

BASELINE STUDY REPORT

WASH SDG-WAI Sub-programme in Bangladesh (new areas)



Submitted To



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List of abbreviations and acronyms

BD	Bangladesh
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
COVID-19	Corona Virus-Infected Disease-2019
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCI	Data Collection Instrument
DCT	Data Collection Tool
DORP	Development Organisation for the Rural Poor
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FY	Fiscal Year
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
HP	Hope for the Poorest
HH	Household
IDI	In-depth Interview
JMP	Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGD	Local Government Division
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGI	Local Government Institution
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PA	Practical Action
PWD	Person with disabilities
QC	Quality Control
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TOR	Terms of Reference
WAB	WaterAid Bangladesh
WAI	WASH Alliance International
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
UP	Union Parishad

Executive Summary

WASH Alliance International (WAI), SNV and Plan International Netherlands formed the WASH SDG Consortium in alliance with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS/IGG) and launched the **WASH SDG Programme** in July 2017. The programme aims to increase demand for improved WASH facilities and practices, improve service provision quality, and improve the sector's governance. The strategic objectives of the sub-programme are:

- ☑ To improve demand and use of equitable and sustainable WASH services;
- ☑ To increase participation of women and the socially excluded.
- ☑ To improve public sector equitable and sustainable WASH service delivery and governance; and
- ☑ To improve private sector sustainable and equitable WASH service delivery.

The WAI sub-programme reallocated funds from Nepal to Bangladesh to achieve overall WASH SDG Consortium Programme Targets. Therefore, the WAI subprogramme in Bangladesh added new 11 rural unions & 1 urban municipality based on the reallocated additional fund received. In order to implement the programme, a baseline study is done to assess WASH status at the base in these new areas. A baseline assessment of the selected new areas-Kalapara Municipality, Aylapatakata, Burir Char, M. Balitali, Keorabunia, Hosnabad, Jalalpur, Khalishkhali, Nagarghata, Tea garden (Rajghat, Satgaon, Kalighat) unions becomes essential to understand the socio-economic background and basic standards on the current state of WASH.

The baseline study adopted a mixed-method combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires Akvo app-based on household surveys (865 Households where 97.5% female and 2.5% male), school facility surveys (36 Schools), and health facility surveys (34 Health facilities) in the new project areas. In addition, water quality testing was also conducted in 432 HHs, surveyed schools (36) and health facilities (34). Qualitative information was gathered using 46 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and 12 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

The household size was found more elevated in the urban areas (4.37) than in the rural. From the 865 respondents, most household heads can read and write (63.8%), and 36.2% cannot read and write. Around 7% of the households have a person with disabilities (PWD). In the urban area, 8.3% of the household have a person with disabilities (PWD).

Drinking-Water Services (Result 1)

Household: In WAI new areas, around 87.9% of households consume drinking water from basic-level sources. The household's primary source of drinking water is the Deep tube well/borehole (65.8%) following by the Shallow tube well/borehole (23.9%). About 24% of the surveyed households' water sources on-premises are contaminated with E.Coli, and 58.2% of the external water sources are found with E.coli. In the baseline, 15.1% of households reported iron contamination in the on-premises water source and 16.3% of the households confirmed iron contamination in the external water sources. Nearly 29% of the surveyed households found on-premises water sources contaminated with salinity, and 68.3% of the households informed external water sources contaminated with salinity.

Status of School and Health Facility: Basic level of drinking water is available in schools of almost all targeted areas except urban region Kalapara, where the basic level of drinking water availability in schools is 66.7%. Besides, among the surveyed health centers, the basic level of water available is 39.4 per cent, and limited level drinking water is available in 24.2 per cent of health centers.

Sanitation Services (Result 2)

Household: Most households use an improved latrine: safely managed and basic except the lowest wealth quintile. About 32% of the rural households use safely managed sanitation facilities and 34%

use basic-level sanitation facilities. Compared to the rural areas, safely managed sanitation facilities use is 9.1%, and basic-level sanitation facilities usage is 14.6% higher in the urban area (safely managed: 41.7% and basic: 48.6%). None of the households reported having an open defecation service level in the urban areas, whereas 12.6% were rural. When observing the latrines, it was noted that the quality of most of the improved ones is not good: 20.7% of the improved latrines do not have a suitable superstructure, 27.6% of the latrines are not clean, 17.1% of the latrines do not provide privacy, and 71.3% of the latrines do not have a functioning light. The availability of water, a functioning lock, and a covered bin are even rarer. This baseline study found the highest presence of pit latrines with slab (63.2%), followed by the toilet that flush/pours to the septic tank (11.7%) in the programme target areas. The number remains lowest for the toilet that flush/pour to pit latrine (0.3%), as it is only found in the urban area. Most of the urban respondents use pit latrines (63.2%), and their toilets are clean (59.2) with privacy (69.7) and superstructure (56.1%) than the rural zones. The safely managed sanitation was found very high in the male-headed households (33.7%), where it found only 20.7% in the female-headed household. The open defecation also increased in the women-headed households at 19.5%, whereas 10.6% in the male-headed households. It was assumed that these were seen mainly due to a lack of proper awareness, training for women in the study area.

