

CWFD helps low-income people access healthcare

AKBAR HOSSAIN, back from Mymensingh

It was not long ago when the couples belonging to low-income group in Mymensingh district hardly got any advice and materi-

als for their family planning needs and healthcare.

But now comes to their aid an NGO that started its operation in 1997 in a bid to promote family planning and provide healthcare facilities to the people, especially

the poor.

The Concerned Women for Family Development (CWFD) has been providing family planning services, mother and child healthcare, immunisation service, treatment of diarrhoea and respiratory infection and reproductive healthcare for about 85,000 people in the Mymensingh district town and its suburban areas.

As the ministry of health and family welfare provides tertiary healthcare facilities only in the municipality areas, people in the Mymensingh district town have to rely on the non-government organisation (NGO) for primary healthcare facilities.

"We frequently visit this hospital [CWFD] for family planning advice and other healthcare facilities," said Amina Begum, who came to the NGO-run clinic located at Patgudam Road in the town.

"Even sometimes we get

medicine free of cost when we cannot afford those," said Rokeya, another visitor to the centre.

She also added that the NGO has been playing a vital role in the treatment of diarrhoeal diseases and immunisation programme, apart from the family planning services.

"Everyday, on an average, 50 people visit the CWFD for treatment or consultation," said Ahsanul Habib, manager of the clinic.

The flow of people increases every Sunday and Tuesday as those days are called EPI (Expanded Programme of Immunisation) Day, he added.

"We frequently arrange group meetings at the rickshaw garages to raise awareness among the rickshawpullers about the use of condoms as a means of family planning method," said the clinic manager.

He also said, "We give options to the couple with regard to family planning methods and try to convince them to adopt which is suitable for them."

Apart from Mymensingh, the CWFD operates 18 clinics in Dhaka and nine other municipalities. It is a part of the USAID-funded NGO Services Delivery Programme Clinic Network.

In addition to the door-to-door contraceptive distribution, the CWFD staffs also motivate

couples to avail themselves of clinical contraceptive methods such as injection and sterilisation.

A team of the USAID, led by its mission director in Bangladesh Gene V George, visited the clinic at Mymensingh recently.

George stressed the need for paying more attention to the NGO-run clinics as the people of municipal areas depend mainly on the NGOs for primary healthcare services.



PHOTO: STAR

Patients wait for their turn at the clinic of Concerned Women for Family Development (CWFD) in Mymensingh.

