Organizing, designing, building and forming of groups and centers of Grameen Bank and its services implementation strategies in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The objective of the paper is to narrate the Grameen Bank (GB) group and center organizing, designing, forming, and building tools in Bangladesh and to identify what mistakes the author and his colleagues have made during their journey in GB. It explores how they could do better jobs in organizing, designing, building and forming groups and centers and other activities if they are skilled in the community work ahead of their jobs in GB. The paper discusses different concepts, thoughts and ideas of community organizing, community designing, community building, and different mechanisms of GB loans and savings services for poor in Bangladesh. GB is continuously changes its center organizing and building tools; and developing innovative loans, savings products those are suitable to its borrowers to overcome their poverty.

The paper narrates the author and his colleagues’ personal working experience in GB during late 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, the paper incorporates different challenges GB faces like social and economic barriers at the macro and micro level in implementing its services to poor people in Bangladesh at different times; and how GB overcomes these challenges and developed different innovative products and services in its Phase-1 and Phase-11. The narrated history of forming groups and organizing centers of GB and its different loan and savings products evolution process generates new knowledge and evidence in the field of group-based micro-credit. The process of evolution of GB would be a learning lesson for the readers, micro-finance practitioners, researchers and different community organizers in Bangladesh and elsewhere.

Keywords: Center and group management, community, civic engagement, social capital, community organizing, community building, community social planning, and Grameen Bank.

1. Introduction

This paper is about the experience of participatory decision-making process of group forming; center organizing, center designing and building of groups and centers of Grameen Bank; and implementing strategies of different savings and loan products of it in Bangladesh. The primary objective of the paper is to narrate the Grameen Bank group formation, center organizing, designing and planning experience in the villages of Bangladesh. Moreover, the paper identifies what mistakes I have made; but how I could do better jobs in group forming, center designing, organizing, planning and other activities if I have knowledge and skills on community organizing and planning ahead of my jobs in Grameen Bank in late 1970s and 1980s. Because through my working experience and research in community-based organizations in many countries, I have realized that I could do better jobs in my group forming, community (center) organizing, designing, building and center planning assignments in the 1970s and 1980s. However, the good thing is that I learn lots from mistakes and improve my jobs from there. Even Grameen Bank learns and changes many of its loans and savings products from its field experience. The GB center structure and operation system was not developed by outside experts rather its center
organizing, designing, group forming, planning and implementation strategies has been developing by the inputs come from the field staff of GB since 1976.

2. Objectives
The purposes of this paper are
- To discuss community, civic engagement of the community, community organizing, and community social capital development and their relationships to GB center organizing and group formation.
- To explore different approaches to community organizing, designing and building and applying them to Grameen Bank specific circumstances and issues
- To discuss different savings and credit products of GB both in Grameen Bank Phase-1 and Grameen Bank Phase-11 and their implementation strategies in Bangladesh.

3. Community synonym terms
The word “community” can mean different things to different people at different places. Community refers to communities of association based on religion, gender, race, or geography. Cohen (1985) defines community as a system of norms, values, and moral codes that provide a sense of identity for members. Fellin (2001) describes a community as a group of people who form a social unit based on common location (e.g., city or neighborhood), interest and identification (e.g., ethnicity, culture, social class, occupation, or age) or some combination of these characteristics.

In Bangladesh, NGOs are not using the term ‘community’ rather they are using village organizations, group, neighbourhood, center, association, or society. For example, Grameen Bank uses the term ‘Center’, BRAC uses ‘Village Organization’, ASA uses ‘Association’, Nejara Kari uses ‘Group’, Society. However, in North America, Europe and in many other countries use the term “community”. Below the paper first discusses community participatory decision-making process, community organizing, community building, community, community building and planning different thoughts and approaches; secondly the paper narrates author’s community working experience in Canada and compares his working experience with Bangladesh; thirdly, how Grameen Bank is organizing, designing, forming, building and planning its groups and centers; and how GB is managing its centers, groups; and its different loan and savings products in Bangladesh. Fourthly, the paper also discusses GB operational policies and strategies in Bangladesh at different periods.

4. Community participatory decision making process
Community organizing has implications for those who express opinions about how their intended community is shaped; participatory planning and decisions means exchanging information, ideas, opinions, and process and positions with those people who live near the neighbourhood. However, citizen participation, community people participation is necessary for every community people voice and choice. Because the concept of participatory decision-making that people should deliberate together over issues that affect their future and make decisions accordingly. It helps community members, group members and individuals understand one another’s point of view, and it facilitates decisions making for the common good (Rouf, 2016). In professional terms, participatory decision-making means that the professional or the source of political power is not the sole decision maker, rather someone who works with the people to help
them reach decisions. In community planning terms, participatory decision-making means that community planner works with people, helps them reach decisions about community designing, planning issues, and translate these decisions into planning language throughout the decision-making process. However, the problem is if the community worker is not within the community, or he/she does not know the community’s background and its different the issues behind.

Therefore, in the community meeting, community organizing and planning, community worker would be a facilitator, is not a decision maker. Rather, he should identify what community voices and choices are. If the community people spontaneously participate and express their choices that are needed for them, the community worker tries to accommodate their voices and choices into community building and planning documents. However, to reach common understanding among all community people, it is sometimes difficult. In the community participation decision-making meeting, there might many opposition views. In that situation, community organizing and planning worker might think the community is not a homogeneous or a heterogeneous or conflicting notion. There should be different opinions among the community peoples, but the community organizing worker should have skills and capacity to translate opposite views are also community views, but in the decision-making process, only include majority’s demand into community design, building and action plan as a priority basis. It is important to remember that community organizing, designing, building, and planning process is inherently democratic. Umur Toker (2012) thinks the participatory decision-making community organizing, designing and planning have been developed to achieve the following benefits:

- To let professionals become facilitators in the community decision making process of different issues and demands of the community people
- To efficiently design, manage, and analyse community design events
- To move toward consensus building
- To help reach design decisions collaboratively
- To guide parties that will contribute to and manage implementation so that the decisions made are implemented as desired by the community

5. Community organizing

Community organizing is the coordination of cooperative efforts and campaigning carried out by local residents to promote the interests of their community. Community organizing is a process where people who live in proximity to each other come together into an organization that acts in their shared self-interest. It refers to the entire process of organizing relationships, identifying issues, mobilizing around those issues, and maintaining an enduring organization. This process of building and mobilizing community is called “community organizing.” It involves "the craft" of building and enduring network of center people, who identify with common ideals, and who can engage in social action on the basis of those ideals in the context of Grameen Bank (Rouf, 2016). In practice, it is much more than micro-mobilization or framing strategy (Snow et al., 1986.). According to Saul Alinsky if the community already exists, someone has to help transform it to support political action. Sometimes that requires reorganizing the community by identifying individuals who can move the community to action.

According to Elizia Pan (2012) and Participedia community organizing is a process where people who live in proximity to each other come together into an organization that acts in their
shared self-interest. Unlike those who promote more-consensual community building, community organizers generally assume that social change necessarily involves conflict and social struggle in order to generate collective power for the powerless. A core goal of community organizing is to generate durable power for an organization representing the community, allowing it to influence key decision-makers on a range of issues over time. Community organizers work with and develop new local leaders, facilitating coalitions and assisting in the development of campaigns. Its organizers generally seek to build groups that are democratic in governance, open and accessible to community members, and concerned with the general health of a specific interest group, rather than the community as a whole. Community organizing seeks to broadly equally empower community members.

Community organizing is the process of building power that includes people with a problem in defining their community, defining the problems that they wish to address, the solutions they wish to pursue. The organization will identify the people and structures that need to be part of these solutions, and, by persuasion or confrontation, negotiate with them to accomplish the goals of the community. In the process, organizations will build a democratically controlled community institution that can take on further problems and embody the will and power of that community over time.” (Beckwith et al., 1997).

In general, community organizing is the work that occurs in local settings to empower individuals, build relationships, and create action for social change (Bobo et al, 1991; Kahn, 1991, Beckwith and Lopez, 1997). Community organization is the process that builds a constituency that can go on to create a movement, and it occurs at a level between the micro-mobilization of individuals (Snow et al, 1986). Within the Alinsky model the organizing process centers on identifying and confronting public issues to be addressed in the public sphere. In the Alinsky model, the organizer isn't there just to win a few issues, but to build an enduring organization that can continue to claim power and resources for the community--to represent the community in a public sphere pluralist polity. The organizer shouldn't start from scratch but from the community's preexisting organizational base of churches, service organizations, clubs, etc. This model uses the small group to establish trust, and build “informality, respect, [and] tolerance of spontaneity” (Hamilton 1991, 44).

6. What is community design?
Community design is the act of design the physical attributes of a community. Community design is the act of making sustainable living places that both thrive and adapt to people’s needs for shelter, livelihood, commerce, recreation and social order (Hall and Porterfield 2001, p. 3). Physical attributes of the community are location, and structure of the community organizing, building and planning. The physical structure of the community settings may affect people’s ways of doing things (Lennertz, 1991). The community design approach includes (1) a community planner or designer makes decisions with people’s interests and community planning worker’s own professional background in mind, (2) people occupy the social positions and social capital and products, and (3) people adapt to the social positions and community settings while the community settings adapt to people’s needs.

Community design is a process working with people, not for people (Hester, 1990). Therefore, a community worker works with people and facilitates a process during which people and
community workers learn from each other; the community worker translates the wishes and aspirations of the people gathered during the process into community design and uses community workers’ experience. Moreover, the social capital products like social network, solidarity are the outcome of those community designs and plans, is adapted to the people. Therefore, community design is the process of organizing community and making design decisions in collaboration with the community people who stand to be impacted by those decisions. As a community worker, we GB field workers learn from center members about their day-to-day relationships with their physical settings of their neighbourhood. Community design also is the documents, legal structure of the community plan. Therefore, GB center organizing, designing and planning is the participatory decision-making process with the center members of GB. Grameen Bank field workers advocate for participatory decision-making principles like understanding center members’ needs, adopting their situations and learning from them.

Key components of community organizing are developing a timeline, identifying tasks and instruments, tools, specifying goals, identify participatory activities of the community people, and develop outreach plan and activities.

The community design and advocacy model materialized in the US in Saul Alinsky’s work (Sanoff, 2000). As a community organizer, Allinsky went beyond planning and design issues and got involved in the social and organizational aspects of community building. He focused mainly on lower income communities and worked with them for social change. His well-known Rules for Radicals (1971) provides guidelines for proponents of this approach.

According to Umut Tokker (2012) the community design has the following stages:

- What does the community want to get out of the process?
- When and by what step does the community achieve the outcomes (timeline development)?
- What types of activities and tools is helpful for achieving the desired outcomes.
- How will community people be informed about the process and invite too provide input (identification of outreach techniques)
- Interact with the community outreach and receive inputs from them and record them
- The community design process is a nonlinear
- Collect feedback from community people before finalize community design and translate the community design into tangible products.

