

# Research Brief

Digitizing Implementation Monitoring and Public Procurement Project

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## Dynamics of Collective Action within the Citizen Monitoring groups

### ABSTRACT

Since 2017, the DIMAPPP project has brought innovation in improving public procurement performance and enhancing capacity for monitoring of public works from multiple dimensions. One of its core objectives is to professionalize procurement and citizen engagement. Citizen Based Monitoring (CBM) has gained popularity among governments and NGOs worldwide in enhancing capacity using citizen volunteers.<sup>1</sup>

To explore the benefits of 'Citizen Engagement model (CE), the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) partnered with BIGD to set up a pilot project in 16 Upazilas in 2019 (scaled up to 48 Upazilas in 2020) to monitor public works

like construction of roads, schools, and bridges across the country. This study was undertaken to understand the underlying dynamics of 'collective action' within the citizen monitoring groups.

The purpose of this exercise was to analyze which demographic, programmatic and other external factors influence citizens to be more proactive towards monitoring. The program also wanted to understand the role of program staff in increasing activeness. This knowledge would help formulate future monitoring groups comprising of citizens who are more likely to be active.

<sup>1</sup>Conrad, C. C., & Hilchey, K. G. (2011). A review of citizen science and community-based environmental monitoring: issues and opportunities. *Environmental monitoring and assessment*. 176(1-4), 273-291.

## METHODOLOGY

Out of the 60 sites under DIMAPPP, 24 were purposively picked as their construction was near completion different types of contracts like roads, schools and cyclone centers were picked for monitoring. The sites covered all 12 Upazilas under 12 districts and 8 divisions where citizens monitoring groups were formed in 2019.

6 group members were selected from each site for interviews. Respondents were selected based on their pro-activeness, socio-economic status, gender identity and technical knowledge, totaling 144 interviews. The 16 FOs working with the citizen groups were also interviewed.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What personal and demographic characteristics were prevalent among active and passive citizen group members?
2. What factors determine the activeness and passiveness of citizen group members in a certain community?
3. Does FO's performance in creating, mobilizing and ensuring group involvement contribute to higher participation from members?

## KEY FINDINGS

**Active members:** Out of the 144 interviewees, 36 respondents (25%) were found to be Very Active in their monitoring, visiting the site at least once a day. 64 respondents (44%) were Active, visiting frequently, yet not every day. 44 respondents (31%) were found to be Less Active, participating and visiting sites a lot less.

## WHO WERE ACTIVE?

Demographic and personal factors indicate what kind of people were active.



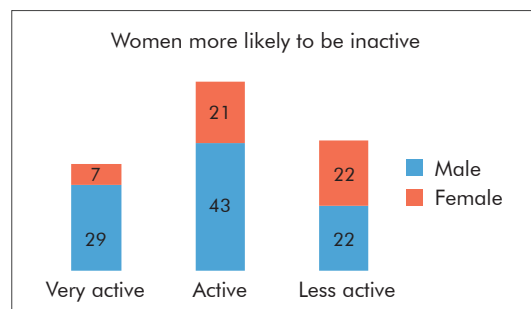
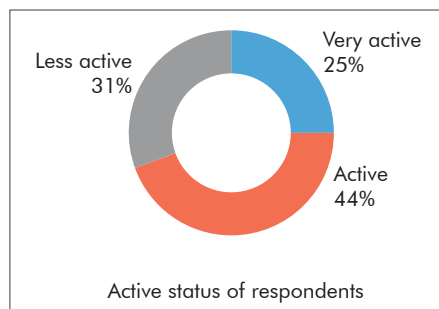
### Gender

Men were found to be far more active than women. 44% fell in the Less Active category whereas only 23.4% of male respondents were found to be Less Active.



### Age Range

Participants between the ages of 25 to 39 had the least percentage (20.7%) of less active people among them, therefore the rest 79.3% were either active or very active. Age group ranging from 40 to 59 years also had 66.7% of active or very active members among them. Very young and very old groups had higher percentages of less active members (46.2% and 41% respectively).





## Socio-economic Status

Respondents considered as 'elites' by FOs, who are respected and have authority in the community, were found to be proactive. 50% of elites were Very Active and 46% were found to be Active.



## Education

Level of education played a major role in determining the level of active participation. Participants with a graduate degree were found to be the most active group. 48% of the graduate level respondents were found to be more active members.



