer to the research questions. The summarization of the data analysis plan is presented below:
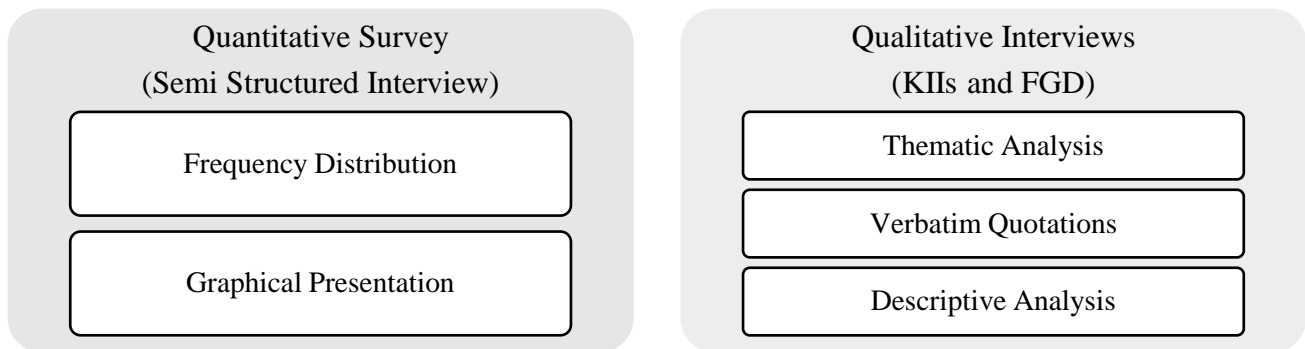
Quantitative Survey (Semi Structured Interview)	Qualitative Interviews (KIIs and FGD)
Frequency Distribution	Thematic Analysis
	Verbatim Quotations
Graphical Presentation	Descriptive Analysis

Figure- 3: *Data analysis plan*

Results

In this research, data were collected from 60 qualitative surveys (semi-structured interviews), 15 Key Informant's Interviews (KIIs), one Focus Group Discussion (FGD), observation, and secondary sources. Data were analyzed by using frequency distribution, thematic analysis, descriptive analysis, and verbatim quotations. Finally, the data of this study is presented in graphical presentation and narrated in a descriptive way. The results relevant to the research questions are as follows:
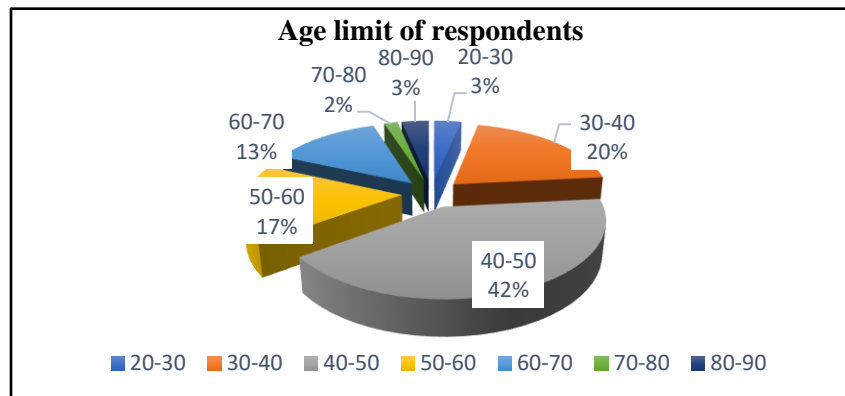
Age limit of respondents

- 80-90: 3%
- 20-30: 3%
- 70-80: 2%
- 60-70: 13%
- 50-60: 17%
- 30-40: 20%
- 40-50: 42%

Legend: 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60-70, 70-80, 80-90

Figure- 4: *Age limit of the respondents*

The chart shows that in Hulhulia village, among the respondents 42% are from the 40-50 years of age group and 20% are from the 30-40 years of age group. On the other hand, data was not collected from the respondent below 18 years of old. It is observed that about 18% respondents are from 60- 90 years of age group. So, it is remarkable that senior citizens are the third largest number among the populations of Hulhulia. Most of the young people below the 40 years of old are living in cities or in abroad for education and job purpose.

