

Experience Sharing Meeting on Community Based Solid Waste Management

By
Uthpal Kumar

Background

An experience sharing meeting was held at the SPS (local NGO) meeting room on May 23, 2012. Civil society group and ward commissioner (16) was present at the sharing meeting to discuss about the issue of community based solid waste management at KCC. 10 years back SPS (a local NGO) started their activity on house to house solid waste collection and its safe disposal with support from a National NGO, Prism-Bangladesh. At the beginning community people was disagreed to pay for house to house solid waste collection, but later on community people were motivated to pay 10 taka per month. Now SPS has covered 3-wards in KCC (ward no. 9, 14 and 16). Figure 1 shows household solid waste is collecting through a plastic container and transferring waste to the van at ward no. 16 of KCC area. From the last few years (5-7 years) SPS has been suffering from financial crisis as donor support is stopped after completing of the project period in 2005. Now peri-urban project is supporting the organization for developing a sustainable community based solid waste management system at Chhoto Boira for saving the river Moyur from solid waste pollution lead by the community households.



Figure 1: House to house solid waste collection system developed by a local NGO SPS at ward no. 16 of the KCC area.

IWFM has been working in Khulna on peri-urban water security issue, financially supported by the IDRC, from the year 2010; and found that solid waste is one of the main sources of water pollution in Khulna. The river Moyur is only the freshwater river in Khulna which shared by the urban and peri-urban residents. However, this river is almost dead due to solid and liquid waste dumping from the KCC. Ecological services of this river have largely reduced due to pollution and encroachment. As a part of our peri-urban research project, we realized the importance of this river in Khulna and discussed the matter through a multi-stakeholder platform (KDA, KCC, WASA, DoE, NGOs, Civil Society groups, KU and KUET) to save the Moyur. The entire stakeholders said that we have been debating since long to save the river but we are failed to save the river Moyur. Thus, as a part of action research project, IWFM, KU and ILS have been decided to develop a community based solid waste management system at *Chhoto Boira* which could reduce solid waste dumping to the Moyur. Figure 2 shows a community sharing workshop has been conducted by ILS and SPS in Khulna. Based on the result, this activity will be replicated in other part of the Moyur for saving the river from pollution and degradation.



Figure 2: Dr. Hamidul Huq of ILS is conducting an experience sharing workshop on community participation in solid waste management in KCC, Khulna. (Phot: Mr. Nuruddin Md. Idris)

Stakeholders' Opinion

Executive Director of SPS, Mr. Alamgir Islam Lavlu said, we are now prepared to start our preliminary activity of waste collection and composting at *Chhoto Boira* peri-urban site with support from peri-urban project. We already prepared van and two people to run the activity. From first June it will be started. Community people said that KCC does not clean KCC's drain on regular basis. Moreover, most of the residential housing developed by the KDA is not linked with the main drainage system KCC. Earthen drainage is filled up by solid waste dumping and sometime blocked by huge waste from informal tea stall and shops. Mr. Sazu has been living at *Boikali* area of KCC from more than ten years. He said people's awareness is very low. Thus, community based group meeting and awareness program should be taken at each *Mohollah's* of the city. Mr. Sazu also said that he will arrange venue at his house, if such program is arranged by the SPS. Mr. Lavlu said that we already covered 1600 households under our service and it will be increased if community people support us to run the minimum project cost. Mr. Lavlu said earlier we started composting from organic solid waste but we failed to sell compost fertilizer. He said we still have tons of organic fertilizer but we could not sell it due absent of it buyer. Stakeholders of the meeting said that farmers always obey the agriculture officer. So, if we can motivate the agriculture officer to motivate the farmers for using compost, it would be easy to develop a market chain. In Khulna there are 17 NGO who started their activities of community based solid waste management. But now only 4-5 NGO are doing this job. Management of a community based solid waste project is becoming hard due to increase cost for maintenance. A local ward commissioner Mrs. Memory Sufiya Rahman Sunnu said that it is impossible for KCC to serve the house to house collection system. But we are developing communal dumping sites or first delivery point in the KCC. We hope to better serve of the KCC people. But it will be better if NGOs or Private agency leading role where KCC can support in different mode of action.



Figure 3: Newly developed composting plant at *Chhoto Boira* by a local NGO SPS with support from the IDRC supported peri-urban water security project.

Stakeholder of the meeting said that SPS is playing very good role in managing environment of the KCC but they should include drainage cleaning service which will reduce mosquito and water logging problem in the KCC. The present tariff of solid waste collection has been fixed at Taka 30 per month from June 2012. The leader of the SPS Mr. Lavlu said that he is trying to develop a community based tariff collection system forming a small committee in each ward. In the coming days drain cleaning program on a regular schedule will be taken with discussion with the community leader.

Conclusion

Community based solid waste management would be a popular program in Khulna which could save the rivers and natural water bodies from pollution and degradation. Besides, solid waste management is also important for saving public health and clean environment in the cities. Development of a sustainable community based solid waste management system is thus very challenging.