

Policy Brief

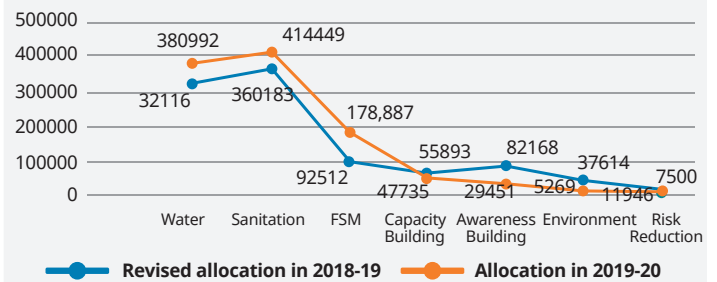
Fight back COVID-19 by giving WASH due attention in proposed National Budget 2020-21



- Coronavirus pandemic has vividly embodied the necessity of required national budget to meet the challenges in health and WASH sector, and has created a strong urge to improve country's water, sanitation and hygiene situation.
- Allocation from 2007-2008 to 2019-2020 has demonstrated an upward trend from Taka 25.63 billion to Taka 106.87 billion with an increase of 11.6 % over revised budget of 2018-2019 with little fluctuations seen in two financial years.
- Finance Minister in his last budget speech (13 June 2019) indicated fresh allocation in safe drinking water and sanitation in the rural areas through "My Village, My Town", a political commitment made in ruling Party's Election Manifesto.
- Government's Plan and Policy, for example, Vision 21, Perspective Plan 2010-21, 7th Five Year Plan, Sector Development Plan for Water Supply and Sanitation Sector 2011-2025, Vision 2041, etc., recognize existing inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene in the country and ask for covering hilly districts, coastal and haor region through clean and accessible water for all and bringing all households under hygienic sanitation.
- However, the plans have not been implemented properly. Huge investment projects have been undertaken for infrastructure development in urban areas, which mainly cater to the affluent while the poor are left behind. So, policy discourse needs to be strengthened for ensuring equity and justice for all.
- 2020-2021 budget must prioritize hygiene as a key area in the light of COVID-19 experience and complexities of SDG 6 attainment (example, clean running water and soap available when needed at premises) – which are quite challenging in itself to obtain.

During FY19-20 Sanitation received highest allocation but hygiene was overlooked, while both need equitable attention to fight COVID-19 in the coming years

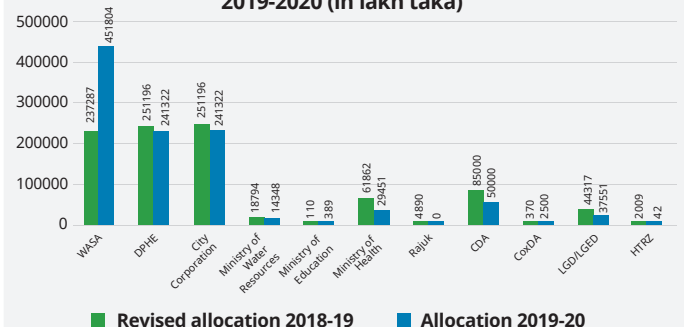
Figure 1: Sector wise WASH Allocation in the FY 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 (in Lakh Taka)



During FY 2019-20 no allocation was made for awareness and no money was there specifically for hygiene sub-sector. In the previous years there was minimal allocation for hygiene however.

- MoHFW advocates for hygiene but gets little as the following figure shows; the allocation has been used for awareness building only. It was important to allocate more on handwashing demonstration which is crucial to promote good hygiene and avert COVID-19.

Figure 2: WASH Allocation by Agency in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 (in lakh taka)



Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) remains under-addressed

- Disaggregated data on sub-sectoral allocation shows (Table 1) that percentage of allocation in FSM has increased by 93.36 percent, but this important sub-sector is still under-addressed in comparison to drinking water and sanitation. This will hamper achievement of SDG 6.

Table 1: Allocation towards FSM

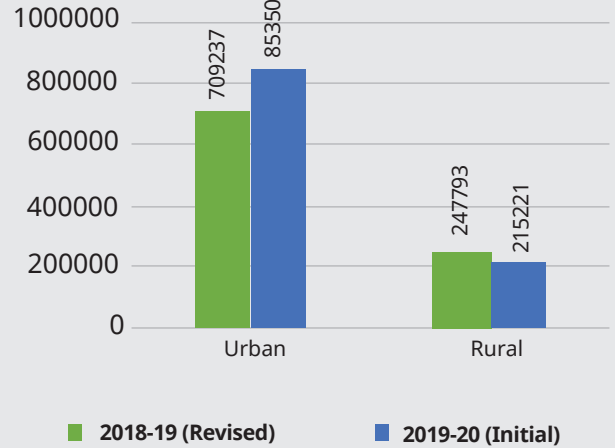
FY	Allocation in Lac Taka	% of increase
2016-17	19,950	Base Year
2017-18	15,350	-23.06
2018-19	92,512	502.68
2019-20	178,887	93.36

Budget 2019-20 reduced spatial inequities among the urban centres to some extent which needs to be continued

- The previous Policy Briefs and WASH allocation and expenditure analytical reports of WaterAid, Unicef and PPRC always highlighted the severe spatial inequities in budget allocation between urban and rural and among urban centres themselves.
- All city corporations received WASH budget in FY 2019-20. This is a positive sign as Khulna, Barisal, Gazipur, Kumilla City Corporations did not receive fund in the past.
- The allocation for WASAs has increased several folds for Rajshahi WASA with an allocation of Taka 8.78 billion, which is very close to the Taka 8.75 billion for Chattragram WASA. However, there was no change in allocation size of Khulna WASA.
- The allocation of DPHE which is responsible for secondary towns and rural areas had also been doubled in FY2019-20 – from Taka 10.68 billion (FY2018-19 initial allocation) to Taka 24.13 billion.