## Occupation

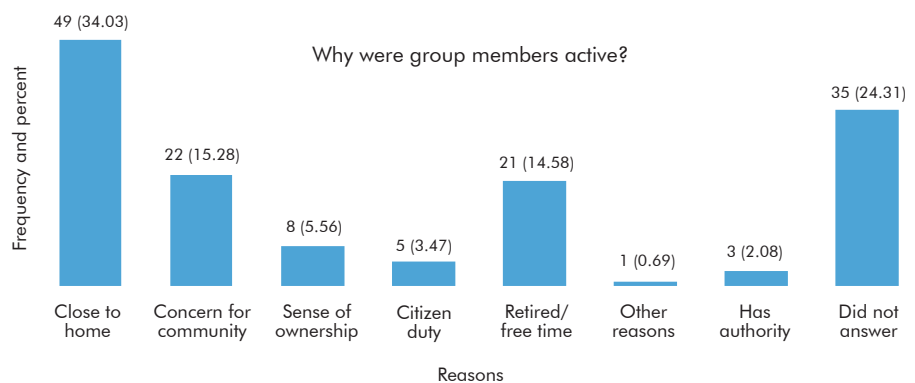
Day laborers, and multiple job holders were less likely to find the time and confidence in attending to regular monitoring activities. Meanwhile, businessmen, teachers, UP members and people with stable and socially respected jobs were found to be more active.

## WHY WERE THEY ACTIVE?



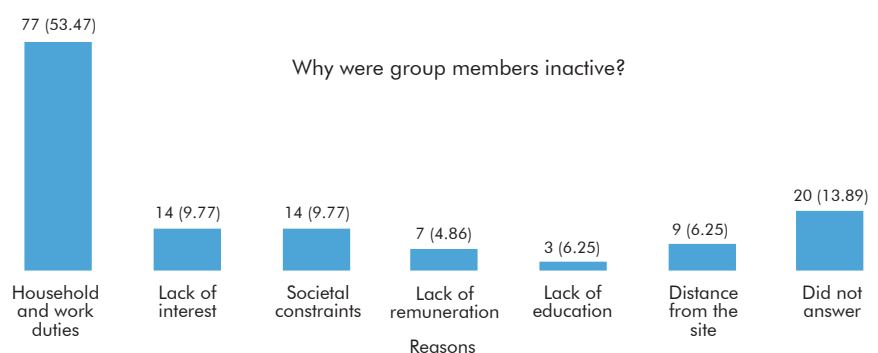
### Factors influencing activeness

Being close to the site helped monitoring activities as citizens close to site could conveniently visit the sites. Group members who were retired, had less household responsibilities, were educated but unemployed had more time in hand to travel to construction sites and oversee work. Care for local community, and concern for future generation also played significant roles in determining activeness.



### Factors influencing inactiveness

53% of male and 54% of female members cited having household duties and job responsibilities as core reasons for inactiveness among group members. Societal constraints also obstructed women from participation. Distance from the site, lack of interest and incentives were also reasons for inactiveness.



## PROGRAMMATIC FACTORS



### FO Activeness

In the sites where FOs were proactive, kept constant communication with the citizen team, site contractors and engineers performed better than sites where FOs were relatively less proactive.



### Site meeting attendance

Site meeting created a platform for the general citizen to receive basic knowledge directly from engineers on monitoring of construction work. Timely presence and degree of activeness of the engineers during site meetings also had an impact on citizen enthusiasm towards monitoring. Here is a comment from a 67-year-old citizen group member,

“

Never in my life have I seen that in the launching day of any public work, the Engineer himself has come to communicate about basic monitoring techniques to citizens and where both the Engineer and the contractor have insisted citizens to monitor any irregularities.



### Learning from orientation meetings

Learning from the citizen group orientation influenced citizens to participate in the monitoring process. Basic monitoring checklist enhanced citizen's confidence to participate.

### Sign boards

Installation of sign board enhanced citizen activeness for monitor and reporting grievances.

Citizen suggestion to Increase participation of citizen members

- Increasing number of members in groups.
- Including more diverse members with higher education, free time, economic stability and authority in the community.
- Making site visits convenient for members (i.e.: picking more members closer to sites)
- Facilitating members with daylong household/work duties and selecting convenient times for meetings and visits
- Having more encouragement and constant communication from BRAC staff.

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