Outcomes of community design: Community designers go through systematic idea generation processes with group of people and translate these ideas into action for the wellbeing of community members. Such process requires a good amount off coordination, organization and collaboration. However, the question is what are the outcomes of community design processes? Following are the possible outcomes may arise from the community design. (1) Learning from each other. (2) Community people become empowered by close interactions among community people and by providing inputs to community decision making process. (3) Fulfil community intended goals. (4) Develop unique solutions for each community projects. In the community organizing process, it acknowledges and embraces the multiple ideas of people and it develops an approach that includes multifaceted input.
7. Community building
Another model of community organizing is community building, which encompasses elements of both locality development and social planning approaches. Community building focuses on strengthening the social and economic fabric of communities by connecting them to internal and outside resources (Smock, 2004). The goal of community building is to build the internal capacity of communities by focusing on their assets/strengths, and engaging a broad range of community stakeholders to develop high-quality and technically sound comprehensive plans (Smock, 2004). Moreover, community building facilitates are developing bridging and bonding of social capital in the community by creating social networks among community people and large numbers of agencies and institutions based on normative ties (i.e., a shared vision of the common good of the community). The focus is on the identifying the common interests of the community members and agencies who have a stake in the neighborhood. The field staff of Grammen Bank let group members interact among them to develop their social networks and solidarity among them as well as let them identify their own problems, and solve their problems by them through their mutual interactions, dialogues and cooperation. To develop their bridging and bonding social capital in the group and center, field workers of GB are only the facilitators and mentors of their social capital and economic capital development in their life in Bangladesh.

Building a community involves real participation with people actively engaged, creating options and making decisions about them; it is a practice of genuine democracy (Alperovitz, 2009). Community governance is about practicing that mutually agreed by the worker and the community people. Community workers develop strategies, work with strategies for stabilizing local economics, and building community include small independent firms, cooperatives, worker owned companies, neighbourhood corporations, municipal utilities and new approaches to community banking and social investing.

There is an approach called self-help and self-built approaches. It is contrast to the community organizing model. This self-help approach focuses on empowering community people by helping them develop their means and skills to effect their incremental change. John F. C. Turner (1972) endorsed individuals and families’ rights to self-build. John Lucien Kroll turned their attention more to the physical implications of self-building. Habraken, MIT community organiser, thinks develop ‘support structure’ would provide the infrastructure needed the community based on their needs. However, there is a question what happens when there are conflicting interests exist among community people? If the conflicting interests are not solved immediately, it would turn to community crisis situation.

Role players in the community design process: The leading group of people in the community are community members, community leaders, members of the local governments and members of the NGOs. Key informant is someone who can provide the community designer with ‘insider’ information, but he should not be spaying to community worker. Participant is an individual who is likely to be affected by the outcomes of the community design process and the project. Project champion is a person who is particularly interested in the success of the community organizing and believes in the advantage of community collective well-beings. Through this process, the community designer starts translating community-based ideas into planning and design language.
Muhammed Yunus is the champion of designing and streamlining the Grameen Bank centers in Bangladesh.

8. Community social planning
In terms of community social planning is a form of community organizing that focuses a technical process of problem solving regarding substantive social problems that utilizes the expertise of professionals (Rothman, 2001). The goals of community social planning include the design of community formal plans and policy frameworks for delivering goods and services to community people who need them (Rothman, 2001). The Community social planning facilitates bridging the social capital, economic capital and civic capital based on normative ties among community people. However, the focus is on the interests of participating agencies and the community at large, rather than the individual self-interest of neighbours. In case of Grameen Bank Center organizing and group formation planning, we field workers keep the center boundary within half kilometer of the neighbourhood of the members; we form a group with five members and form a center with thirty members with six groups. Conduct the center meeting within the middle location (house) of the neighbours of the members.

9. Grameen Bank group formation and center design structures in Bangladesh
Grameen Bank Project is a project of Bangladesh Bank, a Central Bank of Bangladesh, in 1976-1983. The Grameen Bank Project is attempted to serve those rural people in a group who are not covered by the traditional banking system. In order to provide loans to poor landless people in Bangladesh, the Grameen Bank project formulated the following rules and regulations, center, group and village association structures etc.

Center is the village landless association (Landless community association) of GB is organized and build by the field workers of Grameen Bank Bangladesh. The village landless association of Grameen Bank is the center of GB which is the grassroots organizational structure of landless people in GB; it is the primary and vital unit center structure of GB. In the Center, the landless micro-borrowers of GB conduct their weekly meetings, annual general meeting; discuss their different issues and plans, deposit their savings, propose for loans and receive loans, and develop their future plans. A General Assembly (Shadharan Parishhad) of the Village Landless Association is constituted with the Chairman of all the landless groups of GB.

9.1. Grameen Bank Group of formation design
Only the village landless poor are eligible to form a group. Any member from a family (i.e. a household unit) owning less than 0.4 acre of cultivable land is considered to be a landless poor person and he can form a group (five people together form a group). A group can be formed with a minimum of five members. All the members of the group are the inhabitants of the same village or neighbourhood. Group shall be formed with persons who are likeminded, are in similar economic condition and enjoy mutual trust and confidence. There shall not be more than one member from the same household in any one group. If more than one person from the same household intended to become members of the landless groups, they do so by becoming members of different groups. It is not desirable to form a group with close relatives (e.g. father, brother, uncle, father-in-law etc.). There shall be a Chairman and a Secretary in each group. They shall be elected by the group members. Election will be held at the time when a group is formed and subsequently in the month of Chaitra (last month of Bengal calendar year) every year.
Chairman and Secretaries elected in the month of Chaitra will assume their offices from the first of Baishak, the first day of the Bengal year. As of June 2018, GB has 2,568 branches in Bangladesh, its total numbers of groups are 1,384,180 and total numbers centers are 139,314 and it is working in 81,675 villages.

9.2. Grameen bank center design, savings and loans transactions policies and their implementing instructions

Below is describing the Grameen bank center design, savings and loans transactions policies and their implementing instructions.

The Biddimalla also has an article (article 10) that designs center meeting structure, rules and regulations. Meeting center of the GB borrowers is a place where borrowers organize and conduct their weekly group meetings in their neighbours. Each meeting-center shall have a ‘Center-Chief’. The group Chairmen of all the groups in the center shall elect a Center-Chief and a Co-Center Chief’ from among themselves. The Center Chief’ and the Co-Center Chief’ shall be elected in the month of Asharh (June) every year. They shall assume their offices on the first day of Shraban (July). The overall responsibility of conducting weekly meeting shall rest on the “Centre-Chief”. In his absence, the Co-Center-Chief’, shall perform this responsibility.

The savings, insurance and loan products of GB and their repayment systems designed at different times to address GB borrowers’ different needs and situations. Grameen Bank executives particularly Muhammed Yunus always looks at the center organizing, group forming, and their management dynamics, clients’ socio-economic dynamics and the chain of command of GB management dynamics. For example, Grameen Bank has developed the disaster loan products at different times to address the borrowers’ disasters situations, but they are different from normal loan transaction systems. Grameen Bank group formation and center management experience is not always linear. There have been huge conflicts among group members, facing breakdowns of groups, and violation of disciplines of bad debt defaulters since inception. Many abnormal situations created by the disaster suffering borrowers.

9.3. Bylaws (Biddimalla) of Grameen Bank

The bylaws of Grammen Bank are called Bidimalla that is drafted in 1978 and is finalised in 1981. Group and Center of Grameen Bank and their designs, structures, functions; conducting group meetings, GB loans and savings products etc, describes in the Biddimalla. As part of conducting the meeting, the Center Chief shall ensure attendance of the group members at the meetings, payment of installments and overall discipline and order. He shall help the bank worker present at the meeting in receiving installments and deposits and explaining bank rules. If any Center Chief absents him from half or more of the weekly meetings held during any three consecutive months, the post of the Center Chief shall be deemed to have fallen vacant and a new Center Chief shall be elected in his place. In the Article 10.6 the Biddimalla also mentions if the Center Chief becomes a ‘difficult loanee’ at any time i.e. if he does not pay his installments for ten consecutive weeks or remains absent from the weekly meetings for ten consecutive weeks or if he has not fully repaid his loan in 52 weeks), he shall be disqualified for the post of Center Chief and the post of the Center Chief shall be deemed to have fallen vacant. In such cases, a new Center Chief shall be elected to replace him.
9.4. **Duties and responsibilities of the group members of Grameen Bank**

The Chairman and the Secretary of a group maintain constant contact with the Landless Association and the loan-giving Bank (borrowers of GB receive loans from different national commercial banks during 1978-1983; however, the borrowers directly receive loans from Grameen Bank when GB become an independent Bank). The Chairman and the Secretaries of the groups is responsible for recommending credit requirement of the individual members, ensuring proper utilization of the credit and repayment of loans. All members of the group should remain present in the weekly meetings of the group. The weekly center meeting, each member of the group must deposit at least one taka (One taka until 2000, five taka since then) as his regular savings. This amount which is collected is as his/her weekly savings deposit in the group’s own account with the Bank. In the weekly meeting, the Chairman of the group maintains discipline, collect weekly dues from the individual members and deposit it to the representative of the Bank.

Here most important strategy of the bank is the bank officials goes to the door-step of the borrowers and collect the money from the borrowers’ neighbourhood whereas in Canada micro-credit borrowers have to deposit their installments and savings in the office. Every member of the group must be fully aware of his responsibilities as a member and of the rules and regulations governing the activities of the group. All members keep vigilance over each other regarding the proper use of bank credit and regular payment of installment. They also make sure that every member attends the weekly meetings regularly. Any person qualified as per provisions of these regulations, may become a member of a particular group at any time subject to the consent of all the members of that group. At the beginning (1978-1985) maximum ten people could form a group, but after 1986, only five people can form a group. Moreover, if the group has defaulter borrowers or any one decline to continue to be members of the group, there may be less than five people (at least three) in a group. If there are less than three members in an existing group, the members of less than three people should merge to the nearest another group (1990). This process is called GB group-based collateral free microcredit.

If a member of group is found indulging in activity subversive of discipline (such as absence from weekly meetings, irregularity in payment of installments, etc.) the remaining members can impose fine on him. The money so received deposits in the Group Fund. Group Fund structure and its functions discuss later in the paper.

There is a rule for member for leaving the group. A member who has no outstanding liability with the bank may leave the group voluntarily at any time. While leaving the group, he/she is allowed to take back the entire amount of his personal savings. If a member who has no outstanding liability with the bank may leave the group voluntarily at any time. While leaving the group, he shall be allowed to take back the entire amount of his personal savings. If a member, who has outstanding bank loans, desires to leave the group, he must repay the entire bank loan before he leaves the group. If any member leaves the group without paying off his bank loans, the group shall be responsible for repayment of the loan of the member concerned. If the members dissolve the group without repaying bank loans, the Center (Association) is liable
to pay off all the outstanding loans. This rule has been functional usually all non-defaulter and disciplined centers. However, defaulter groups or bad debt undisciplined centers enable to collect the pay off the outstanding loans from all the members of the center, rather create chaos in the center. In such situation, GB has provision for write-off the bad debt loan since 1990.

