

Policy Brief: Proposed National Budget 2021-22

Spatial inequities and pandemic priorities ignored: WASH Allocations in Budget 2021-22 fall short on SDG 6



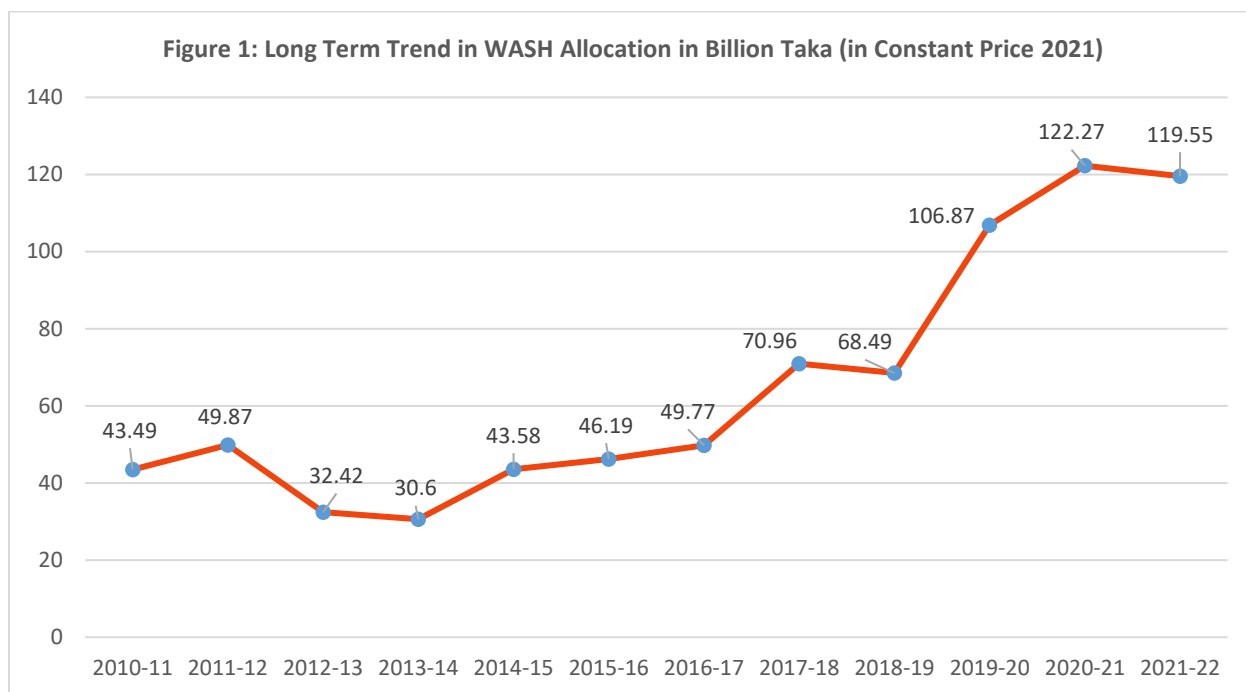
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Upward trend remains in WASH Budget Allocation but Pandemic Priority has not been given Attention

