

How does delegating decisions to beneficiaries affect their access to a public service? Evidence from a field experiment in Bangladesh

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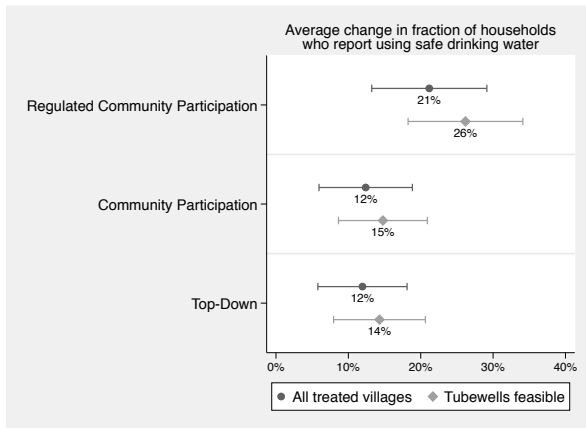
What aspect of promoting women's participation will we discuss?

- ▶ We will present the results of **a field experiment** which evaluates what happens when **we give targeted beneficiary communities the authority to take non-technical decisions** about the construction of community wells, which would otherwise be made by project staff:
 - ▶ ...**without imposing any rules** about how decisions are made
 - ▶ ...when we impose decision-making **by consensus with representation of women and the poor**

What was the purpose of our study and why should you care?

- ▶ Participation in decision-making is very widely seen as key to successful community development projects
- ▶ Different types of participation in decision-making may have different consequences, not all of which are positive
 - ▶ e.g. elite capture, marginalization
- ▶ Most prior research cannot separate out the effects of different types of decision-making from other characteristics of the implementing organization, project, or beneficiary community
- ▶ Our study provides the first experimental evidence on how participation in decision-making affects projects to provide safe drinking water

Participation in decision-making increases project impact...



... but **only when we impose decision-making by consensus and rules on representation of women and the poor**