Here is a rule in the Biddimalla section 7.4 mentions that if the membership of any group is reduced to less than five members due to desertion by one or more of its members, the group concerned must fulfill the condition of minimum membership i.e. five) within 3 months by enrolling new members. It is okay in the disciplined group. However, after 1990 many group members are absent in the group for long time and center is unable to the gap meaning take new members in the group to fulfill five members in a group. Therefore, many groups have been running in GB centers for long (mostly after 1991). If the required number of new members cannot be enrolled within the prescribed time-limit, the incomplete group has to merge with some other group.

Alternatively, two or more incomplete groups may unite to form a complete group. This practice is continuing now to fill up the gaps of the group membership where needed. However, it is a very complex job to merge one incomplete group with other groups to make five group memberships in a center because it required lots of paper works, change bookkeeping and share transfer jobs etc. Please note that members can buy one share of GB started in 1983, but the Bidimalla was written in 1978. This new rule is included but it is not in the Bidimalla. Buying GB share certificates and their instructions prepare separately in 1983. Huge paper works needed for maintaining the members’ share buying and selling transactions.

There is another Article in section 9.0 of the Biddimalla that states if the total quantity of land owned by the family of any member during the tenure of his membership of the Landless Association exceeds 0.4 acre or the value of the assets owned by his family exceeds the amount prefixed by the bank, he shall be compelled to resign from his membership of the Association. Field workers are trying to find out the real information from the respective members, screened by cross checking with other members of the center and or with their neighbours about the assets or land owned by the members; however, many members hide their actual assets and liability information to the field workers. Now many GB borrowers are receiving loans from multiple agencies are working in their areas by hiding information to GB.

Therefore, many borrowers of GB who have huge loan burden; many of them become defaulters and they are noising in the center if expel them or forced them resign from membership from GB. These default borrowers influence other members to breach the discipline of the group or center until GB accept him to provide further loans to him. To face such defunct situation of the center or group is challenging for many field staff. Even I have faced many indiscipline group members in the centers. GB field offices cannot sue to against aggressive borrowers. Only motivation and negation has been the tools for tackling such defunct borrowers. Therefore, it is difficult to follow the bylaws of the Center/group legal design and structure because field workers sometimes need to negotiate with the demand and request of members. However, field workers have faced the audit for departing their job from the written instructions.
10. Working experience in the field of GB
At the beginning in 1976-1977, GB employees work in the Grameen Bank Project without community work experience and without manuals. For example, there are no guidelines, knowledge and idea how we field workers can organize the centers in order to develop the center structures and functions. After working three years from scratch in 1978, a Biddimala (bylaw) draft is streamlined from field experience and then the Bidimalla is supplied to the field officials. The improved version of the Biddimala was circulated in 1981. We follow the bylaws of group formation, center organizing, designing, center structure and center management of GB. The written bylaws of GB center legal structure and functions assist us to do our jobs in a better way by following Biddimala. This Biddimla has been a training manual for the trainees and the field staffs of Grameen Bank since 1981.

In 1980s and onwards, GB has developed written guidelines and instructions for loan transactions and savings collections rules and regulations for the field workers to follow them uniformly in Bangladesh. It was hectic for us (the field workers) to face the disaster situations at different times and uniformly follow and apply the instructions to borrowers. However, the good thing is if we field workers inform our problems and disaster situation as well as the departing situation for addressing the disaster of the borrowers to the head office, then head office is flexible to immediately change the instructions. We adapt and respond to the ongoing situations to face and to solve the problems through interactive center meetings management process. In this way, we field staff follow the center participatory decision making process under the framework of the GB bylaws and other instructions, Nitimallas. We find center and group decisions are more effective to members if it is quickly response to their knowledge and inputs from them.

However, at the pilot stage of Grameen Bank project, we field officials including Muhammed Yunus work without any guideline. Whatever daily working experience have with micro-borrowers, we field workers discuss our daily experience in person with Muhammed Yunus. The venues are in different school fields, under trees or other public places. When the loan demand increased more than one village, it is requested by field staffs to make a guideline that can help all field workers work uniformly specially center organizing, group forming, loan disbursing, and savings is collecting etc. The Biddimaala streamlines all the field experience of staff and rules and regulations of forming groups and centers of GB. The different loan products and savings invention of GB have developed at different times to address the changing environment of the borrowers of GB.

Each loan products operation instructions (Nitimala) and their implementation guidelines are also changed at different time to address borrowers’ different situations. Borrower’s weekly savings, Group Funds and Center Emergency Disaster Funds, Grameen Pension Scheme (GPS) and other participatory innovative financial safety net savings products (weekly regular savings, individual voluntary savings, and insurance etc.) have changed at different time as well as their book keepings and accounting jobs. However, the Bidimala, (the bylaw) of group forming, center organizing, designing and building of GB remain unchanged (1979-2018).
However, there are chaotic situations have existed in the center with other members of the center which the bank workers need to solve them immediately. Because the center chief become influential in the center and he diverts the members towards biased him. He does not listen or follow bylaw of the bank rather claim for undue demands like provide more loans to defaulters although defaulters are not regularly paying loans and breach the center discipline. Many center chiefs have linked with political giants and they give us hard time by asking for undue loans or claim for undue demands from the Bank.

11. Grameen Bank Phase 1
11.1. Group Fund savings products
Group fund savings dissolve in Grameen Bank Phase-2 in 2001. However, Group Fund savings had been running from 1978-2000. In group fund account, five percent of the loan amount shall be deducted as contribution to the Group Fund. This amount of money is known as ‘group tax’ or ‘group saving’. This money shall be deposited in the group’s own account and the member has no personal right or claims over it. All members have equal rights to this fund. Withdrawals from this fund shall be made under joint signatures of the group Chairman and the Branch Manager. While withdrawing money from this account, the group Chairman and the Secretary has to be present in person at the bank.

If any member of the group intends to leave the group voluntarily or is expelled at any time, he shall not get any share of this money. The combined fund of group savings and weekly individual savings shall be known as ‘Group Fund’. Up to a maximum of 50% of the total amount accumulated in the Group Fund may be borrowed and invested by the group members’ jointly in partnership with another group and or taken by individual group members as loans for any purpose with the approval of all the members. In taking individual loans from the Group Fund, a special meeting of the group members in the presence of the bank worker shall be necessary. Money from the Group Fund may be withdrawn only on the basis of unanimous decision of that meeting. This meeting decides the term, repayment procedures etc. of the loan.

Moreover, five percent of the loan money shall be deducted as ‘Group Tax’ at the time of disbursement of loans from the Group Fund. Each group fixes its own rate of interest on loans from the Group Fund (the group may also advance loans without charging any interest, if it so desires). The rate so fixed applies to all loans. The group is fully responsible for the recovery of the loans given from the Group Fund. However, if this loan money is not repaid in due time according to its terms and conditions, it is considered by the bank as breach of discipline of the group. When a member leaves the group, he is entitled to a refund of the entire amount of his personal savings deposited in the Group Fund at the rate of one taka per week. This personal savings, however, cannot be withdrawn for any other reason except this one.

If any member of the group does not repay bank loans willingly or unwillingly, the loan has to be repaid in full from the Group Fund deposits. If any loan taken from the Group Fund remains unpaid even after the expiry of the agreed time limit, no new loan shall be advanced from the Fund. If all the members of any group leave the group willingly or if the members do not keep the group in operation, the group savings of that particular group shall be deposited in the
Emergency Fund of the Center/association. All the loonies shall pay interest on all loans taken from the bank at the rate fixed by the bank. However, many anti propaganda, campaign against the group fund savings. In 2001, group fund savings rules erased from Grammen Bank bylaws.

11.2. Emergency Fund
The center emergency fund is one of the safety net services to the members of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. This emergency fund generates from borrowers’ contribution. After payment of the total interest accrued on bank loan, an amount equal to half that amount is deposited in a special fund of the Center/Association which is called ‘Emergency Fund’. This fund creates through compulsory contributions of all the members of the center deposited in the Emergency Fund. Money accumulates in the Emergency Fund of the center/association can spend for the following purposes: To repay the bank loan of any member who becomes unable to repay the loan due to any accident (e.g. the death of a cow purchased with the loan money, damage of a rickshaw in accident etc.). This emergency fund can extend grants for repayment of the outstanding amount of loans in case a member of any group fails to repay his/he loan for any other reason where the total saving of the particular group is not sufficient repayment of the same.

Moreover, the emergency fund utilises for other activities making arrangement for veterinary services, adoption of health care programmes for the members etc.). However, the expenses for such programmes shall not exceed 50% of the total savings in the Emergency Fund. Moreover, arrangement of insurances of different types for the members e.g. cattle insurance, crop insurance, life insurance etc. pay from the emergency fund. The money from the Emergency Fund can be spent in such programs only on the basis of decisions taken by the General Assembly of the Center/Association.

The Emergency Fund operates under the joint signatures of the Center Chief and Associated Center Chief and the field Manager. Loan taken from the bank repays generally in weekly installments according to the terms and conditions of the loan. However, the loan money must be utilized within one week of the receipt of the loan in activities for which it has been taken. Those who will fail to utilize the money within one week must keep it deposited in the bank until opportunity for its proper utilization comes. Any sort of deviation from this shall be considered as serious breach of discipline.

11.3. Loan disbursement and repayment procedures
Credit facilities offered by the bank to the members shall primarily depend on the regular attendance of all group members in the weekly meetings, their sense of discipline and regularity in payment of loan installments. Failure of members to attend weekly meetings in time, absence from meetings, underpayment of loan installments, non-payment etc., disqualify the group for receiving the bank facilities.

Loans are given to borrowers only after Grameen Bank recognizes group members. The bank considers loan applications from the registered members (receivers of the loans) of the groups, for different economic activities. Group membership alone is not entitled a member to get back loans. The members are considered qualified for loans from the bank only if they abide the rules and regulations of the bank. Receiving loans by the remaining members in subsequent turns
demand on regular payment of installments by the members who already received loans, and strict observance of rules and regulations by all group members.

In the article section 4.4 of the Biddimalla mentions that all loans are taken from the Bank is generally repayable in weekly installments in the weekly center meetings of the center. In cases where the utilization of a loan generates opportunity for daily or weekly incomes, the loans have to be paid off in weekly installments. However, in cases where utilization of a loan does not create opportunity for daily or weekly incomes but generates a large income in a lump after the expiry of a certain period of time, a “token installment” can be paid every week. The remaining amount should be paid in one single installment immediately after the receipt of the lump income. Failure to pay this token weekly installment is considered as breach of discipline as in cases of non-repayment of “regular” installments.