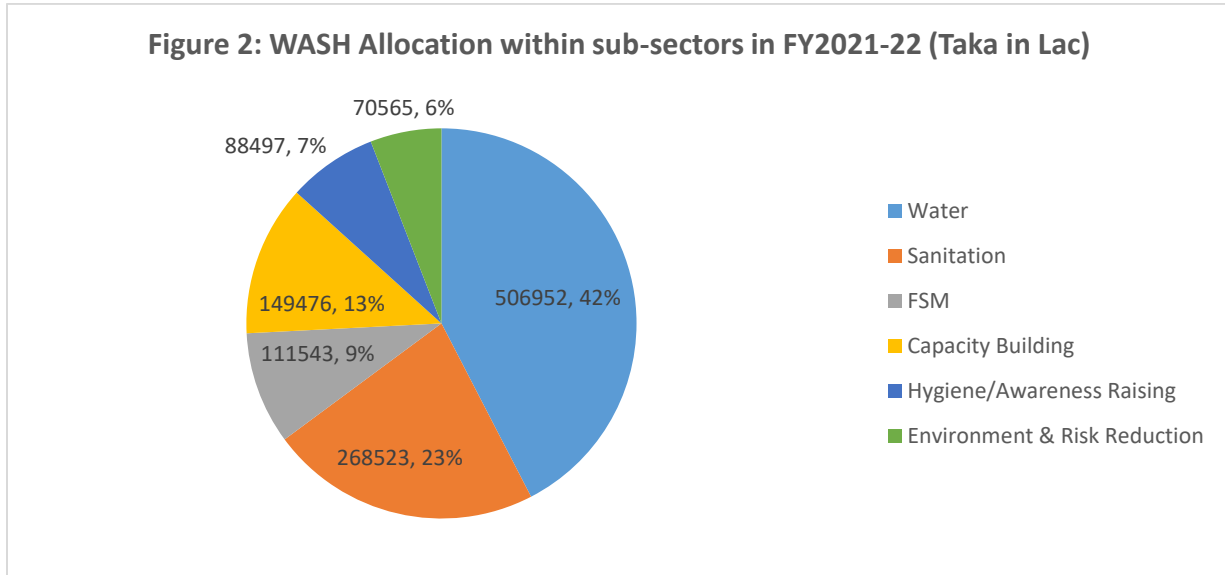
A significant increase in WASH Budget has been observed over last several years till today. From Taka 43.81 billion (FY 2010-11) the present size of the proposed WASH budget (FY2021-22) has reached to Taka 119.55 billion as shown in figure 1. But challenges remain in allocation of WASH budget reducing serious spatial gaps and, of course, a challenge of distribute resources proportionately among the WASH sub-sectors, and finally satisfactory utilization of the allocated budget by the GoB implementing department and agencies.

Growth of WASH Budget

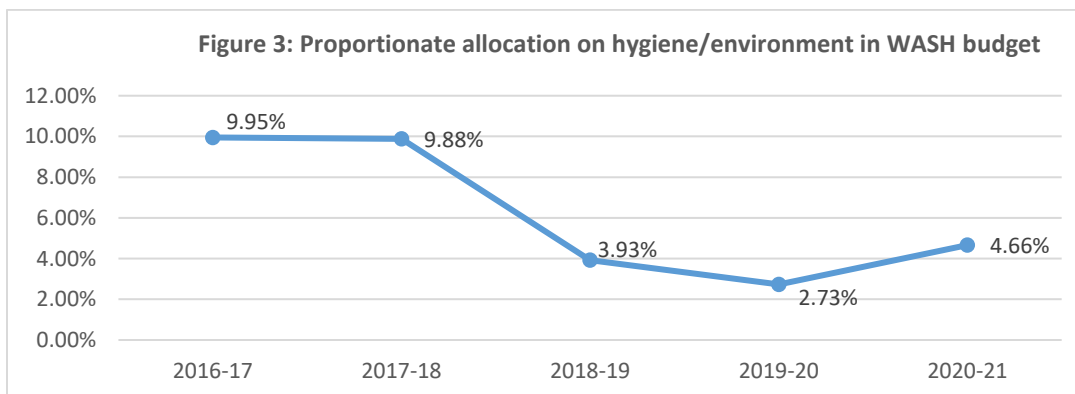


Pre-budget Brief urged for a pandemic priority WASH budget to fight COVID 19

It was identified that sub-sector Hygiene should get a priority in WASH budget allocation. But the sub-sector has been overlooked (Figures 2) in the proposed budget as usual.



The proportionate allocation from FY2016-17 to FY2020-21 shown in Figure 3 clearly reveals a downward trend in allocation in Hygiene sub-sector. Alleviating Hygiene from footnote to mainstream agenda and exploring the linkages between hygiene and health and under-nutrition as suggested in the pre-budget briefing remain a challenge and require much attention.