Analysis of demographic and health related variables

Table-1:
Demographic variables (Number of frequencies, N=60)

Demographic variable		Responses (frequencies)	Percent (%)
Literacy rate	Primary	15	25
	Secondary	35	58.33
	Higher education	8	13.33
	Illiterate	2	3.33
Family structure	Single	44	73.33
	Joint	16	26.67
Household income (BDT)	1-5000	6	10
	5000-10000	13	21.67
	10000-15000	13	21.67
	15000-20000	10	16.67
	20000-25000	3	5
	25000-more	15	25
Main occupation of the family (Multiple response)	Agriculture	55	91.67
	Business	11	18.33
	Day laborer	5	8.33
	Private job	6	10
	Govt. job	5	8.33
	Others	16	26.67
Nature of household	Tin shed- brick wall	37	61.67
	Tin shed- mud wall	23	38.33
	Brick built building	1	1.67
	Others	2	3.33
Sources of drinking water	Tube well	58	96.67
	Others	2	3.33
Nature of toilet use	Ring and slab	23	38.33
	Brick build	37	61.67
Internet facilities	Yes	54	90
	No	6	10

From the analysis of semi structured interview, table- 1 shows that 96.67% respondents of Hulhulia are educated and only 3.33% respondents are illiterate. It was found that 58.33% respondents studied or completed secondary level. On the other hand, 13.33% respondents are higher educated. Among the 15 key informants, six of them think that the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) pass population is 60% or more, five are thinking 70% or more. Two of them have ensured that the SSC pass population is 80%. One informant does not know the actual figure and another informant said that it will be 55% in total. From FGD it was revealed that SSC passed population is 70-75% and dropout rate in primary and secondary school is also significantly very low. In primary school, about 30 students are admitted and all of them completed primary education. In high school, 25 students get admitted but 20-22 students passed the SSC examination. Some are dropped out and some are admitted to the schools of towns.

Table-1 also shows that 77.33% respondents live in single family and 26.67% respondents live in joint family. So, single family consists of couple and their children are the major pattern of family in Hulhulia village. Household income of the villagers showed a variation. About 25% of the respondent's

household income is 25000 or more than 25000 Bangladesh Taka (BDT), whereas 21.67% respondents are in BDT 5000-10000 and BDT 10000-15000 income group. About 16.67%, 5% and 10% respondents belong to the income group respectively BDT 15000-20000, BDT 20000-25000, and BDT 1-5000. Although this survey cannot reveal the real family income because family members outside the village provides money to them but most of them do not know the provider's actual income. It was found from the focus group discussion (FGD) that poverty ratio in Hulhulia is 10:2. Among 10 people two of them are living under the poverty line in the context of Hulhulia that is 20% of total population. In Hulhulia, a man is poor if he has less than 2 acres of land or a man's monthly income is less than 15000 takas.

Results from the analysis also show that 91.67% respondents are directly and indirectly depend on agriculture, 18.33% on business. Among the respondents 8.33% depend on govt. job, 8.33% on day labor and another 10% on private job. A 26.67% respondent depend on other occupations such as fish cultivation, fishing, garments work, raring live stocks, brick layering, work in village government, muezzin (the Muslim official of a mosque), mechanic, work in farms etc.

Table-1 also shows that 61.67% of houses are tin shed building with brick-built walls, 38.33% of houses are tin shed building with mud walls. Among the houses only 1.67% of houses are brick built and 3.33% are of grass and mud. So, the result indicates that most of the houses are strong enough for survival in any disasters and hazards. The villagers of Hulhulia get pure drinking water from tube wells and other sources. Among them 96.67% of the villagers get pure drinking water from tube wells and 3.33% get water from submersible deep-water pumps. Almost 90% of villagers have free internet access and they relate to an internet digital hub and 10% people cannot use internet either for ignorance in technological knowledge or lack of suitable devices.