12. Functions of the members of Grameen Bank

The Biddimalla (bylaws) of Grameen Bank mentions that it is the responsibility of the center/association to motivate its members to create among them a proper attitude, a sense of discipline and a spirit of cooperation among each other and with the bank, to take full advantage of the opportunities created by the Grameen Bank in order to change their social and economic conditions. The Center/association takes special care to create a sense of responsibility among the members and the groups who are callous and prone to violate rules and regulations of the bank. The center/association considers it as its responsibility to ensure proper utilization and timely repayment of all loans given by the bank to its members.

The center takes steps to create opportunities of training for, and take new initiatives in, helping increases the efficiency and skill of the members in different trades with a view to ensuring gradual improvement of their economic condition through the financial cooperation of the bank. The Center/association evolves and develops within itself a permanent and effective institutional mechanism for mediation in, and settlement of all disputes and removal of misunderstanding among its members.

The Center takes special care to create and maintain a cordial and cooperative atmosphere among its members. All center members meet once in at least two months and after reviewing its program, take practical steps to keep the center/association moving forward. The Center Chief of the center maintains regular contact with the bank and extends all help and cooperation to the bank authorities for smooth operation of this special credit program. In practice, usually center itself do not call meetings for reviewing their performance and defaults rather sometime they sit together for conspire against repayment, stop savings, increase loan size or blame bank reduce interest rates, waive interest rates. Sometimes center leaders call for meeting for voting to their favourite leaders etc. Although these deviant type meetings are not frequent, but general borrowers suffer for following center disciplines and repaying their loans. In such situation, bank managers, and area managers visit together and talk about the negative effects of negative propaganda for refreshing and motivating borrowers. Sometimes several meetings need to reorganize and to revive the center discipline.

I joint Grameen Bank in GB Project Office in Dhaka in April 1980. After one day briefing, I am sent to Narandia Tangail Branch which is 250 km from my home village Comilla and 150 Km away from Dhaka Capital City. The Bank of Narandia Project office is situated in the Narandia Bazar and all the branch staffs live in a Tin Sheet house beside the branch. There is no latrine in the branch or near the branch. However, luckily there is a Tube well that we use for cooking, washing, baths, and drinking water.

I am shadowed under an existing bank manager of the branch. I go to a village called Palima with him by walking on my second day in the branch. We talk together on the way; the manager describes me his working experience how he has organized the landless associations, centers and form groups; and what are the challenges he has faced to conduct meetings, form groups, organize centers and deal with the village elites. Before we arrive at the center meeting at 7.30 am, all center male members sit together in an open space under a tree. The center chief starts the meeting and then the bank worker collects the loan installments and savings from borrowers. At the end of the meeting, three members proposed for their loans, the respective group chairman, and center chief endorsed their loan proposals and then bank worker receive the loan proposals; we visit the second center meeting in another village Pusna Pallima at 9:00 am the same day. I am amazed to see the discipline of the members of centers and loan repayment and savings collection system and their recordings and bookkeeping.

We walk to a new village adjacent to the meeting centers. There I observe, twenty women are waiting for us in a house. The manager and a bank worker talk with them about how to form groups, centers; how to maintain center disciplines, conduct meetings; how to propose loans and get loans for them and deposit savings in the bank. They talk with us for 45 minutes. We ask them to choose five women together to form a group and attend for seven consecutive days for group training in the same place at the same time. Afterward, we returned to the office. The bank worker completes his bookkeeping jobs and other paper works related to loans collection and savings deposits. It takes him about one hour. Then we go for lunch for one hour in the dormitory where we live. We again go to another village for group training at 2:30 pm, return to the office at 5:30 pm and debrief our whole day jobs with other branch staffs.

The manager tells me next day I should work independently; know myself about the branch geography, village names; land leasing system, sharecropping system, big trees in villages, loan borrowing formal and informal agencies exist in villages and their loan borrowing mechanisms and conditions. Moreover, I should know about different classes of people, and their occupations and social locations. Map out different physical infrastructures in the area like roads, bridges, rivers, canals, big ponds, hospitals/clinics, schools (when they established, how many students, (male and female students)), droop out student numbers in each grade. Moreover, I visit different clubs, government offices; I also visit religious institutions like Mosques, churches, temples to find out the Purdah system, religious rituals, customs, people’s local traditions, values, and believes etc. of the local people within the branch area.

Moreover, I collect local market products and their prices; visit cooperatives and commercial banks, NGOs, private and public institutions that are working in the area. I explore local
transportation facilities, means of agriculture, irrigation facilities for agriculture, pure drinking water facilities and cultivable lands and their frequency of annual crop productions in the area. My job also includes knowing about the demographics and literacy rates of each village, main manufacturing products, and their processing centers. Moreover, I discern money lenders economy, share economy practices in the villages, wages of different occupants, and laborers both male and women; poor people’s household economy, different economic opportunities available for the poor people, and other loan proving institutions in the villages. I collect data on food habits of the poor people, women status in the family and in the society; and village arbitration system. In addition to these, find out people’s citizenship participation status in public decision-making practices. Moreover, I collected floods, cyclones, hurricanes, draughts and other natural disasters events and their records in the area and their effects on public life.

In addition, I survey what are social, economic, political and environmental different sufferings of the people in the area? The branch manager also advises me to find out where and how many poor associations/centers can be formed for Grameen Bank, He also asks me to collect detail two case histories of two poor women from two villages. I draw a map with all information in a big sheet and submit it to the office after two months.

In addition to all these jobs, the manager also ask me organizes open house meetings, conduct group training, and attend special meetings with other branch staffs where they would be.

In order to collect all this information, I go out every day in the villages to find out and to talk with money lenders, farmers, labours, fishermen, carpenters, blacksmiths, formal and informal elites, village Punchayets. Moreover, I visit backyard poultry, homesteads gardening, identify food intake behaviors of people like what they are eating and how many meals they take per day; what they are buying. Besides, I attend different Punchayet meetings in the villages and observe their arbitration system.

I map out the geographical boundary of the branch. At the same, I visit and attend the existing centers’ meetings of Grameen Bank and observed members’ attitudes, behaviors and disciplines. Simultaneously, I learn office documentation jobs. It is very labor intensive and hardworking jobs, but I enjoy my apprentice job in the branch. Although I born and raise in a village in Bangladesh; however, I do not know about the miserable life of the poor people particularly poor women in villages. Usually, all GB field workers do the same survey jobs that I have done.

14. My first experience of organizing groups and center schools in Grameen Bank
On the third day morning (7:30 am) of my posting in the branch, Narandia Kalihati, I go to Luhuria village by walking, which is four miles away from the branch that is within the boundary of the branch. The purpose is to know about the physical geography of the village and peoples’ occupations, socio-economic conditions, their dress code, house patterns, irrigation system, crops processing mechanisms, and to know what children are doing in the morning, noon, evening and night time. I observe many day labours and farmers are working the fields, plowing lands with cows/buffalos; many children (6-14) are assisting their parents in the crop field; many women are manually processing their crops in their houses. Poor women are working in the rich and upper middle farmers’ houses.
At 10:00 am, I sit under a tree for taking rest and to eat the biscuits that I carried with me. Many labours come to the tree for taking rest and for smoking. I informally talk with them; know about their life, about their socio-economic conditions as well as know what their wives and children are doing at home, and what they do in lean session etc. After one hour I visit a school to know about the school and its students. At 2:00 pm, I again sit under another tree where many straw cottages are located and many women do bamboo works in their houses. Some women ask me why I, a literate person, am sitting in this place. According to them, none in their life have seen a literate person sit and talk with poor women.

I introduce myself to them and tell them about Grameen Bank micro-credit program service opportunity for the poor people in their area. If they are interested, I could provide them with more information about the bank. One senior lady tells me that the village poor ladies are not smart enough to understand my discussing topics. She offers me come to this neighborhood next night and discuss services of GB with people. I agree. However, when I am returning to the office around 3:00 pm of the day, on the way I observed many naked malnourished children are paying marble game besides the street. I ask them why they are not going to school.

I again went to Luhuria village by walking next day and talked with people at street corners, Madras, and school playgrounds and offer them to attend the open house meeting at the North West Luhuria neighbourhood about my open house meeting in the evening. At 5:00 pm, I find many poor children are sitting under a tree and gossiping there. As a fun, I show my fingers one by one to teach them numbers. Some children quickly learn numbers by displaying fingers and enjoy. I tell them if they could come here every evening to learn literacy and numeracy skills, I’ll teach them voluntarily. There is a lady seated beside us; she invites me to teach the poor kits here. She can assist me to open a school here. She tells me, in school, teachers are not allowing poor children to be in the classes without having clothing. I started pity and parrot exercise with the children in open spaces in their neighbourhood. Twenty-five children started to learn basic literacy classes and do the exercise here with joy. I have continued teaching in this center school and named it the Luhuria Center School.

At one moon night, I and other staff of the branch visit another neighbourhood located at the South West Luhuria to conduct another open house meeting to inform them about the mission, vision, objectives of Grameen Bank. About fifty people (male and female) attend this open house meeting. Men sit in front of us; women sit behind of us and they listen to our speech. I observe many middle-class men also attended the open house meeting. We talk there for one hour that night. Many people express their interest in receiving loans from GB.

I collect people names and tell them I would come to this place for providing training on the GB group formation mechanism, center structure, members/borrowers responsibilities, loan transaction system; savings deposit collections and repaying rules and regulations. They request me to conduct training in this place at early night. I tell them they (loan receiving interested people) should prove me all information on their assets and liabilities during the training period. Those poor people properly completed the training are able to register with GB and qualify for the loans.
In order to provide training to the poor people, I go to the agreed scheduled place every night at 7:00 pm. We sit together on a mat in an open space under a tree. There I teach them GB manual for ten days. At the beginning of the training, twelve men attend the training sessions but only five people continue to complete the training. These five trained people agree to abide by the rules and regulation of the bank. They chose their own group chair and group secretary and filled the GB Form-I. Form-I is a form for collecting socio-economic demographic data from the trained members. The trained five men deposit their seven days savings (each one taka for one day) Tk. 35.00 in the bank at the end of the training. With this savings money, they opened their group fund account in the bank.

Although the training starts at night, I go to the center school every day at 4:30 pm to teach basic literacy and numerical skills to the children. The total numbers of children (both sex different ages) increase to forty-five in the center school. I accept them whatever their dress codes are. In the center school, children first play for half an hour and then sit under the tree for learning the basic literacy skills.

One day it is raining during the lessons period in the school. It affects children learning. I discuss this situation with their parents; they agree to build a house with bamboo and straw within three days. The house is built and children learn in this house. The house named “Center House “; the members propose this house could be used for educating the children religious education and basic literacy education as well as conducting the weekly center school. This house also can be used for group training at night.