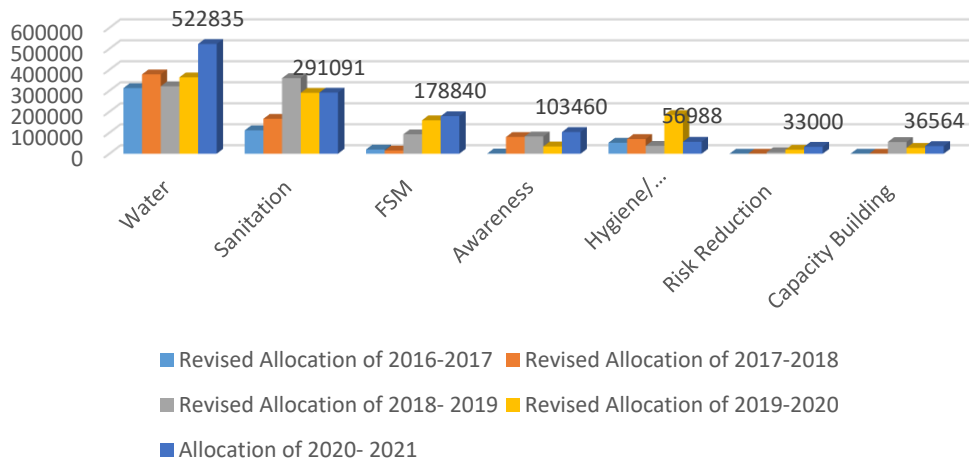
Sanitation is getting priority while Hygiene forgotten

It is worth mentioning that Sanitation is a getting priority among the sub-sectors other than Water. According to Figures 2, Sanitation has received second highest allocation in proposed FY2021-22 budget. Similar trend is also observed in previous years budget (Figure 4). This trend a laudable, one should understand the difference between and substantial value of both - Sanitation and Hygiene in maintaining personal health. Similarly understanding linkages between hygiene and malnutrition/ undernutrition and allocation of money accordingly will add value to nation's health situation. As for example, MICS 2019 survey of BBS has revealed a sharp decline of malnutrition, which fell from 42% (MICS 2013) to 28% in 2019, calculated by moderate and severe stunting of growth.

The National Hygiene Survey 2018 of BBS also reveals that Hygiene is not being practiced as expected by the school students as authorities have failed to create the necessary facilities. One toilet is being used by 115 students while only 34 percent schools have washing location with availability of water and soap, the National Hygiene Survey 2018 says. In a pandemic situation when COVID 19 is spreading in the secondary towns and villages of the country such obstinacy and inflexibility attitude of overlooking Hygiene and personal health care will pave the way of more COVID cases.

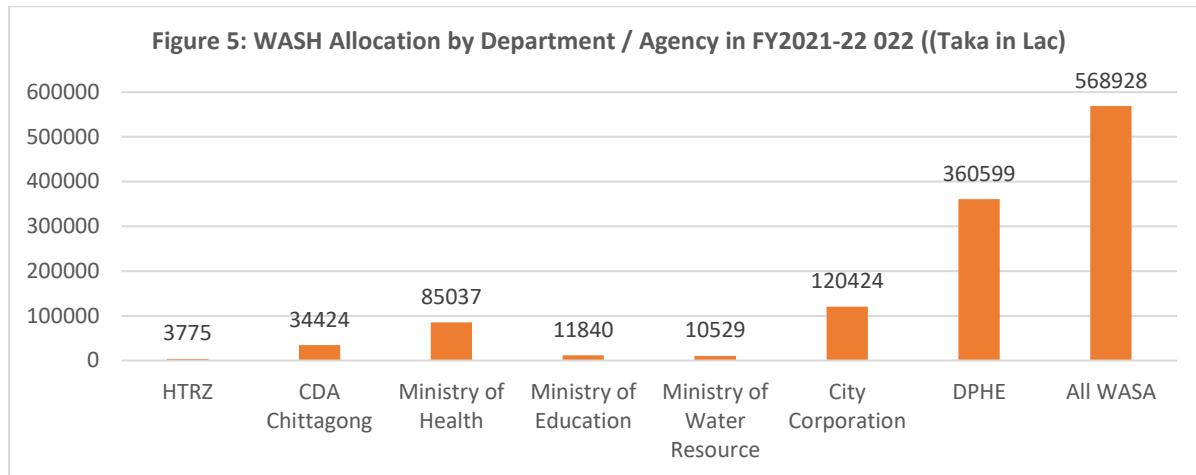
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Figure-4: Trend in WASH Allocation by Sub-Sectors (Tk in lac)