38.33% respondent's family use ring and slab made sanitary toilets and 61.67% of the villagers use brick built sanitary toilets. As one key informant of 90 years of old told, "More than 20 years ago there were a few open toilets." Another old man named Yeakub Ali Sardar (pseudo name) aged at 84 commented, "Forty years ago there were hanging toilets in Hulhulia village". One farmer at the age 63 told, "Sanitation system in Hulhulia is 100% up to date."
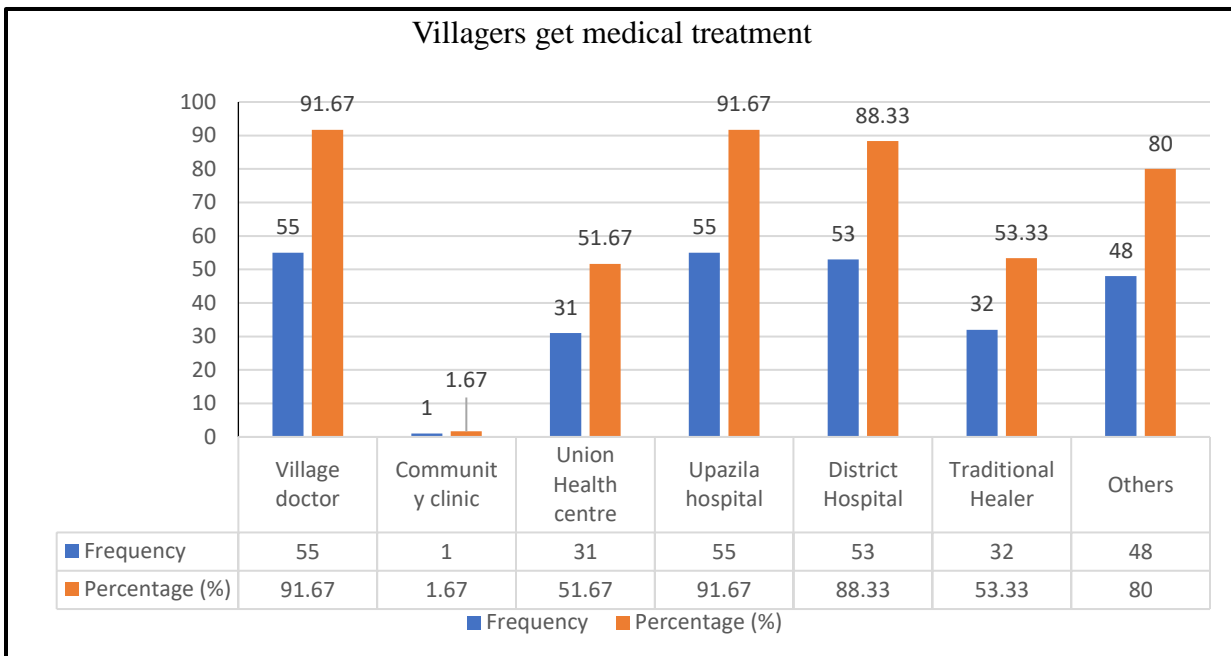

Villagers get medical treatment

	Village doctor	Community clinic	Union Health centre	Upazila hospital	District Hospital	Traditional Healer	Others
Frequency	55	1	31	55	53	32	48
Percentage (%)	91.67	1.67	51.67	91.67	88.33	53.33	80

Figure 5: *Villagers get medical treatment*

Figure-5 shows that 91.67% of villagers take treatment from a village doctor, and another 91.67% of respondents take treatment from Upazilla Hospital, 88.33% from District General Hospital. About 51.67% of respondents go to Union Health Center. But the interesting finding is that almost 53.33% of respondents turn to traditional and religious healers (Imam, Kobiraj, Ojha, Sapura) for getting treatment in the cases of dog and snake bites. Sometimes, people go to the healers in the cases of hand and leg-breaking, paralysis and take Tel-Pora (Healed oil), Pani-Pora (healed water). Another 80% of respondents get treatment from other sources such as charitable dispensary, Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH), Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College hospital, and the hospitals of Dhaka.