After two weeks of membership registration of the trainees, firstly two members of the group receive loans, then another two members and lastly the Chairman of the group receive loan. The loan size varies from $100-$125. I start to collect savings and installment from them every Monday morning. However, every day I go to this neighbourhood by walking for teaching poor children. On my way to this village, I talk with other villagers whoever I meet. It is my tremendous exciting job that I have enjoyed. I utilize this working experience to organize community schools in other countries like Afghanistan, Namibia, Lesotho, and Botswana when I work there.

On one day noon, I meet with a moneylender under a Bansai tree. He is looking at me in an angry mood and asks me why I have giving loans to poor people in this village. I answer him with honor that the bank has mandated to provide loans to poor people here. He again utters at me and tells me I should not again come to this village. The borrowers come to me and tell me that this man also cautious them do not borrow money from the bank. They are scary. I talk to the office about this situation. Next day we all office staff go to the village and make clear that it is their liberty and rights to receive loans from wherever they like. We also request rural elites do not threat the borrowers who received loans from GB. However, the money lender is not cool but he keeps silent.

I have another open house meeting with poor people in other parts of the village. We (I and the manager) are talking with women in a house near their locations. Three people (the moneylender, Immam, and a Mattabarr (village leader)), meet us in the open house meeting and challenge us
why we are talking with women that break the Purdah in the village. We make a dialogue with them and confirm them poor women are not destroying their Purdah by attending the meeting rather we are helping them to involve in income generation activities to alleviate their poverty. After a long conversation with them, the Mattabarr tells us women field workers can do jobs with women borrowers. However, the moneylender cautious me I should not come to the village for giving loans to poor people. I ask him why? He replays to me that the bank loan receivers are not labouring in his lands. I find it is his conflict of interest with GB loan program.

I tell the Imam that the women attendees are maintain their veiling and Purdah in the meeting; and I am respectful to their Purdah. I am also a Muslim. Women attendees and I are not breaching the Purdah here. It is a hectic situation for me to work in this village. I immediately report to the Union Councillor of the village; and I narrate him about my mission, vision and activities in the village, but the protest against my work from the elites are disturbing my job. I explain him about GB project which is recognized by the Government of Bangladesh. If rich people of this village can receive loans from commercial loans; poor people (both men and women) have rights to receive loans from Grameen Bank.

After forty years, now I understand people who are working in the community in a more sustainable way our community change agents. This work requires understanding the environmental, economic, political and social system and their interconnectedness and the ability to think of multiple scales in the face of very big issues. However, the community organizing work needs courage, patient, and ability to love and interact with all classes of people outside of job descriptions, understand disciplines and engage in big thinking. Community workers require the ability to communicate clearly, listen and collaborate with the community; it demands humility, authentic appreciation for diverse ways of serving community people and thinks; recognize all peoples mistakes and efforts in together for their integrative positive development. It is important because of the majority of people in the community struggle with issues of everyday life and economic survival in the capitalistic society.

People are willing to make change if the changes are very easy to do or if they took solutions that lead to better life both at collective and individual labels. In order to have effective social diffusion, community workers must be trust worthy of the beneficiaries meaning community workers thinking, services and mixing with the community people in such a way they realize community worker is working for their wellbeing. Therefore, it is important to contact people in person at their door steps which is very effective in spreading innovative work and influential sustainable behaviour. Community workers’ simple language communication is appreciating and important for understandable to community people.

Moreover, community workers should have the willingness to form partnerships among community people, particularly who do not cooperate for whom he/she is working for in the community. Community sustainability work is not a single pathway rather sustainability has many goals, issues are many and varied, but each of us has our own sets of skills and understanding. But these skills and understanding should open; openness to accept or deal with all issues and tries to satisfy all peoples need and demand. The more we are open to alternative voices, the stronger our social community design and community build that could enhance our
richer choice of potential sustainable community collective futures. These all skills can develop among community workers through hard work and love community people. It is more likely to generate novel responses to changing conditions, and some of the innovation leads to solutions with good fit to new conditions (Worldwatch Institute, 2013).

I tell the local councilor of the village that if women members of GB do business and earn extra money in the family, they can use this money for their children’s education, food intake and for a better life etc. The councilor attentively listens to me, but he does not give me the answer. However, I challenge myself and continue my group training job with women in the neighbourhood. However, the women who are interested to take loans from GB, they decline to receive group training and to receive loans from the bank. I ask them why they have declined to receive training and receive loans from GB. They report to me that the money lender, Immam, and Mattabbar threat them; they shall be ousted by the elites if they receive loans from GB. I talk with the poor people and explained to them the conflict of interested of the elites against their loan receiving. To destroy their vicious cycle of poverty, it is necessary to take the challenge with these unethical elites. They should challenge this threat. I am also the part of their challenge. They inspire. Although my group training job is disturbed, I continue my group training and loan collection jobs in addition to my center school voluteering teaching job there. All classes of people in the village support me to do my volunteering schooling job there.

I am always looking for alternatives and dialogue with the people where I am obstructed to do my center organizing jobs. My jobs have not been linear since I work in Grameen Bank. I always adapt the situation with alternatives and following Biddimalla, the bylaws of GB.

There are three groups (fifteen members) form in this Luhuria Center in three months. I get strength and support from the poor people of the neighbourhood. It is a hard work and it needs a lot of talk with the elites and with the poor people to understand my job in the village. In the fifth month, six poor widowed, three single poor mothers come to me for providing them with training and loans. They tell me that their children have been suffering from food, housing, clothing, education and healthcare for long. Rural elites exploit their labours. They want to do their own business by taking loans from the bank.

At the seventh months, one female group is registered and received loans from the bank. It is hurrah for these people and for me. The message spreads all over the village and neighbouring villages. The situation is favorable to me for working with poor women in the village and the neighbouring villages. The center members are the spokesmen of my work in the villages. After one year, I am able to form four male groups in one center and six women groups in another center in the West North Luhuria village neighbourhood and two center schools in the village. One female field worker is recruited in the branch who takes over the charge of the female center instead of me. I have immediately seen the socio-economic change of the members of Grameen Bank while I am working with them. For example, their weekly income has increased, their family members eat three meals a day, members buy new clothes for their children. They are happy with their business and income; I am excited to see the immediate positive change in the members’ life.
I also start to organize another women group and male group separately in the neighbouring village, Kurua, in the seventh month of my posting in the branch. The male group meeting is in the South East part of the Kurua village and women group in the middle of the village. In the open house meeting in this village, I talk to people about my working experience in the neighbouring village Luhuria like organizing a center school there. They get the reference point of my work. When I collect installments and savings in Luhuria village centers, three women from Kurua to visit the center activities and to talk with the members of the Luhuria center who provided them (the visitors from Kuria) positive experience of income generations, center disciplines and their solidarity in the center. The visitors of Kurua village encourage them to join GB and do business with the borrowing loan. I am inspired to start group training in Kuria village. Ten poor women and five men are trained to register with GB.

However, one day noon, three boys come to the branch and blames me I am involved with a love affair with one divorced young lady, a member of a group, although it is false. I am surprised even the lady is ousted from the group by their neighbours. However, this woman is chosen as a chair of one group. However, thereafter she declined herself to be a group chair with frustration. The other group members also declined to form groups. I find three young boys from rich families of the village are observing my activities in the village; their fathers are elites of the village. I continued to conduct training for male members. After one-day training session with male members, I do not find my cycle; it is stolen. I am nervous, but I suspect these young boys who are the thieves of my cycle. These boys who blamed me about love affairs with the divorced young lady. I report to a teacher in the neighbourhood who is an influential person in the village.

Next day morning one center schoolboy of the Kurua village secretly tell me he has seen my cycle under the water of a pond. I give this information to the teacher to whom I seek help rescue my cycle. He calls a meeting near the ponds with three other Mattabbars. They asked a boy for search the cycle. After searching, the boy brings the cycle from a pond to the arbitration place. The teacher calls the three young boys (who blamed me with the love affairs with the young divorced lady). After cross-talking with the lady, the boys and with me; the teacher found it is a false conspiracy against me for stopping me center organizing training in this Kurua village. These boys steel my cycle. It is a conspiracy instructed by the money lender, the Mattabar, and the Imam. The teacher advises the villagers including these elites and the boys they should cooperate with me to do my jobs in the village. The teacher also warns them do not make false blamed against me rather cooperate me to work in the village.

Next day I visited each of the poor women in the neighbourhood and invited them for receiving group training in their own neighbourhood. The blamed divorced lady is happy and she agrees to continue her group chair responsibility with GB. Later she became the Center Chief of the center when there were fifteen members registered in the center. However, it takes me two months to revive and to reorganize the groups and the center. Many poor males assist me to form male groups in this Kurua neighbourhood.

Moreover, I again face a serious sensitive religious problem when start to organize another female group and center training in other parts of the village. Muslim people decline to be in one center if Hindu people are in the same center although all Hindu people and Muslim people are
in separate groups. I already completed bookkeeping jobs of this center and included both religious people in one center. It was a serious sensitive issue raised by Muslim religious leaders in the village even it spread to neighbouring villages. Thereafter, I split the center into two centers with homogenous religious faith people, but I was in tension if any uncomfortable situation and issue arise among the people. However, my alternative steps of separating two centers by religion have assisted me to avoid the faith-based tension among members. I talk about this problem to the manager, and I corrected my bookkeeping jobs for these two centers with his permission.

I describe the above two villages’ group formation challenging job experience to inform the readers that community organising, designing, building, and planning needs to tailor and adapt to the local situation although there might have job guidelines and instructions are assigned for community workers. The Grameen Bank microcredit program in the village is not welcomed by money lenders, elites and rich people in 1970s and 1980s because the Grameen Bank group-based micro-financing is threatening to money lenders. The reason is Grameen microcredit services hamper money lenders money lending business in the villages.

The Grameen Bank micro-credit lending program liberates and relives poor people from money lenders bondage, exploitation, and injustice. The borrowers’ incomes have increased by using loans received from GB. The elites felt uneasy and jealous for poor children schooling. The rich people cannot use poor children as cheap labour working for them. Poor women do the business of their own instead of doing jobs in rich peoples’ houses. Poor women are saved from false blame by Mullahs’ Purdah domination. Grameen bank activities in these two villages spread to other neighbouring villages. Later I receive a support from the group members if I faced any difficulty in organizing, forming, designing, groups and centers in villages. After one year, it is easy for me to form groups in other villages.

As male group members and borrowers are working in the outside of their homes, I conduct the male center meetings and their loan collection sessions at night (6:00 pm-8:00 pm), but women center meeting conduct in the morning (7:30 pm-9:30 am). I am respectful of the borrowers’ customs, cultures, traditions, proposals, and time. I face their problems with politely. Within one year, the general public of the village finds us (GB staffs) honest, sincere and hardworking with our jobs. Now all kinds of villagers welcome our loan services jobs although there are politics involved regarding GB at the national level in Bangladesh. Even though there are many critics and false propaganda exists in Bangladesh against Muhammed Yunus until now; however, the current Government of Bangladesh supports Grameen Bank activities in Bangladesh.