Status of School and Health Facility: Basic-level sanitation facilities are available in 80% of the schools of the targeted areas. Reportedly, not to ignore, around 6% of schools have no sanitation facilities.

Hygiene Practices (Result 3)

Household: Around 40.3% of the households have limited hygiene facilities and access to safe hygiene, at least a basic level of hygiene found as 17.9% and 39.1% having no hygiene facilities. Urban people are more aware of handwashing frequently: Most respondents have washed their hands before eating (92.3%) and after toileting/defecation (86%). The service levels vary slightly between the male-headed households (38.7% no facility) and the female-headed households (42.5% no facility).

Status of School and Health Facility: Only 17% of the surveyed schools of the targeted areas do have limited hand washing (hygiene) facilities. The condition is worse in the case of health facilities proven that only 6.1 % of the surveyed health centers of the targeted areas have handwashing (hygiene) facilities.

Local agencies implement more effective demand creation strategies (Result 4)

Department of Public Health Engineering Office alone and in association with Union Parishad (under Local Governance Support Project-LGSP), conduct various activities to improve safe drinking water and safe sanitation access to the community like digging of ponds, installing tube-well and toilets. According to the Local Government Institutions (LGIs) officials, there is national-level policy instruments (policy, strategy) related to water-sanitation-hygiene (WASH). The municipality and Union Parishad human resources and financial resources are inadequate to tailor WASH-related demand creation among the community and assess progress through intense monitoring which need to be addressed. The municipality does not have any mechanism to test the WASH-related messages to the community. The municipality gets feedback on WASH service status through ward councillors and monthly public hearing events. According to bellwethers, there are problems between Union Parishad and the DPHE Upazila Office with their mandates and responsibilities related to WASH services to the community. The roles and responsibilities of DPHE and Union Parishad need to be clarified, and a coordination mechanism for them is essential. Bellwethers find the active role of NGOs in decimating WASH-related awareness-building messaging but no activity of measuring the effectiveness of those messages.

Increased involvement of consumers in improving WASH conditions (Result 5)

The baseline study found that 98.4% of households invested in WASH products in 2021. Besides, 13.1% of the surveyed households confirmed investment for WASH services. Three-fourth of the

urban households spent on WASH-related operations and maintenance, double that of rural households (27.8%).

Outreach and suitability of WASH products and services for consumers at the bottom of the pyramid (Result 8)

-  Local WASH entrepreneurs value such extreme

Only three female WASH entrepreneurs were found in this baseline study who are local MHM product distributors in Barguna Sadar. Limited access to business finance and a social conservative mindset about women working outside of the households create barriers to the emergence of female WASH entrepreneurs.

Level of the Strength of the WASH Sector Policies and Regulations (Result 11)

There are visible gaps of understanding between LGI officials, bellwethers, and community people who do not communicate well with LGIs. Much not possible to explore WASH-related policies/strategies in the baseline study because LGI officials claimed the existence of such but could not produce any evidence in favour.

Local Government Budget on WASH (Result 12)

12a. Amount of local WASH budget spent last year: Baseline study findings suggested that WASH-related budget allocation was lowest in Hosnabad (BDT 20,000) and highest in Burir Char (BDT 13,30,000). There is no specific line item dedicated to WASH found in the project unions. WASH-related item line only found in the budget of Kalapara municipality. WASH-related allocation is usually built-in within health and/or health and sanitation line items.




12b. % of WASH budget increase: The baseline study found WASH-related allocation in the Union Parishad budget of Aylapatakata, Keorabunia, and Burir Char increased. Meanwhile, no evidence of WASH-related allocation increase/existence was found in the budget of Jalalpur, Khalishkhali and Nagarghata.

Uptake of Loans (Result 13)

13a. Number of WASH-related credit products available for households and entrepreneurs by financial institutions: There are several MFIs active in the targeted intervention areas. Among the active MFIs, only a few have WASH-related schemes for households and entrepreneurs. Reportedly, BRAC and ASA have WASH Programme operating in the targeted intervention areas: Barguna Sadar Upazila (Unions: Aylapatakata, Burir Char, M. Balitali, Keorabunia) and Betagi Upazila (Hosnabad Union). Apart from the BRAC and ASA, other active MFIs of the targeted intervention areas informed that they do not have any WASH-targetted loan schemes. Meanwhile, there is the WASH credit program available in the Kalapara Municipality.