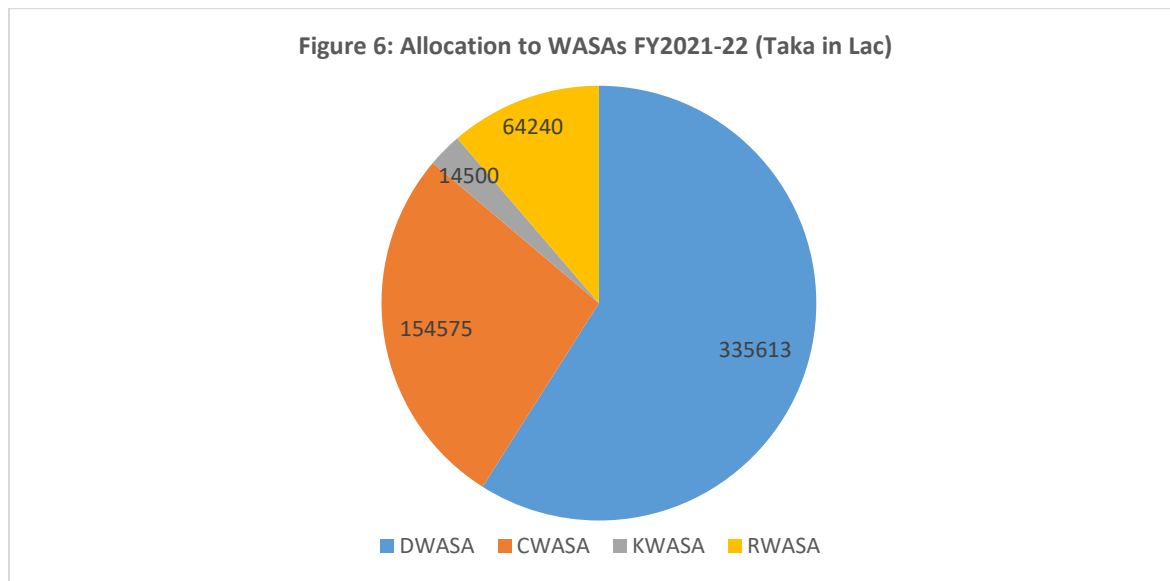


WASA receives the highest WASH allocation

As seen in previous years 4 WASAs in 4 major metro-cities snatch the most portion of the WASH allocation as shown in Figure 5. But disaggregating allocation in 4 WASA reveals that the allocation has not been made reasonably and equitably. Figure 5 shows that Dhaka WASA has swallowed the highest allocation.