If I look back to my center organizing work strategies and Grammen Bank bylaws, I find there are huge change happened now. It is because to adapt and to adjust to the changing situation of borrowers, time and context. Grameen Bank introduces many new loan products, design new savings policies and strategies to face and to address the borrowers’ contemporary issues and situations. Muhammed Yunus accept mistakes and accept workers’ decisions if it is not breaching the basic discipline of Biddimalla and the framework for organising the groups and centers in Bangladesh.
15. Community organizing work experience in Canada

If it is compared to Toronto community development different works, I find lots of various types of community agencies are working in Toronto, they very efficient in dealing with problems although are very formal. Here communities are more structured. People have fewer interactions with their neighbours. Toronto communities are more nationalistic-based, faith-based, racial-based, class-based, aged-based, and gender-sexuality based. In Canada, disadvantaged people particularly, single mothers and newly immigrant poor women are isolated and away from different community participation decision-making process. They are very busy to earn income for their surviving in this individualistic and capitalist expensive society. There is no ‘sharing economies’ among people here in Toronto. I have been involved with many community-based agencies, social economic institutions in Toronto even in the US since 1993. Here community workers usually are not walking in the community; they do not visit clients at their doorsteps; they are not individually talking with community people and invite people for community meeting rather they are displaying written information in the notice boards in community centers, churches, street corners and other public places like community houses; community newspapers, community radios, weekly/monthly newspapers etc.

Food/light refreshment usually serves in the meeting for the attendees. However, few people are attending community meetings. In Toronto, community meeting schedules are tied meaning start and finish meeting at a particular time. Topics of community meetings are community health education, nutrition education, drug prevention education, religious education, community gardening, English as Second Language education. Immigration community agencies are briefing on different resources and their locations in Toronto, familiarise them with Canadian economic, social and multicultural education, community dance festivals and community street festivals etc. Here community gardens and community kitchens are available where people do their gardening and cook foods in these community facilities

Community Street festivals are usually organized by ethnic people in summer. Open consorts, music, dances, arts and other cultural activities are popular in these street festivals. Food Vendors displayed and served their ethnic foods and do business in these festivals. Ethnic dresses are displaying and selling in the street festivals. Vendors are promoting their business products at the festivals. These vendors are promoting consumerism in the festivals. I have observed in the street festivals food and clothes, costumes, jewelry, and toys are expensive than usual shops and restaurants; poor people cannot afford them. However, free food samples deliver from vendors to the festival visitors for their food business promotion.

The City of Toronto organizes many meetings in the City Hall and support many community events. However, in these community meetings and events, the City tries to disseminate its own different agendas like multiculturalism, community gardening, historic arts, promoting cultural heritage, public health education, community peace education etc. Surprisingly, none of the agencies are involved in micro-financing activities for low-income people in Toronto, but many agencies are involved in providing small business training to people. Maximum of these training agencies are receiving SME training funds from City of Toronto, Provincial Government, and Foundations even from private donors.
If we look at Grameen America, it is a 501 nonprofit microfinance organization head office based in New York City is founded in 2008. It follows the group-based micro-credit model in the USA. There are eight Grameen Bank officials seconded to Grameen Bank. It is working in 12 US cities of USA. The cities are New York City, Harlem, Omaha NE, Los Angles, Indianapolis, Boston, Oakland, San Jose, Union City, San Juan, Charlotte NC, Austin TX, and Miami Florida. It repayment rate is 99% and its borrower’s average credit scores are 640. As of 2016, Grameen America passed an incredible milestone of investing more than half a billion dollars in more than 86,000 women entrepreneurs around the country. Grameen America’s members have saved $USD 5.9 million deposited in different US Chartered banks. Its total income is $USD 17.4 million and expenses are total $USD15.7 million.

Likewise, Canada could initiate group-based microcredit lessons learned from Grameen America. However, the important thing is the credit workers should be hard working and field oriented (80% of their work in the field), physically and intensively visit clients' business sites. The field worker should not feel that they superior to their clients; do not be panic and hypocrites to clients, do not hide true information with the public and do not show rude face to clients rather respect and love clients, trust clients; learn from them and happy to see clients’ success.

In Canada the community meetings are usually monthly, bi-annual and annual basis; few agencies do have weekly meetings. All type of meeting agencies is serving light refreshments, hot lunch or dinner to attract people to join meetings. However, after the meetings, few people interact with each other. Here in Toronto, people are busy to do paid jobs or searching for paid employment. However, people enjoy eating food and talk to each other in the parks and recreational centers too.

The professional associations’ meetings are highly sophisticated. Their meetings are usually conducting in the private hotels and they have strong social network among them.

The Government of Canada is attentive to seniors’ services like meditation exercises, community swimming, senior health care and safety, drug prevention education etc. Senior homes in Toronto organize many events like indoor games competitions, music, dance, food, selling second-hand clothing, antiques etc. Here churches are organizing many faith lectures in the community. Seniors are enjoying these events; they enjoy potluck food events where they prepare food and bring food to the events and eat together with other seniors. Many senior agencies and disability agencies are arranging trip to different historical places cost shared by the seniors or by the agencies.

There are huge employment resource centers and immigration service are available in Toronto. The Government of Canada emphasis on Youth Employment Services; the government agencies are supporting these employment resource centers. These employment centers are fully equipped with computers, printers, internets and other employment information. These employment resource agencies are offering employment development services to youths even open their services to all other unemployed people at free of costs. Employment resource centers
like COSTI, South Asian Community Support Services, YMCA, YWCA, Career Foundation Center, ACCESS Community Support Services, and Cross-cultural Community Services, Storefront Community centers, Community Police etc. are organizing different lectures related to employment, community gardening and workplace health safety. All ages of people join these employment resource centers and browse computers/internets for searching jobs, read newspapers and other inquiries. Very few people find professional jobs in Toronto through employment resource counseling services.

Many youth centers have been providing anti-drug campaigns, safe sex education, and peace education. Moreover, here community agencies are organizing seminars on public health and nutrition education, environmental basics education, and health education. However, here client-worker relationships are very formal and structured. Disadvantaged poor people shall be very happy if they have cordial relationships with their community workers.

It is found in Toronto, many community centers are working with people for providing basic English language training at free of costs for those who have English as a Second Language (ESL), but such language training at free of costs is absent in Bangladesh. Moreover, junior schools, secondary high schools have social workers who are organizing parental meetings in the schools where they discuss on parental relations with and children; discuss how parents could deal better with their children and educate their children better.

Here many rich and middle-class families have the personal support worker who is taking care of the seniors like bathing them, change bedclothes and dress senior, clean clothes and houses, prepare food and assist them to eat food and medicines etc. Personal support workers also bring disabled people (all ages of people) to child care centers, senior centers, schools, community centers and other recreational centers. Red Cross Canada has food services for the seniors called ‘Meals on Wheels’. This program delivers healthy food to seniors at costs. Many churches have such services for their members. Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) has Tran wheel vehicles that are providing transportation services to the seniors and physically disabled people. These are great facilities and services available in Toronto. Unfortunately, these services are unavailable in Bangladesh. Here universal health care facilities provide great services to all to citizens of Canada that are absent in Bangladesh. Here community agencies, hospitals, and clinics are very popular for their efficient services to people in Canada.

Table 1: Compare and contrast community working experience in Bangladesh and in Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community organizing experience in Bangladesh</th>
<th>Community organizing experience in Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh uses the terms group, center (Kendra), society (Samitty) and village organization synonym to community.</td>
<td>Canada uses the terms community, association and society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum community organizations are in the rural area</td>
<td>Almost all community agencies are working in the urban area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-financing institutions are more in</td>
<td>Few microcredit agencies are working in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bangladesh both in rural and urban</th>
<th>Canada although huge demand for microcredit among low income people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NGOs are depend on outside funding sources or MFIs are covering their costs from loan investments and savings refinancing</td>
<td>Receive funding from local government, regional/national government and or from foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field workers are not involved in fundraising events</td>
<td>Every community organizations have fund raising program through community dinners or fund raising campaigns throughout the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field workers have flexible to implement agencies guidelines to serve clients</td>
<td>Field workers strictly follow the manual of work, they are not tailoring their jobs to clients’ needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field workers are flexible to discuss various topics in community meeting and flexible to the schedule their meetings</td>
<td>Very tied rigid meeting topics and meeting schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually bottom-up approach</td>
<td>Usually top-down approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs are focusing on people’s need and request</td>
<td>Strictly follow job assignment and follow the manual of the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field workers are less critical</td>
<td>Field workers are more critical and analytical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executives are connecting their activities to progress reports for the donors or future plan and design outcomes</td>
<td>Community organisers able to connect their activities and thinking to organizational future planning and design outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum works are do their job manually and documents their jobs by hand writing</td>
<td>All documentations are done electronically, very few jobs are done manually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few anti-drug education, mental issue services, disability services, and seniors’ services</td>
<td>More anti-drug services, basic English language education, mental services, disability services and seniors’ services are available to people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum beneficiaries are micro-borrowers</td>
<td>Beneficiaries are usually non-micro borrowers, new immigrants and non-mainstream people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No small business training available to micro-borrowers</td>
<td>Small business training available to the interested people by community organizations both at free of costs and at costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFIs or NGOs can collect savings from micro-borrowers</td>
<td>MFIs or NGOs are not permissible to collect savings from their clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field workers are usually stay within their working area</td>
<td>Field workers are not necessarily staying within the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community workers visit group, centers by walking and by cycles</td>
<td>Community workers visit or attend their meetings by driving cars or riding public transits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People can talk/contact the worker any time</td>
<td>People can only talk during the meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workers have primary relationships with low income people particularly at the end of the session as declared by the worker

Community people has secondary or formal relationships with their workers

Maximum works done through mutual discussion Work done pre-written instructions

Usualy poor people are beneficiaries of NGOs Lower middle class, low income unemployed, part-time worker are the beneficiaries of community organizations

Learning by doing, improve services from mistakes Do job with pre-instructions; zero tolerance for mistakes

Field worker usually do their job manually Use computers, cell phones, power points or other electronics in meetings

Field workers provide loans and services to low income people Mostly educational and training services to community people

Few outreach program can be seen organized by colleges and universities Every community college, university has community outreach programs and community outreach research centers

No food supply for attendees in the meeting Usually every community meeting delivers food for the attendances

Dialogue based informal discussions in meetings Very prescribed formal discussions in meeting

Very few social safety net services available for the clients Social safety net services available for beneficiaries from both public agencies and community based agencies

Civics is important as people re-learn skills for participating in democratic governance (Toker, 2012. The Grameen Bank has bylaws of changing Group Chair, Group, Secretary, Center Chief and Associate Center Chief in a democratic way every year in order to develop all members’ leadership and to maintain center disciplines. This system of changing leadership is not a process of leadership development rather it is a process to empower all members of the center. Moreover, communities will become more decentralized and more resilient, with greater control over many aspects of their lives if they build networks among them. In Canada, community members’ connect with other community members using information technology in order to continue to build collective learning both at the community micro level, mezzo level, and national level. Many young in Bangladesh connect with each other by email, Facebook and Linkedin. Worldwatch Institute (2013) mentions community workers find a place to stand for working for the wellbeing of the community people. Its community building slogan is chosen what you love. Start from there, do what you can, and connect with others.