Participation in self-governance (village government) and community development

Table-2:
Participation in SG and CD initiatives

Participation process	Frequency (N=60)	Percentage (%)
Directly	59	98.33
Indirectly	1	1.67
Voluntarily	59	98.33
Involuntarily	1	1.67

Table- 2 indicates that 98.33% of respondents think that they can participate directly and 1.67% can participate indirectly in the village government system. The people of Hulhulia participate in community development initiatives of their own will and 98.33% of respondents participate voluntarily. It is significant that each male person in the village has an equal chance to be elected if he has the educational qualification. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the village are directly elected by the vote of males and the rest of the 21 members are selected by the people of each 12 Paras (a small part of the village). Everyone has a chance to be selected from the 'Para' chronologically over the time being. Besides, there are 11 committees in the village and each committee is constituted by several persons. Under each committee, people are willing to participate in the development activities.

Several KIIs data reveal that the people of Hulhulia have the scope to participate in the decision-making and implementation process of the CD initiatives and local governance issues. A farmer told, "Every man of the village has their participation in the development process. People's demands and claims are fulfilled carefully." Another farmer of Hulhulia village claimed, "In every two years, there held an election in the village and then the process of participation begins. Everyone can enjoy the scope of participation in development activities." A former chairman of that village told, "People participate in the decision-making process in a free and fairway. They also participate in development activities by their free labor, time, and money." On the other hand, a former chairman and farmer talked about the participatory government that, "participatory local government is more development-oriented". A woman has no interest in the participation process as she was telling, "I have no interest to participate in village government. It is running and everything seems good."

Figure- 6 shows that most of the people of Hulhulia are directly involved in village community development initiatives. The analysis of the surveyed data reveals that 100% of respondents are supporting the village government by providing money, physical labor, suggestions, and material support. About 22 % of respondents help the government by providing other types of support such as giving seasonal crops, attending funeral services, giving time to welfare activities, helping the poor, providing relief activities, giving inspiration, donating the share of total earnings, land, and necessary services. It was also found that people who do not live in the village provide monetary help to CD initiatives.
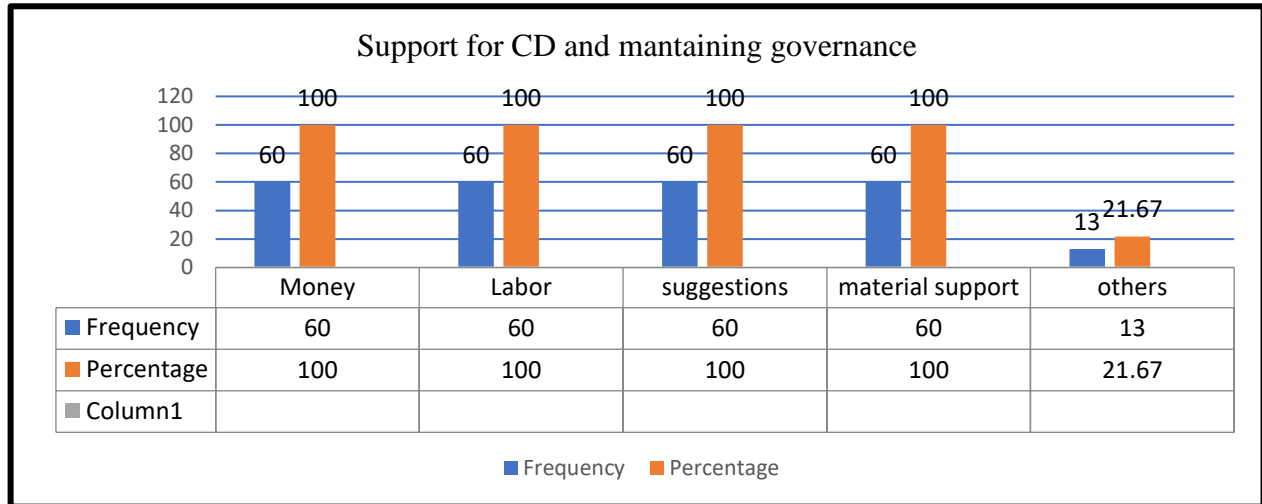
Support for CD and mantaining governance

