Participatory Approach towards Sustainable Rural Development:  
*A micro-level qualitative study from Bangladesh*

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Development of village people in Bangladesh mostly depends on the government assistance where the people do not take functional participation. Separate from that idea a Participatory Rural Development (PRD) approach was initiated by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) during last two decades where people plan the development projects and implement those with outside assistance. Such activities of JICA are going on in Dakhkhin Chamuria village of Kalihati Upazila of Tangail district along with some other villages in the Upazila. This micro level study was conducted in Dakhkhin Chamuria village in order to investigate villagers’ prospects and problems of participation in development activities. Data were collected through Focus Group Discussion regarding the overall development activities achieved through participatory approach and their future prospects. Causal Diagrams were used to identify their problems in participating the development initiatives.

With the help of services from the Nation Building Departments (NBDs) and JICA the villagers built four roads, two bridges, two culverts and set up one post office and one local market. Now they have their own village committee meeting room and library. Around twenty ponds were prepared during the course of constructing the roads. Most of the people are now adopting family planning methods and constructed improved latrines. Now almost all the children go to school. With such participatory interventions peoples are motivated to reduce their dependency on outside assistances and earned faith on “self help is the best help”. They aspire that in near future the village will be a model of participatory rural development in the country. Yet there participations are not free from constraints. Villagers’ lack of motivation to join participatory ventures, internal and leadership conflicts, lack of timely cooperation from the NBDs and NGOs, natural calamities, etc. are some of the major constraints to participation. However, they still think that this way of rural development should be a sustainable approach through local peoples’ participation.