16. Grammen Bank loans products and their implementation strategies during Phase 1

Grameen Bank starts providing general business loans individually to its group members and it still continues. However, in the early 1980s, GB experiments with the collective loan, a bigger loan given to a group and center instead of to the individual. The motivation of these larger loans was that they would enable members to fund more profitable activities that required greater
capital, such as the installation of rice mill, oil and weaving mills and leasing of markets, orchards, Jamahal (ponds etc. However, some members felt that they were doing most of the work while others enjoyed the benefits. Conflict among the group members in the centers resulted in the limited success of these loans, and then the bank eventually abandoned them.

In Grameen Phase-1 (Classical phase (1978-2000)), Grameen Bank has initiated the housing loans for the members for constructing their houses. This loan is introduced on small scale in 1984, but it is expanded rapidly after the devastating flood of 1987. I first disburse this housing loan for the flood victims in my branch called Gobindashi Vhuapur Branch during my Area Managership in Vhuapur area. Grameen Bank thought that better housing for the poor should be categorised as an investment rather than as consumption, as the borrower can use a good house both as factory space and as protection from natural calamities detrimental to health. The housing loan provides to borrowers for a longer-period to be repaid by weekly installments over several years, with an annual interest rate of 8% per year. Initially, a sum of TK. 7000 is given to housing loan borrowers as the “Moderate Housing” loan. However, the amount of housing loan was raised to TK. 25,000 taka to account for the rising cost of building materials. The houses built with the loans to purchase four concrete pillars, a sanitary latrine, and corrugated iron roofing sheets. This type of houses provides protection against floods, cyclones, and rain.

This housing loan was exclusively given to poor women borrowers. The land on which the house is built has to be in the woman’s name. Grameen included this condition to make sure that the women would not be evicted from her home in case of dissolution of the marriage. Owning a piece of land through a housing loan from Grameen Bank may be the only way for a woman to have “a house of her own.” GB also introduced “Basic Housing Loan” to rebuild homes of the borrowers that were damaged by the flood of 1987. The loan size was Tk.7000-Tk.12.000. The maximum period for repayment of a housing loan is five years (Dowla & Barua, 2006). However, the repayment rate of housing loan was not satisfactory. As the loan repayment rate was for more than one year, borrowers are relaxed to pay the loans regularly. However, they could complete repaying their housing loan in their lifetime. GB introduces to awards to those workers who provide more housing loans to borrowers and recovers the loans regularly. As of June 2018, GB provides housing loans to 721,306 borrowers of GB in Bangladesh.

During the 1980s, Grameen Bank promoted children’s education by helping to establish schools in the centers that I discuss in the paper earlier. Majority of borrowers hope that their children will become educated and successful to find respectable occupations like medical doctors, engineers, lawyers or join government services. However, the cost of higher education is high that results the drop in higher education enrolment of borrowers’ children. In 1997, the higher education student loans are introduced with easy terms and conditions for the children of GB borrowers. By receiving this loan, many children of GB borrowers completed their education and become doctors, lawyers, engineers, chemists, biologists, physicist, and social scientists in Bangladesh. Loan receiving graduated students are regularly repaying their loans. As of June 2018, GB disburses higher education loans $USD 52. 25 million (female loans $USD 13. 89 million and male students $USD 38. 36 million) to 53, 933 students (male student 40,970, and female students 12,963) in Bangladesh.
I am assigned to draft the Grameen Bank higher education student loan manual in 1997. Grameen Bank decides to provide this student loan to finance higher education to the children of GB members. Currently, all children of borrowers who are on a basic loan or flexible loan and have been members of the bank for at least a year are eligible to receive student higher education loans. Grammen Bank introduces scholarships for the children of GB borrowers in 2001. Scholarships are given with priority to girls every year, to encourage them to get better grades in schools. On an average 3,000 children, at various levels of school education, receive these scholarships every year (Yunus, 2002). Now I am voluntarily conducting a research on Grameen Bank higher education student loan services in Bangladesh attached with the Center for Learning Social Economy and Workplace, University of Toronto.

Grameen Bank Phase-1 has proved that the poor are creditworthy. Poor become self-employed and overcome their poverty by using loans from GB. Below the paper precisely describes the Grameen Bank Phase-1 activities and policies of micro-lending to poor people in Bangladesh (Extract from Dowla & Barua, 2006).

- Grameen Bank targets poor, particularly poor women, as identified by land ownership
- It offers micro-loans to its borrowers for starting income-generating activities
- GB is providing loans to poor without collaterals, it is based on trust
- All loans must be paid back in installments (weekly or bi-weekly)
- To receive loans, poor people must form groups and belongs to centers
- A borrower can receive a new loan, often larger size, if the previous loan is repaid
- Borrowers must paid to the Group Funds, weekly savings and the Emergency funds
- The borrowers need to memorise and follow the ‘Sixteen decisions”, the social development charter developed by GB in 1984

Some of these key features of GB have changed in course of time and cope with borrowers’ needs and situations; however, some of the aspects of the classical Grammen Bank loan products changed and center structured improved. However, the bank management structure like the branch office, Area office, Zonal office and Head Office has remained same except the field workers designation. Previously it is called “Bank Workers”, now it has been designating them as “Center Manager” since 2000.

The Grameen Bank worker is likely to find himself multi-rules performers like the roles of marriage counselors, conflict negotiators, group trainers, civic leaders, community organisers and center managers. Every day they are working either in the office or in the field for organizing and forming groups, mitigate conflicts, revive center disciplines, advice defaulter borrowers, collect loan proposals and loan installments, and savings etc. They work from 6:00 am until 10:00 pm at night. They spend 65% of their time in the field for organizing centers, maintaining group disciplines, collect installments and savings. Now Center Managers are collecting a huge amount of cash money from the borrowers and carrying these cash money from centers to the office every day. It is a risky job. They are like emergency room doctor (Woolcock, 1999). However, now it is very risky for carrying cash in Bangladesh. GB should develop alternative strategies for carrying cash from the center to the branch.

GB uses the following ten indicators to assess whether members are moving out of poverty:
1. The members and their families are living in a tin-roofed house or in a house worth at least Tk. 25,000; the family members sleep on cots or a bed instead of the floor
2. Drink pure water from tube-wells, boiled water or arsenic-free water or purified by the use of alum, purifying tables or pitcher filters
3. All children of members attending schools or finished at least primary school education
4. The members’ can repay minimum weekly installment is Tk.200
5. All family members are using sanitary latrine
6. All family members have sufficient clothing to meet daily needs
7. Members have vegetable garden, fruit bearing trees etc.
8. Members maintains an average annual balance e of Tk. 5000 in their savings accounts
9. The members are able to feed their family members three meals a day throughout the year
10. All family members are conscious about their health; they are able to treatment if they are suffering from illness.

Source: Grameen Bank Training Institute poverty reduction survey parameters

By using these poverty free indicators, the internal survey of GB shows the following data of borrowers free from the poverty line.

Table 2: Year wise poverty declining rates of Grameen Bank borrowers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% above the poverty line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Monitoring and Evaluation Department, Grameen Bank

I find in my survey (2011) credit program participation leads to women borrowers taking a greater role in the household and public space decision making (87%), it is because borrowers having greater access to financial and economic resources. They have developed their social capital with their neighbours, increased their choices and voices in the community. The study finds borrowers have developed their bargaining power with their husbands, family members and with their neighbours. I also find they have increased their social, physical and psychological
mobility. Moreover, they increase and develop their capacity to think about their children education.

Halen Todd (1996) found that bargaining position of Grameen borrowers in her sample improved as a result of participation in the bank, join in the center and attendance in the weekly center meetings. Borrowers of GB maintain their center disciplines, regularly deposit savings; receive bigger loans, increased their business and repay their loans regularly although it is mismatched during 1996-2000.

17. Evolution of Grammen Bank Phase 11; its products and implementation strategies

The Grameen Bank repayments rates fall to 65% during 1996-2000. The New York Times published news in its front page about Grammen Bank borrowers’ default status with statistics in 2001. The reasons for increasing default rates are several consecutive disasters like floods, cyclones, droughts, and hurricanes and political turmoil from 1996 to 2001. In order to resolve the problem, Grameen Bank has developed a Samassha (Problematic) Cell headed by Muhammed Yunus in Dhaka. The Samassaha Cell executives analyze centers problems, identifies borrowers sufferings and looking for possible solutions for the struggling members those victims of natural disasters. The solutions make case by case to revive credit discipline among defaulters and struggling members of Grameen Bank, but it is like window dressing; however, there is necessary to overhaul the whole Grameen bank credit and savings design as well as reenergize the field workers of GB.

In 2001-2002, Muhammed Yunus himself has visited many problematic centers, areas offices and meet with the field staffs of different zones; even he stays in the fields and heard the field problems directly from field staff and collect information, ideas from them to design Phase 11. He redesigns the loan products, savings products and introduces an attractive pension scheme for the borrowers in Grameen Bank Phase-11. The redesign of loan and savings products and implement them created an extremely important role in the rebuilding of the centers and revive center discipline and regularize borrowers’ creditworthy behaviours. Through deliberation, debate and extended discussion, dialogues, the winning ideas are incorporated into Grameen Bank Phase -11.

Throughout Yunus’s visit to the branches, give him to find out cause and effects of the defaulting behaviours of the borrowers. Moreover, he finds the cause of problems is not only of natural disasters but also bed rumors by other agencies against GB. The rumors are anti-GB propaganda. Muhammed Yunus also realizes the problems that are caused by structural faults with the system of Grammen Bank (Dawla & Barua, 2006). These problems also have crystallized from the organized protest by religious leaders in Bangladesh. He finds their causes also included too much on loan disbursement and mismanagement by the field staffs.
The borrowers’ lack of interaction with the bank is also revealed as the major cause of problems at the branches. When members stopped coming to the regular weekly meetings, the centers become mismanaged. Moreover, Muhammed Yunus explores lack of attendance at weekly meetings is a major reason for the crisis. Another flaw identifies the inappropriate use of loan money. After an exhaustive study of the causes of the crisis of 1996-2000, the various task forces started working on steps to rebuild their respective branches. Through consultation, debate, and discussions, Muhammed Yunus with other executives is able to learn from each other. They realize that loan disbursement and installment collection system are rigid under Grammen classical Phase-1. Then they think to redesign the whole Grammen loan products, savings, and insurance products.