	Money	Labor	suggestions	material support	others
Frequency	60	60	60	60	13
Percentage	100	100	100	100	21.67
Column1					

Figure 6: *People are providing support in community development initiatives*

Generally, people participate in any development activities by voting. Before that chairman calls the respected committees and the people by playing drums, announcing in Mosque, and by village government officials. The participation process is narrated by different key informants in different ways. Sometimes, a committee can call a general meeting. According to a key informant, "A general meeting is called by a specific committee, then we decide to implement. People can inform the 'Gram Sarkar' (village government) on any issues." As another key informant narrated, "People participate by their voting power. We play drums and call every younger and older person to come and sometimes we call people over the loudspeaker of the Mosque." According to a senior citizen of the village, "Sometimes people participate directly and sometimes they participate indirectly or by force." A school teacher also told, "People do not participate equally. Sometimes they participate willingly and sometimes inspired by others."

It is observed that the people of Hulhulia participate in community development activities by means of their all resources, intellectual abilities, labor, physical efforts, economic support, and commitment. A former five times elected village chairman narrated, "People participate in village government by their every possible way of participation. They provide their physical labor, intellectual support, monetary help, etc." The process of people's participation in community development activities is explained in such a manner by another key informant, "'Gram Chairman' (Village Chairman) calls the village people by 'Village Sakindar' (village government's official). He and committee members seek help from the people and people give their opinion directly." Besides, in any issue, anyone can influence the chairman to call the people for development activities.

It was also found that 100% male population can vote in village government elections and 100% of males and females can vote in the national elections in Bangladesh. All the respondents have ensured that there is no conflict between the village government and local government authorities. A retired school teacher emphasized compromise in critical situations. According to him, "Sometimes there creates some conflict. As we want development we cooperate and compromise with the people and local government."

Initiatives of Hulhulia Samajik Unnayon Parishad (HSUP) in community development
Survey data reveal that 100% of respondents agreed that HSUP (the short form of the official name of the village government) ensures the facilities of education, infrastructure development, and communication development and arranges religious programs such as Waj (Islamic lecture), Eid, Sab-I-Barat, Sab-I-Miraz, etc. On the contrary, 98.33% of respondents get health and treatment facilities from the village.
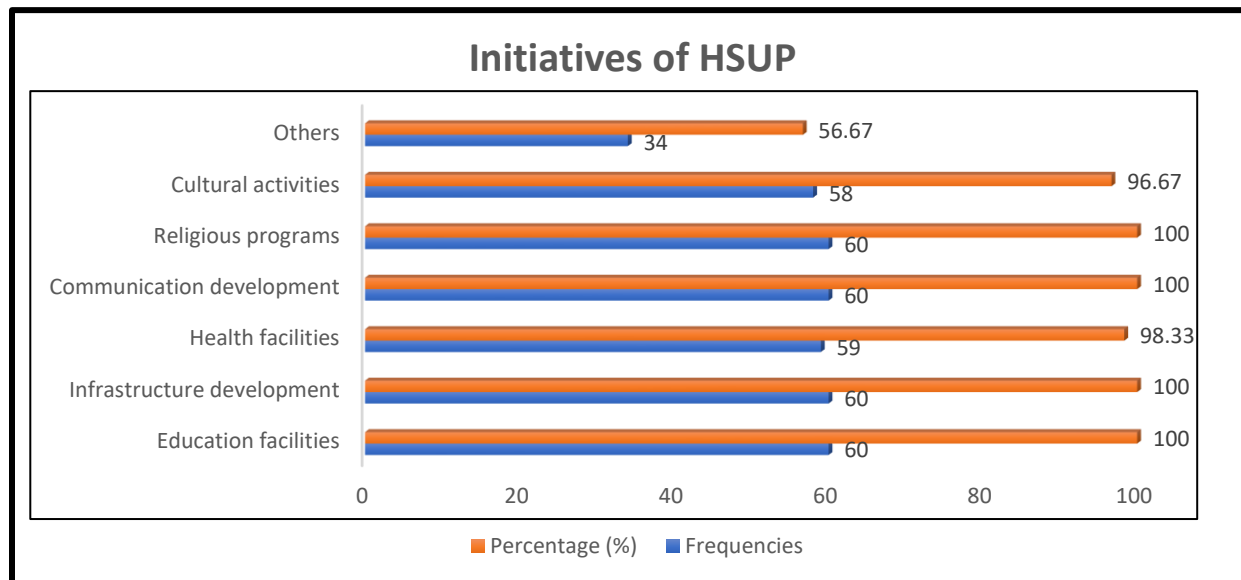
Figure-7: *Initiatives of HSUP in community development*