13b. Number and amount of WASH-loans taken up by households or entrepreneurs in the last year: In the baseline study, only three MFIs were identified from all active MFIs in the targeted intervention areas: 1 municipality and 8 unions offering WASH-related credit products. In total, 18 entrepreneurs, including 3 female entrepreneurs, received a loan from BRAC WASH Programme. Only 3 entrepreneurs received loans from the ASA WASH Programme, and all of them are male. Only an entrepreneur gets the WASH loan scheme from ASA, which is operating in the Sreemangal Upazila. Reportedly no WASH loan scheme was found in the Tala Upazila.

Recommendations:

-  PNGOs need to give special attention to promoting safely managed sanitation facilities.
-  PNGOs need to work on promoting basic handwashing practices in the community of the project areas.
-  Facilitate LGIs to address WASH support to people who are living at the bottom of the pyramid.

- ☞ Joint messaging by LGIs and NGOs to sensitise and mobilise the community people about the importance of safely managed drinking water, sanitation service, hygiene practice for the health of their household members.
- ☞ Financing the local WASH entrepreneurs by banks and Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) enables them to supply required water supply and treatment materials, required sanitation facilities construction materials, required handwashing agents etc.
- ☞ Reducing interest rate by the MFI for the entrepreneurs to grow their business and repay the loan quickly and easily.
- ☞ Need to install safely managed public water points, toilets, handwashing points etc.
- ☞ Launch new WASH products targeting women, adolescents, children, regular customers with diverse and changing needs, and arrange WASH credit schemes for consumers.
- ☞ Increase the number of memberships for women and girls in the WASH committees formed by LGIs, NGOs and by organising courtyard meetings with socially excluded people.
- ☞ Introduce integrity strategy at LGIs to ensure their accountability and committed role.
- ☞ Should increase WASH-related budget allocation for Union Parishad, Municipality and DPHE regional offices. Facilitate LGIs to allocate more budget for WASH to address the need of the poor and marginalised (i.e. open budgeting etc.)
- ☞ More MFIs need to launch WASH credit schemes for households, entrepreneurs and especially female entrepreneurs.
- ☞ Develop female entrepreneurs to promote MHM in project areas.
- ☞ Emphasis on the needs of implementing the Union Parishad Act 2009 and pro-poor strategy implementation to address the WASH needs of the marginalised/bottom of the pyramid.
- ☞ Need to strengthen and activate WASH-related Standing Committee as per LGI Act (UP) 2009, emphasising the participation of women and marginalised groups in the decision-making process.
- ☞ Facilitate LGIs to open their budget as well as allocate more resources for WASH considering the number of poor and marginalised.
- ☞ Variety of product development can be accelerated to address emerging needs and geo-physical conditions of the project areas.

Summary of Findings

The following table demonstrates the baseline findings at a glance for all 13 indicators:

Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline Status
Sustainable and equitable use of WASH for all	1. Number of people (and % of people) who reach basic or safely managed service levels of drinking water of the SDG-ladder	226,836 (92% of total population)
	2. Number of people (and % of people) who reach basic or safely managed service levels of sanitation of the SDG-ladder.	162,153 (67.7% of total population)
	3. Number of people (and % of people) who reach basic levels of hand washing practices of the SDG-ladder.	45,150 (17.9% of total people)
Increased behaviour change interventions	4.% of local agencies that have implemented effective demand-creation strategies within their areas/jurisdiction/Programme	4,011 (average)
	5. % of households that have invested in WASH facilities in their household or contributed user fees to WASH services during the last year	98.4%
	6. Level of participation of women and girls in decision making about WASH activities in the communities	10% to 40% (varied according to target areas)
	7. Level of participation of socially excluded groups in decision making about WASH activities in the communities	20% to 40% (varied according to target areas)
Improved WASH service provision	8. Outreach and suitability of WASH products and services for consumers at the bottom of the pyramid	Less than 50% (varied according to target areas)
	9. % of WASH businesses in the intervention area indicate that their sales went up significantly;	50% of the WASH entrepreneurs sales went up
	10. % and # of women WASH entrepreneurs	# 3 female entrepreneur found in a target area
Strengthened WASH governance and institutional framework	11. Level of the strength of the WASH sector policies and regulations	# WASH sector policies and regulations are available, but LGI officials do not know in detail and are hardly found in practice
Government spend more budget on WASH	12a. Amount of local WASH budget spent last year 12b. % of wash budget increase	#BDT 8,046,453 in the fiscal year 2019-2020 (11 unions and a municipality)
Uptake of loans	13a. Number of WASH-related credit products available for households and entrepreneurs by financial institutions 13b. Number and amount of WASH-loans taken up by households or entrepreneurs in the last year	# 1031 households took WASH credits #22 WASH entrepreneurs took WASH credits

A special report with the findings of the Tea Garden areas (Rajghat, Kalighat and Satgaon) is available.