However, Muhammed Yunus emphasizes and requests to field staffs to reorganize and rebuild the centers, give hopes to members and tell them Grameen Bank is for them; any crisis they face, GB is with them. Grameen Bank provides the loan to borrowers in certain standard rules that benefit members of GB in Bangladesh. Moreover, Yunus (2001) instructs to field staffs for developing trust and rehabilitate borrowers for rehabilitating their businesses as a joint partner of the borrowers. He advises them for continuous motivation and hopes to borrowers with face-to-face dialogue in center meetings and center special meetings.

However, field staff reports to Muhammed Yunus only verbal motivation alone would not work. Borrowers need something tangible new loan products and system to motivate borrowers to restart repaying their loans and to revive borrowers’ businesses. Muhammed Yunus also finds to ensure effective participation and execution of necessary changes, there needs special attention to improving staff morale and performance. Through the process of trial and errors and small-scale pilot testing during field study periods in two years 2000-2001, the main elements of Grammen Bank Phase-11 have begun to take shape. There are many new loans products tested with the new loan repayment system; however, not all tested products are included in the regularised new products in the Phase-2. However, through deliberation, debate and open process of dissemination and critical evaluation of results, only the winning ideas survived and incorporated into the new system of Grameen Bank Phase- 11 (Dawla & Barua, 2006). Now GB has 8.9 million borrowers in Bangladesh. The paper below shortly narrates Grameen Bank Phase-2 system.

The massive succeeded tested experiences are written down and circulated to all branches of Grameen Bank across Bangladesh as a recreation process formalized in the written documents called Nittimala: Written instructions are how to work and implement sustainable record documents and monitor the performances. After intensive visiting and collecting information from fields, Muhammed Yunus has given importance on increasing center attendance, savings collections and building social capitals among borrowers. He also instructs them to share each other work experience with new products and new system and learn from each other. Grammen
Bank Phase-11 grows out of the collective efforts of staffs and borrowers led by Muhammad Yunus.

**18. Grameen Bank Phase-11 rules and procedures**

Grameen Bank Phase-11 come up with a number of fundamental changes in the elements of Grameen Bank loan transactions including the flexible loan, the basic loan and the six-month repayment schedule and six-month quality control check. The flexible loan has a limit in that whatever amount a borrower repays, he or she can borrow twice the amount back at a six-month interval, and then every six months thereafter an amount equivalent to the amount repaid (Dawla & Barua, 2006). However, there is a credit limit of the flexible loan where borrowers have to pay off half the loan in six months in order to stay current.

At the beginning of initiation of the Grameen Bank Phase-11, field staff has faced difficulty tracing borrowers, and even if they could not find them. Borrowers do not come forward to reorganize them because they think there is no incentive to repay the loan. On other hand, borrowers felt that because they had defaulted, the bank would not give them another loan even they repay their old loans. In order to reach out to these borrowers, the field staff establishes contact with many of the defaulters and urge them to restart their installment payments. However, it is found distrust among default borrowers and field workers. Moreover, field workers find that while many borrowers would promise to come back and repay, they would not keep the promise. Then bank introduces the written contract (a Chukti) for the borrowers with the bank. Then come to the idea of ‘Chukti Rin’, a contractual loan called ‘flexible loan’.

Another outcome of development has reached is the dismantling of the group fund and emergency funds that are essential elements of Grameen Phase-1. In 1996-2000, there were huge problems in the centers of GB on the Group Funds and Emergency Funds across Bangladesh. Savings are decreased, default rates have increased; centers have disorganized even many borrowers of GB refrain from repaying their loans and deposit their savings in their accounts. Many centers conducted meetings and provide motivational speeches in the centers, but these are less effective. The overall repayment rate declined to 65% and members’ attendance in the center meetings drastically declined.

Then after in 2000-2002, GB develops the new loan products (mentioned earlier in the paper) and an attractive insurance policy (Grameen Pension Scheme) that motivates default borrowers of GB to revive the center disciplines and receive new loans (flexible loan and easy loan) for reviving their business capital. Borrowers start to deposit their weekly savings, voluntary savings and premiums of their pensions (Grameen Pension Schemes (GPS)). The Group Fund and Emergency Fund are abolished in Grameen Bank Phase-11. Although Emergency Fund safety net stopped, each year families of deceased borrowers of GB receive a total of TK. 8 to 10 million in life insurance benefits. Each family receives up to a maximum of TK. 2,000. A total of
54,469 borrowers died so far in Grameen Bank. Their families collectively received a total amount of Tk. 114.0 million (Dawla & Barua, 2006). Borrowers are not required to pay any premium for this life insurance. Borrowers come under this insurance coverage by being a shareholder of the bank (Yunus, 2002). As of June 2018, GB life insurance accumulated $USD 194. 039 million and total amount paid out from life insurance to borrowers of GB $USD5.91 million in Bangladesh.

Field staffs reenergize them through new financial incentives and promotional incentives designed for them. Now GB repayment rate regains to 97%. The premium deposits of Grameen Pension Scheme (GPS) are 100% although all members of the center are not present on time in their weekly center meetings. Even now members are not coming at one time; some come early and others wait for the latecomers which are wastage of time for the early attendees and disturb their business and urgent jobs. However, bank workers go to the weekly center meeting in the morning and start loan and savings collection whoever is repaying their loans and savings. Now GB is flexible to the attendance of the borrowers in the weekly meetings than before. If any reason all members need to sit together or need to resolve any problem, they organize special meetings at their own convenient places at nights.

Table 3: Grammen Bank different loan items and savings products developed at different times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the loan products and savings products</th>
<th>Date of commencement</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unwritten piloted general loan</td>
<td>August 1976</td>
<td>Discontinued in Grammen Bank Phase 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective enterprise loan</td>
<td>November 1982</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing loan</td>
<td>May 1984</td>
<td>Continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic housing loan</td>
<td>Sept. 1987</td>
<td>Continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital recovery loan</td>
<td>Sept. 1990</td>
<td>Discontinue after Grammen 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family loan</td>
<td>July 1992</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food stock loan</td>
<td>March 1992</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation of Tube-well loan</td>
<td>November 1992</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building sanitary loan</td>
<td>February 1993</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leasing</td>
<td>October 1993</td>
<td>Continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary loan</td>
<td>October 1994</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle rearing</td>
<td>December 12994</td>
<td>Continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan for homestead purchase</td>
<td>March 1996</td>
<td>Continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-basic housing loan</td>
<td>October 1996</td>
<td>Continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special general loan (scaling up)</td>
<td>June 1997</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal loan 2</td>
<td>September 1997</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal loan 3</td>
<td>September 1997</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate loan</td>
<td>October 1997</td>
<td>Discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education loan for member’s children</td>
<td>October 1997</td>
<td>Continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New flexible loan</td>
<td>December 29, 1999 for Jamalpur Special project</td>
<td>Continues with improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The newly designed contractual savings plans have enabled the poor to break free from the trap of low savings in Grameen Bank Phase-11. Savings in large amounts by group members have promoted others in the group and even non-members to save more money in Grameen Bank. Now in many Grameen Bank branches, savings exceed loans by a wide margin. Borrowers used their savings to withstand the flood and other crisis situation. Bank also used the cushion of large amounts of internal members’ savings to deal with the two stages of the flood- the first in July and second in September 2004 (Dawla & Barua, 2006). GB cumulative loan disbursed as of June 2018 USD25 billion dollars and members’ savings deposited USD1.6 billion dollars and non-members savings deposited USD 751 million in Bangladesh.
Savings mobilization among members and non-members is the most important change instituted under Grameen Bank Phase-11. Now center managers are needed to explain all these new products in their group training and center meetings as well as in general meetings in order to inform borrowers about Grameen Bank Phase-11 products and services that are for them. Although Muhammed Yunus is out of Grameen Bank; the Grameen Bank Phase-11 is running very well because the design of Grameen Bank Phase-11 is more suitable for them than before; they feel more comfortable with the present loan operation system and savings deposit collection procedures. The bank has developed trust with its borrowers through the new loan operation and savings collections system.

Grameen Bank takes a long preparation to develop a new flexible system and field-tested it over months. Grameen Bank finally introduced the new system in September of 2000. It is a simplified and generalized Grameen bank loan transaction system. Now this works equally well both in normal and disaster situations. It allows the enterprising borrowers to move ahead faster. Muhammed Yunus comments everybody has fallen in love with it. Borrowers love it, staffs love it because it is so simple because it offers tailor-made loans rather than previous single-size-fits all type of loans. The new system basically has introduced two types of loans-(a) Basic loan and (b) Flexible loan. A borrower can take a basic loan for any income-generating purpose with mutual agreement between the borrower and the bank, unlike the old system where all loans are for one year. Basic loans can be for only 6 months Yunus, 2002).

19. Grameen Bank Phase-11 operation incentives to field staff
Both regular borrowers and defaulter borrowers are happy with these new products and procedures. However, field workers paid more attention to the flexible loan in order to regularize defaulters into basic loans where they can receive more loans then flexible loan limits. Those branches who achieve into Grameen Bank Phase-11, the respective field workers, branch managers receive awards from Muhammed Yunus and got a quick promotion, incentives from the bank. Through this process, Grameen Bank default borrowers become regularised and revive and reorganized center disciplines within two years.

The new system has brought excitement and inter-branch competition in Grameen Bank to reorganize the centers, to revive the disciplines among the borrowers and the centers (Dawla & Barua, 2006). This system has introduced a grading system for branches. This grading system creates competitions among field staff and the centers. This grading system awards color-coded “Stars” to indicate the quality of performance of a branch and the centers. If a branch has 100 percent repayment and 100 percent center discipline record for two consecutive years it is awarded a “green star”. If the repayment falls below it during any two successive years, the star is lost. Likewise, GB introduces different colored stars like ‘blue star’ ‘violet star’ and ‘red star’ on the various performance of the branch. Branch staff can wear the stars as a badge of honor and display their stars in the branch stationary to show their achievement.
20. Conclusions

Grameen Bank group forming, center organizing and designing of different types of loans and savings products are based on Grameen Bank members need and their feedback on Grameen products and services. GB has streamlined its bylaw and its different products after testing in centers at different places in Bangladesh. In the beginning, we Grameen Bank field workers do our jobs from scratches, without guidelines, but we improve our jobs from learning by doing and from mistakes. We make lots of mistakes in our jobs. Muhammed Yunus, the employer of us, accept our mistakes and give us an opportunity to correct mistakes with innovation. He gives us liberty to experiment with new ideas and let it shapes a program for the wellbeing of poor people in Bangladesh. Now the rules of group formations, center organizing and designing structures of GB are streamlined. However, we faced huge difficulty from the money lenders, rural elites, and community agencies during the 1970s and 1980s. However, our persistent persuasions, sincerity, and cooperation of borrowers and proper leadership of Muhammed Yunus lead to our job success in Grammen Bank Bangladesh. This bank is continuously flexible to accept new ideas from the field and develop suitable services for its borrowers. Grameen Bank builds its structure and develops its different products throughout its internal innovations.

21. References

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