Inequality between urban and rural still acute hindering access to safe drinking water, equity and justice. GoB's commitment for bringing all households under hygiene shatters too.

Figure 3: Inequities between Urban and Rural (in BDT billion)



The figure above shows the clear gap between urban and rural in FY 2018-19 and 2019-20. On the other hand, the table below reveals that though the allocation in urban and rural increases at the same pace over the years, but, as a result, the gap between them had not been minimized, more so, in 2019-20 rural allocation was decreased from preceding year. This implies that the political commitment was not fulfilled and thus poses a big challenge to attain SDG 6 too.

Financial Year (FY)	Urban	% of increase	Rural	% of increase
2016-17	4,00,091	Base Year	97,572	Base Year
2017-18	5,16,643	29.13	1,93,014	97.82
2018-19	7,09,237	37.27	2,47,793	28.38
2019-20	8,53,508	20.34	2,15,221	-13.14

- It is evident that char & haor lands got some budget during last three years; but FY 2019-20 finds nothing for these hard-to-reach areas.
- It is important to change system and behavior by policy makers towards the poor. It will not be wise to leave the poor citizens at the mercy of market system.
- We need to make sure that everyone, everywhere has access to safe drinking water, a decent toilet and ability to wash their hands with soap and water. This is not only their right, these three things will save thousands of lives, and government should take notice of it seriously.

Major share goes to DWASA while KWASA gets almost zero

- Due to infrastructure development and number of population in the capital city, Dhaka's share is always at the top and much higher than other cities; but to maintain equity and justice other WASAs, specially KWASA should get a better share.

Figure 4: WASH Allocation by All WASA in the FY 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 (Taka in Lakh)

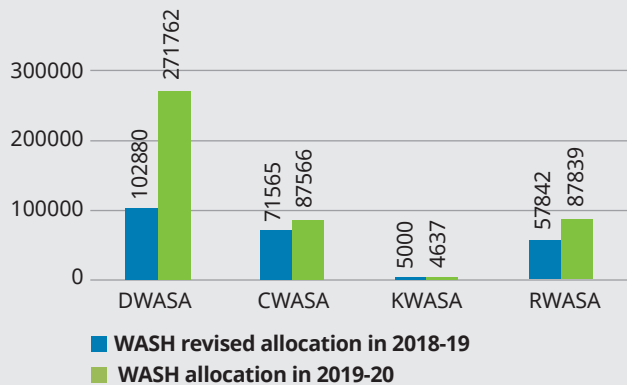
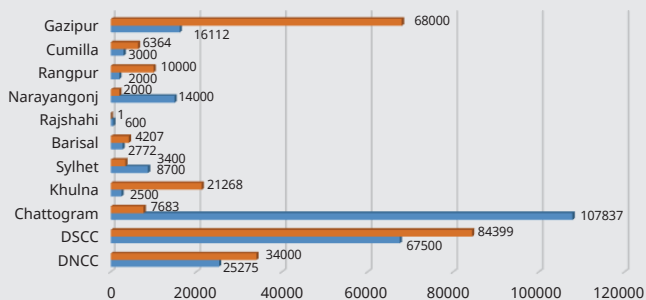


Figure 5: WASH Allocation by All City Corporation in the FY 2018-19 and 2019-20 (Taka in Lakh)



Dhaka (North & South) and nearby Gazipur City Corporations bagged more than two third (77%) from FY 2019-20 budget

- Future budget should be more based on equity and ethical to maintain justice for all.

Gaps and Challenges

- Spatial inequity remains unchanged – Rural vs Urban, among the 4 WASAs, among the City Corporations, etc. Poor shouldn't be left at the mercy of market system during COVID-19 situation
- WASH services to hard-to-reach area yet to be ensured
- Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) is still a neglected area
- Hygiene is not recognized properly, remains mostly untouched issue though maintaining hygiene is the main focus area to fight COVID-19

- Supply of quality water remains a big challenge even for WASAs who receive highest allocation
- Budget for infrastructure development is required, but capacity development remains an issue as not adequately addressed
- Water-related environmental issues and risk reduction is yet to be addressed as a major concern
- Complexities of implementation of SDG 6 remains as a major challenge
- Regulatory Framework, for example, FYP, Sector Development Plan, Vision Statement not followed while making WASH allocation
- Political commitment needs to be ensured and implemented

Recommendations for FY2020-21 Budget Allocation in WASH

1. Prioritise hygiene as a vital tool of public health and epidemic preparedness, and invest in large-scale nationwide hygiene campaign and installation of public handwashing points with soap and water.
2. Increase immediate investment in WASH, including hygiene and WASH in health care facilities, as a priority of COVID-19 prevention and response as well as to build resilience against future disease outbreaks, with a particular focus on hard-to-reach areas and other marginalised groups.
3. Track actual expenditure of WASH allocation systematically to improve targeting and decision-making around WASH investment to cater actual needs of citizens;
4. Commit to financing the priorities set out in key planning documents, such as the Five Year Plan and Sector Development Plan, towards universal sustainable WASH services, prioritising the poorest and most marginalised
5. Address the extreme disparities in access and affordability to clean water between highly subsidised urban customers and marginalised populations in the coast, slums, and other hard-to-reach areas through exploring solutions such as progressive tariffs.
6. Invest in increasing technical capacity of implementing institutions to enable proper execution of national level policies and projects, particularly in lagging areas such as hygiene and faecal sludge management which are critical to public health