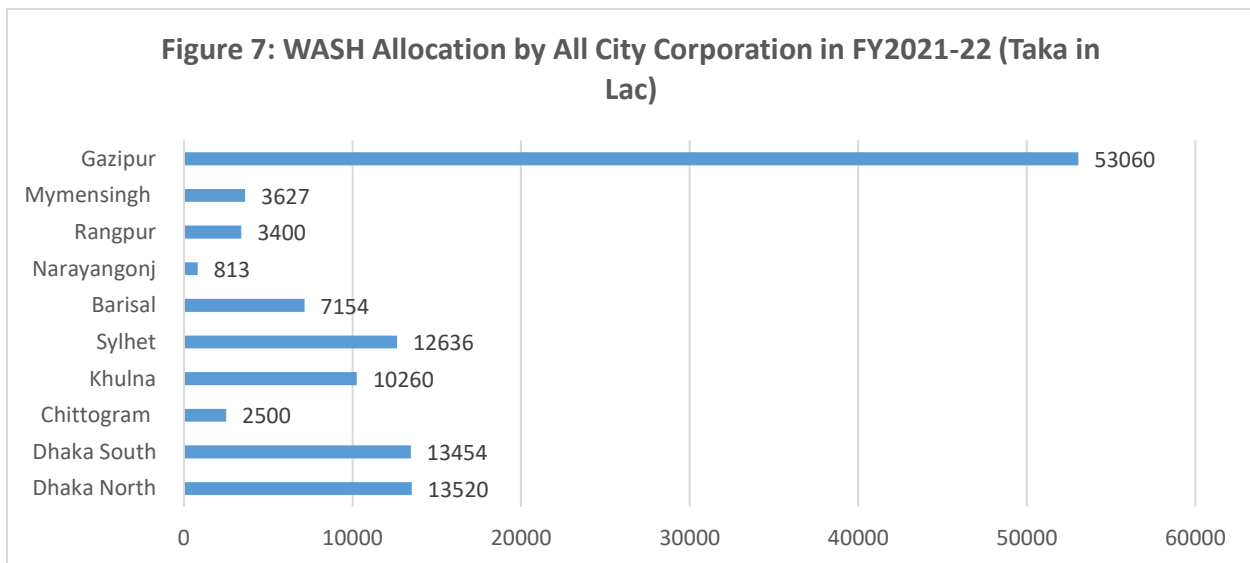


WASH allocation in proposed budget (FY2021-22) among the WASAs reveals that Dhaka WASA alone receives more than half of the total allocation while Kkugna WASA gets the lowest (Figure 6). Such inequitable distribution in budget allocation is happening from previous years without any reason shown without paying heed to the repeated call from the stakeholders in WASH sectors.



Disaggregated Data shows that there is inequitable distribution of WASH allocation in proposed Budget (FY2021-22)

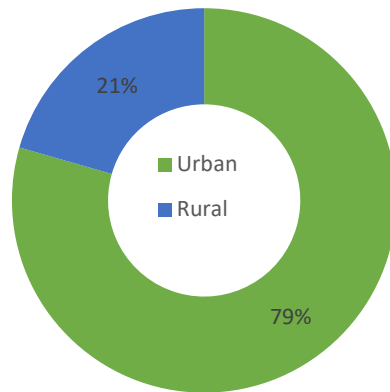
Figure 7 reveals that the Metropolitan cities are not receiving proper and equitable attention in WASH budget allocation. Gazipur City Corporation has alone grabbed more than half of total allocation in proposed budget, and Gazipur and two cities of Dhaka metro (DNCC and DSCC) swallowed three-fourth share of the budget while other eight metro-cities receive little.



Gap between Rural and Urban remains as it was

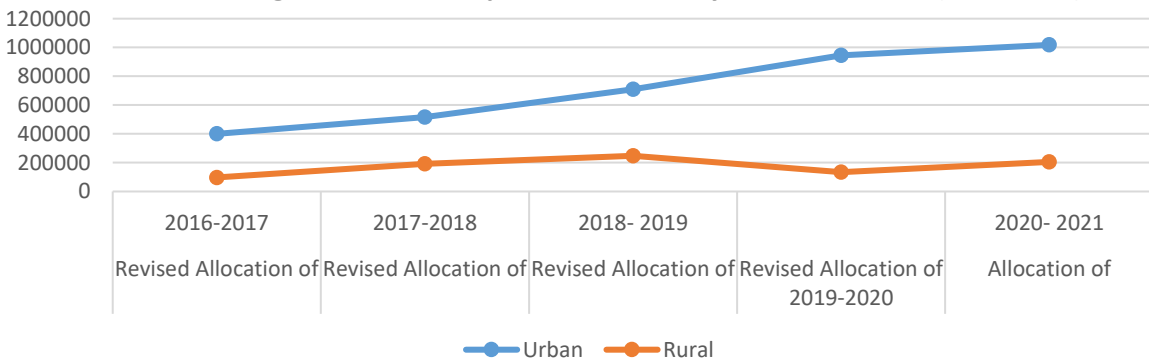
An analysis of data reveals as shown in Figure 8 that the proposed Budget (FY2021-22) in WASH sector did not care to reduce the gap in allocation of resources in rural and urban centres after repeated call from the stakeholders. In order to achieve SDG 6 such deep gap needs to be reduced and an equitable allocation is solicited.

Figure 8: WASH Allocation Urban vs Rural in FY2021-22 (Taka in Lac)

