Leave no one behind: WASH budget should reach everyone, everywhere

Government of Bangladesh has shown firm commitment to WASH, as evident in the long-term trend in WASH allocation. Current year (2017-18) allocations have risen to Taka 65.09 billion from Taka 25.63 billion in 2007-08. However, against the substantial growth of GDP and the national budget over the last six years (2011-12 to 2016-17), relative growth in WASH allocation is disproportionately low at only 3.3%.

Figure 1: % increase over reference period: 2011-12 to 2016-17

But significant spatial inequities

However, spatial disaggregation of WASH allocation show significant inequities (Figure 2). Metropolitan cities receive the lion’s share at the expense of small towns and hard-to-reach regions - char lands, hilly areas and the coastal belt.

Progress against odds

- 97% of population has access to at least basic water services (JMP 2017).
- The percentage of the population using improved sanitation facilities (including shared facilities) is 69% (JMP 2017).
- 40% of the population have access to basic hygiene facilities – a hand-washing station with soap and water on premises (JMP 2017).
- Great achievement in reducing open defecation - 0% in 2015 (JMP 2017).
- First step taken on adoption of Institutional and Regulatory Framework for Faecal Sludge Management (IRF-FSM).

Figure 2
Spatial inequities in WASH allocations have to be addressed as a priority to realise Goal 6, with special emphasis on rural and lagging regions. Neglected issues such as faecal sludge management and hygiene need to be funded adequately. There is a need to allocate funds for awareness programme on FSM and hygiene, to be undertaken in partnership with Paurashavas/city corporations and community/civic groups. Strong monitoring, supervision and coordination of WASH services in line with the SDG 6 indicators is needed.

Public Money and Budget Management Act, 2009 mandates Ministry of Finance to make an economic code-wise quarterly submission to the Parliament on progress of all projects. This provision needs to be activated. Sector Development Plan (SDP) for Water Supply and Sanitation Sector (2011-2025) remains largely on paper. Immediate and proper actions are needed to implement the plan within its timeframe.

UNICEF works in 190 countries and territories to protect the rights of every child. UNICEF has spent 70 years working to improve the lives of children and their families.

Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), an independent policy research centre committed to quality research and evidence-based policy formulation (www.pprc-bd.org)

WaterAid is an international not-for-profit, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation.

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