Almost 97% of respondents think that the village govt. arranges different cultural activities. Another 57 % of respondents talked about other activities that are provided by the HSUP. The other activities are ensuring justice, recreational facilities, facilitating everything needed, mediation of local conflict, establishing social solidarity and unity, creating social awareness and social justice, maintaining boat stands, developing roads, helping the people in need, helping in getting justice for everyone, protecting villagers from crimes, agricultural development, solving social problems. In addition, the village government arranges sports, provides legal suggestions, and helps from the poor funds. A retired school teacher commented about the types of services, "We help people; we have poor funds. We sell 'khal' (leather of Eid sacrificed animals) in the auction. A total of BDT 60000-70000 is collected from the leather sale. We have land for schools, graveyards, and mosques. From these incomes, we are providing help from the poor fund and other funds."

A chairman of the HSUP told, "Different committees are working for the betterment of the community people. Each committee has its own activities. Some of the committees are the Gram committee, Bazar committee, Mosque committee, Graveyard committee, Diamond Club and Library committee, Poor fund committee, Primary school committee, High school committee, 'Bibaho Tohobil' (Marriage fund), Madrasha committee, etc."

It is revealed from the study that village government earns from various sources such as cultivable lands under various committees, ponds, donations from the villagers and migrant people, selling animal leathers, donations from the Union Parishad, collecting money from marriage register, collecting fines from accused, government allowance, emergency fund collection, funds from cooperatives and 12 committee's own income.

Voluntary organizations and NGOs in Hulhulia

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) such as BRAC, ASA, Grameen Bank, Proshika, and a few others are working in Hulhulia. There are voluntary organizations such as 'Sikor', 'Bot Brikkho', Hulhulia Diamond Club. These three are directly related to the village government. But there is another age group of voluntary organizations in Hulhulia such as Hulhulia Development Society (HDS), formed by the young men; Bondhan Club, an online-based club of the students, and so on. From the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) it was known that voluntary organizations of this community are Sikor, Hulhulia Development

Society, and Reliable Society. One intellectual informant told, "Besides Hulhulia Samajik Unnayon Parishad and Diamond Club, Sikor (Dhaka and other city residents from Hulhulia) is working to help the society. Also, Hulhulia Development Society (HDS), 'Chetona Savings and Credit Cooperative Society' are working in Hulhulia. Moreover, Asha and Proshika are working in Hulhulia but BRAC is not working currently."

FGD also reveals that there are two cooperative societies working in Hulhulia. These are 'Chetona Savings and Credit Cooperative Society' and 'Tin Tara Kollan Somiti' of 'Chalk Para'. People of Hulhulia water their irrigation land by 'Panashi Project' of Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) at the rate of BDT 90 per hour.

Women's participation in CD initiatives
It was found from the study that women have no direct participation in village government (VG) and community development (CD) initiatives. There are about enlisted 1400 voters for the national election from the village. Among them, only 750 male residents can vote in the election of the village government but women cannot do that. Even women have no participation in the committees that are formed in the village. But the judiciary process related to the female victim is done by keeping full confidentiality for safeguarding them and their social dignity. Although women's participation in community development has been included in the agenda of village government their inclusion remains a question.