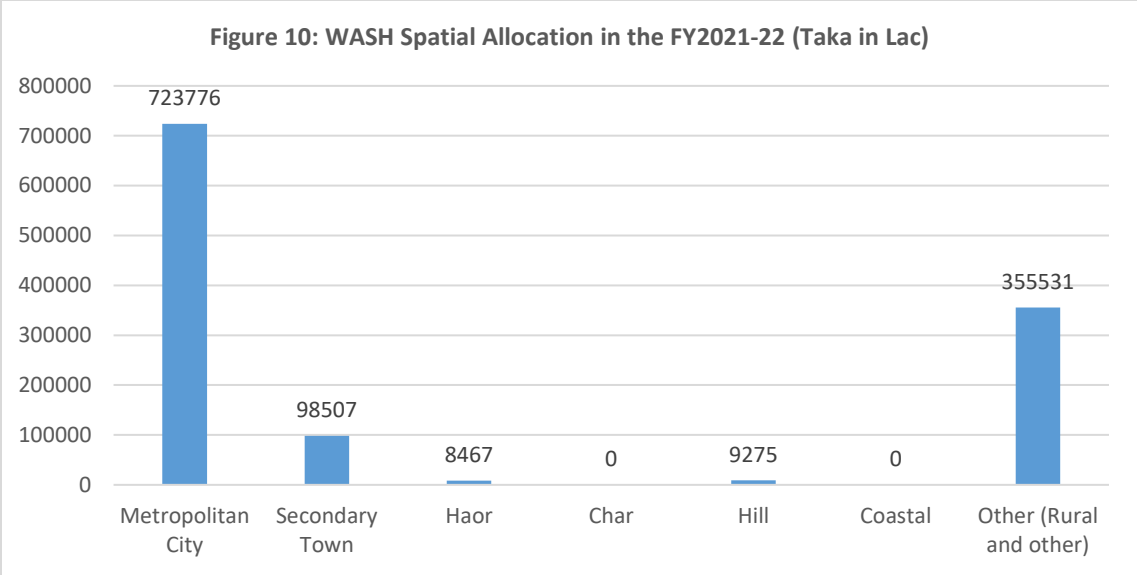


Data shows (Figure 9) that the gap between urban and rural has been increasing from the previous financial years. Rural needs more fund to cope with COVID 19 and attaining SDG 6.

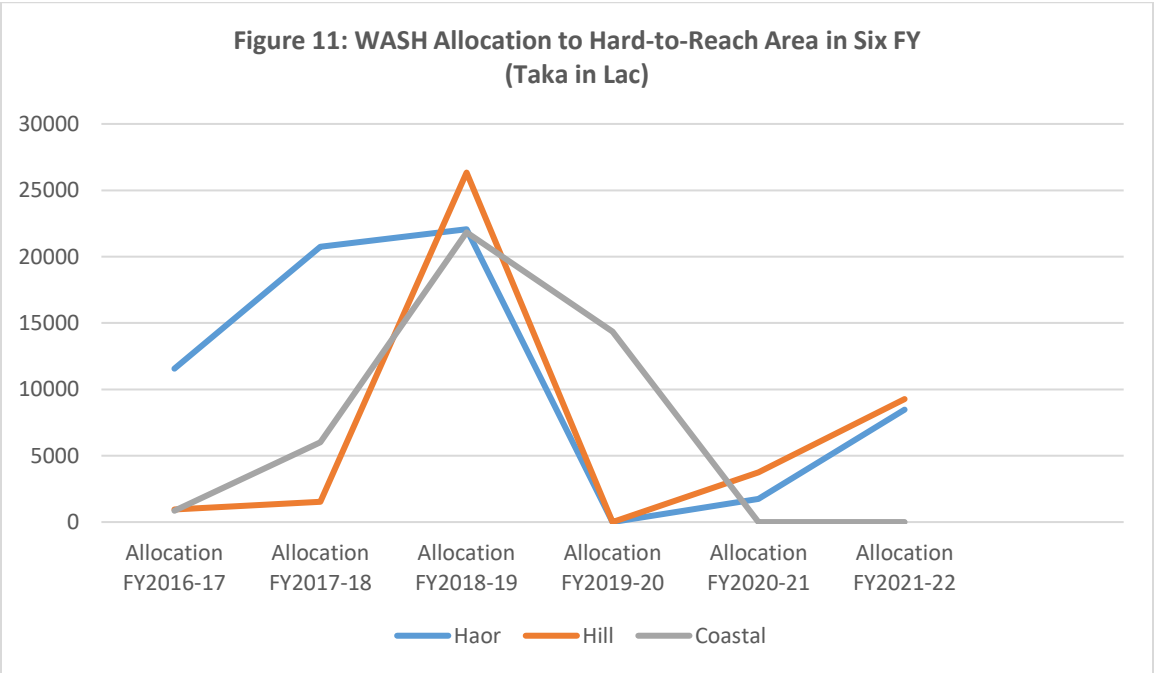
Figure-9: Trend in Spatial Allocation by Urban and Rural (Taka in lac)



Disaggregated data analysis (Figure 10) of proposed ADP WASH budget allocation for FY2021-22 reveals that almost three-fourth of the allocation goes to metro cities while the secondary towns and hard- to-reach areas remains at the bottom of the line. However, coastal area receives Taka 6.72 billion from climate budget for water and sanitation.