Among the key informants, a rich farmer and a former chairman of the village government told, "As voting of the women is not included in the constitution of the village, they can not be the elected representative and can not participate in the development initiatives, but their inclusion is under discussion. We want to preserve women's rights and dignity and we do not take them to the village court." A female key informant claimed, "With the help of villagers I have been elected in Union Parishad. I do not know what would happen if women had participated in the government of Hulhulia. Generally, men solve everything, so why do girls need to participate?" On the contrary a retired school teacher, aged 74 stated that "Women do not come outside of the home. There is no participation of women in the 'Gram Sarkar' (VG). Previously decisions were made to include the women in VG, but it was not implemented for social and cultural factors."

Challenges faced by the people
Research data has revealed that some common challenges have roofed the image of Hulhulia. The KI data reveals that broken roads, communication, construction of new roads, ageing issue, less caregiver to parents, living in a congested village, floods, damage to crops, and sending children for higher studies are some common problems and scenarios in Hulhulia village. The data of FGD show that every year the flood water of 'Nagor River' comes to 'Chalan Beel' before or during harvesting season. Observation reveals that controlled behavior of people, less freedom to talk against HSUP or country politics are more or less hampering the goals of Hulhulia Samajik Unnayon Parishad (HSUP).

Discussions
It is revealed from the study that the people of Hulhulia have a higher education rate, income security, better economic support, developed infrastructure, developed health facilities, internet facilities, clean drinking water, sanitation facilities, and social security. Those help to empower the village people. The findings support the ideas of an "Adarsha Gram" or model village that have been explored earlier as well, most particularly through the Pradhanmantri Adarsh Gram Yojana, launched by the Central Government of India in 2009-10. In the Indian context, a 21st-century model village needs to incorporate several key themes which cover four themes such as sustainability, community involvement, technology, and connectivity (Swaniti Initiative, 2017). Another study conducted in Tando Soomro (Nizamanis) village in the Sindh Province of Pakistan also reveals ten key success factors for being a model village. These factors are "responsible administration, annual development plan, and policies, annual budget utilization, government collaboration, sense of ownership, basic education, primary health care, clean environment, agriculture economy, basic amenities" (Nawab et el., 2021, pp. 1216-1221).

Another important finding from the study was that the people of Hulhulia village were participating in community development initiatives directly and voluntarily. Sometimes they participated indirectly, involuntarily, or by force. The findings also showed that people of all ages were supporting village government and community development initiatives by providing resources, intellectual support, labor, physical effort, economic support, and commitment. The present study supports the study of Mba & Onyesom (2020), where it was observed that youth can take part in "community development programmes such as skills acquisition, education, agriculture, sports, religion, water project market, and town hall" (p. 19). A study by Bell & Reed (2021) also shows that community development workers have to rearrange and reshape the formal decision-making process that clearly rests on the quality of the participatory process and its innate impartiality.

As most of the people of Hulhulia village are educated, they can participate in community development activities. The present study findings support the findings of the study (Deekor, 2019) that "basic adult education need has the greatest value for improved participation in community development among rural farmers" (Deekor, 2019, p. 110). The findings also support the arguments of Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo (2013) where their article 'Local Government and Community Development' in the part of the theoretical framework emphasizes four factors of community development that help carry an excellent local government. These four factors are (a) self-motivation, (b) socio-economic status, (c) greater awareness, and (d) opportunity for participation. Two of their arguments were first, "individuals with a higher level of socioeconomic status show more eagerness in participating in activities prearranged by local government. They also are intended to help the local government in achieving their targets in community development". Secondly, More consciousness is also a significant aspect of community development (Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo, 2013, pp. 54-59).

Another key finding reveals that HSUP generates its resources and funds from various sources. It does various community development and welfare activities for the community people for ensuring good governance. A common feature of the local authorities in the countries studied is that the authorities are fighting for obtaining sufficient financial resources to perform their duties and functions. The circumstances and contexts are different in different countries. The main challenges are facing by local authorities include dependency on intergovernmental transfers, and legislative and capacity-related possibilities to generate their own source of returns (Kuusi, 2009, p. 4).

Community-Based Organisations are grassroots organizations intended to form social capital and assist as a form of governance within the community. Social capital is generally attained through assemblies and collective actions for benefitting the community (Haneef, Pritchard, Hannan, Alam, & Rahman, 2014, p. 11). The findings of Hulhulia village slightly contradict one of the findings of the previous study. But it follows one of the four models of Bailey (1999) 'a local government that assumes it knows best and acts to maximize the welfare of its residents conforms to the benevolent despot model' (Bailey, 1999; Shah & Shah,   2006,   p.   17).

Suvi Kuusi (2009) in the book "Aspects of Local Self-Government: Tanzania, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Ghana" went through the village government organs. According to the example of Tanzania 'a village assembly is responsible for general policymaking in relation to the affairs of the village. The village council is formed with 15 to 25 members elected for five years by the village assembly. These members elect a chairperson by the village assembly and the chairmen of all 'sub-villages' are elected within the village. The members are elected by the village assembly (Kuusi, 2009, p. 25). The findings of the present study support the previous study.

According to (Basri et el., 2021) "the high participation of the community has an impact on improving the performance of the village government" (pp. 123-136). The features of good governance include free and open elections, the rule of law, fortification of human rights, civic involvement, transparency, and accountability (Wilson, 2000). It was also found that "transparency, accountability, community participation, and justice" have positive effects on the performance of the village government (Basri et el., 2021, p. 123). Hulhulia Samajik Unnayon Parishad (HSUP) and the people of the community are trying to ensure good governance, human rights, free and open elections, people's participation, and so

on. Participation of women was not found to be ensured in the village government although they could participate in all other national levels. The findings of the current study support the previous findings but women's participation is still raising questions.

Besides, the study also showed that the village government has a harmonious working relationship with other local government institutions such as 'Union Parishad' (Union Council) or 'Upazilla Parishad' (Sub-District Council). They work together to develop the village, meet the welfare needs and implement the development projects. The findings of the current study are also complying with the findings of the study (Agboeze et al.,2021) that reveal efforts of human resources essential to attain the development projects in the communities. It is also found that local government has a positive role in community development projects such as "reconstruction of roads and bridges in the rural area, supporting rural farmers through agricultural machinery, provision of recreation centers, construction of the fish pond and public toilets, and building of hospitals, motor parks, and public library" (Agboeze et el., 2021, p. 7). The finding illustrates that local government can play substantial roles in doing the best for the community. It assists people to attain efficiency, productivity, and sustainability (Vadeveloo & Singaravelloo, 2013).

Conclusions

Given the constraints and advantages of the people of Hulhulia village, it can be stated that Hulhulia is a model village, with its governance system, people's participation, community development initiatives within the framework of geographical vulnerabilities, and cultural practices except for some drawbacks. From the findings, a number of concluding remarks can be drawn. Firstly, most of the people of Hulhulia are educated, aware of, motivated to community development, use full sanitation packages, and health awareness, and are committed to the village government's authority. Secondly, people participate directly and willingly in the governance system, community development initiatives, voluntary activities, welfare programs, and people are very much helpful. Thirdly, village governments collect funds and do the welfare services accordingly through the active participation of the people. Fourthly, women's non-participation in the governance system and in community development initiatives raises questions about the governance system. Finally, ageing problems, environmental hazards, disasters, and infrastructural problems contribute to barriers to the development of the village of Hulhulia. There are some sorts of limitations in research methodology, sample size, use of data collection, and analysis. Besides, bias and subjectivity of information in the study were observed. Due to a high scarcity of literature related to the study, the study on this village experience some challenges. But there is a wider scope of studying democracy, village governance system, the local justice system, comparative studies with other villages, human rights issues, the culture of the village, etc.

Recommendations

From the findings, it can be said that Hulhulia can be an example of a model village if it can maintain the exercise of a few policies. Firstly, ensuring the participation of women in village government and proactive participation of people in the decision-making and implementation process. Secondly, Digital Internet Hub should be fully functional for ensuring telemedicine and Agro-based services. Thirdly, ageing issues need to be handled carefully, and ensured proper care for older people. Fourthly, village infrastructure should be upgraded and sustainable systems of crop-damage protection should be developed by building some small-scale sluice gates for delaying floods for several days. Finally, establishing an eco-friendly development plan for the people's well-being bridging the lives of people and the environment of Chalan Beel.

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