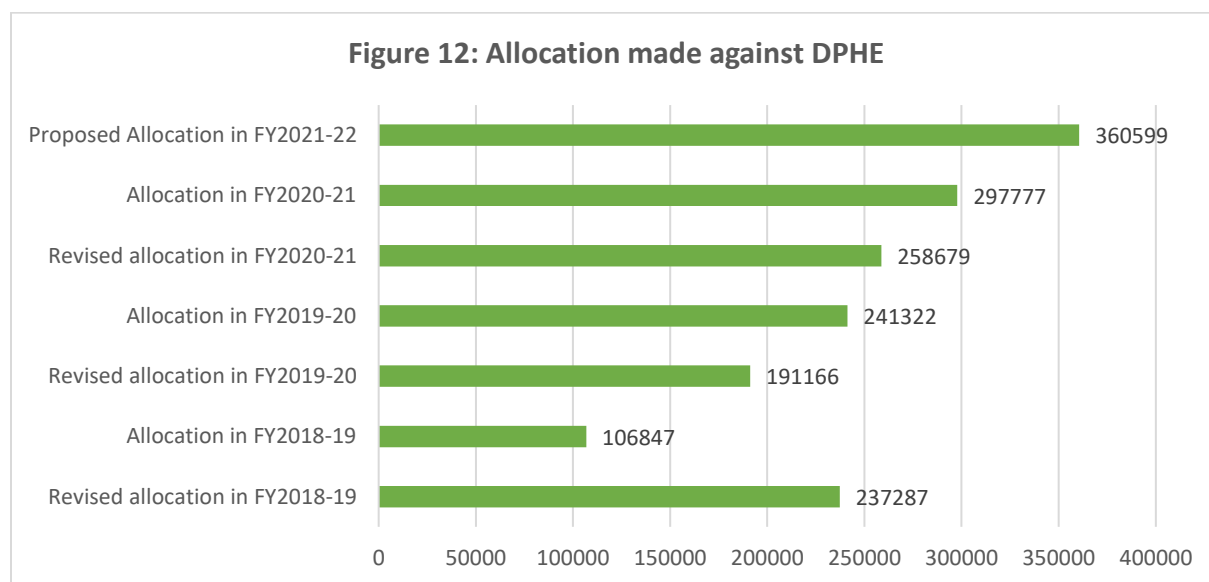


On the other hand, the allocation received by haor and hilly areas in FY 2018-19 was much better, then shows a downward trend, though finds a bit rise again in FY2021-22. On the other hand the allocation in ADP for coastal strip has fallen down from previous year (Figure 11).



Budget implementation is a big challenge

Department of Public Health and Engineering is responsible for implementation of WASH budget in secondary towns and rural areas; but the capacity of this important department in respect of budget utilization has not been enhanced so far. Data analysis reveals (Figure 12) that in most financial years its budget has been reduced in revised budget except for revised allocation FY2018-19 which shows a double increase. Whatever DPHE receives in original allocation or as revised one the department has failed to utilize the whole amount. In FY 2019-20 the department received Taka 191166 lac, but utilization was only Taka 15661 lac.



Recommendations

1

To address hygiene as a pandemic priority - both to combat Covid-19 and cover health-hygiene linkages – WASH allocations in Budget 2021-22 should open hygiene as a separate sub-sectoral line-item

2

A holistic rethinking of WASH allocation priorities should be undertaken to address entrenched gaps in resource allocation between rural and urban as well within the urban spectrum

3

The initiative taken on water-related environmental and risk reduction projects are commendable, but needs to scale up in disaster-prone areas, particularly in flood-prone and cyclone affected coastal strip of the country.

4

Good policies are not being followed by good implementation leading to a poor outcome syndrome. Capacity gaps of implementing agencies should be identified as a priority and allocations made to address such capacity gaps.