

Can CSOs Improve Allocation to Water & Sanitation through Budget Tracking

“A major factor related to budget is timely allocation and utilization in line with plan of various tiers of local government like Upazila Parishad, Union Parishad and Municipalities.”

Executive Summary

Budget tracking on WASH is a process which helps to visualize how public budget is allocated and utilized at Union Parishad (lowest tier of government administration) in order to improve the basic service access to water, sanitation and hygiene for all. Budget tracking on WASH also intended to oversee the financial involvement in water, sanitation and hygiene sector while it also provides a roadmap to the decision makers in their attempt to address the commitment on WASH of the politician as well as government.

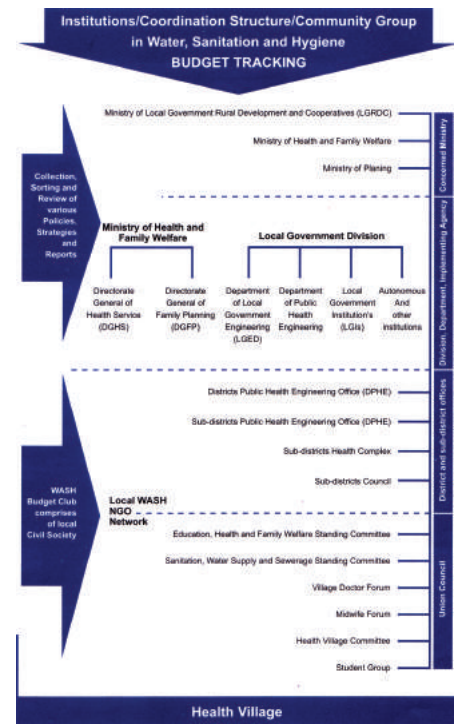
Introduction

By involving various stakeholders, budget tracking process plays an important role in the use of existing policies and plans of Government of Bangladesh on WASH and IWRM. It also involves local decision makers to implement the available related policies and plans to bridge between the community and the local government representatives. Budget for water, sanitation and hygiene need to be increased on the basis of demand from the community people as well as timely implementation of plans. Engaging community people and sensitizing authorities at the same time could make a connection that contribute to enhance effort for improvement of WASH sector which in future may solve issues like less budget allocation and its proper utilization thus develop WASH and IWRM country situation.

Water, sanitation and hygiene sectors were not seen separately before, but due to difference goals and targets, the Bangladesh Water Development Board-BWDB, Local Government Engineering Department-LGED and Department of Public Health Engineering-DPHE and local government institutes i.e. Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and Municipality are now giving necessary support to the public budget allocation of this sector. However, in the next fiscal year 2018-19, the demand for budget allocation for the WASH especially for the people living below the poverty line is strongly being conveyed from various groups of the society.

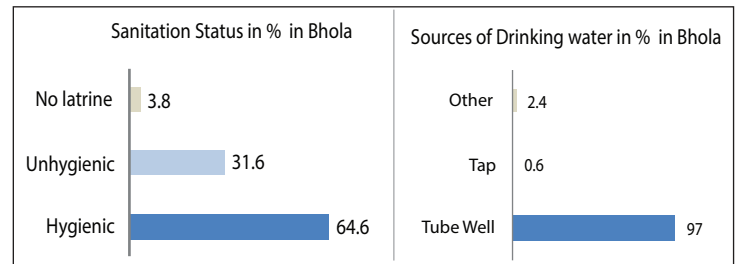
Key Facts and Background

Bhola is an island of Bangladesh and at the downstream of Meghna Basin with many natural resources. Bhola district comprises of 7 Upazilas (sub-district) and 68 Unions under rural settings and 5 Municipalities under urban settings. The country's only delta Bhola, situated in the lower Ganges Belt Bhola Sadar Upazila consists of 19 protected ponds and 31 canals. The ponds are used for fisheries, bathing and other activities. The government has started a re-digging program in the entire country and Bhola district is also under this program. The water resources stored in the ponds are readily available used for many domestic purposes except drinking. Besides, numerous of these canals are filled up and sometimes its water is being contaminated by household and business waste, one of which is 'Bhola canal'. Both, the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 and budget allocation acknowledge these topics as very significant.



According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics-BBS 2011, 97% of families living in Bhola drink tube well water. Less than 1% of households drink tap water and about 2% drink water from other sources. 65% of households using Hygienic latrines and 32% of the population use unhygienic latrines and about 4% of households do not have toilet facilities. But this are findings in line with MDG, if we consider SDG then these figures will drastically go down.

According to SDG 6, by the year 2030, everyone will have to ensure access to safe water and sanitation. To achieve this goal, sufficient public budget needs to be allocated locally and explicitly target the poor. How to make the per capita allocation also falls under the purview of budget tracking. In the 2017-18 Fiscal Year, Bhola Union Parishad's water and sanitation sector was allocated per capita only 51 taka, which is one fold of the 9 against the demand (BDT 483). In order to be able to reach SDGs, the Planning Commission needs to start to allocate the desired amount of money 1148¹ taka need to start from now.



Distribution of budget of the Union Parishad to Bhola canal, land, water logging, distribution of essential tube wells and latrines to the people like bede (nomadic), coolie, midwife, daily labor, and disabled need to be included in the integrated water resources management which is utmost demand. There are 2 CSOs functioning at Bhola Sadar Upazila namely Water Management Citizen Committee-WMCC consists of 30 members from different professionals like teacher, journalist, social worker and above mentioned persons as well. Another is NGO network consists of 7 members who are based in Bhola

¹ General Economic Division-GED, Ministry of Planning-MoP, 2017, SDGs Financing Strategy Dhaka, Bangladesh.

working on WASH and IWRM. They are raising voice for the communities need and demand. However, according to operational manual 2013 and policy 2009 of Union Parishad and Upazila Parishad (Sub-district) it is mentioned that community people need to be consulted during preparation of the budget.

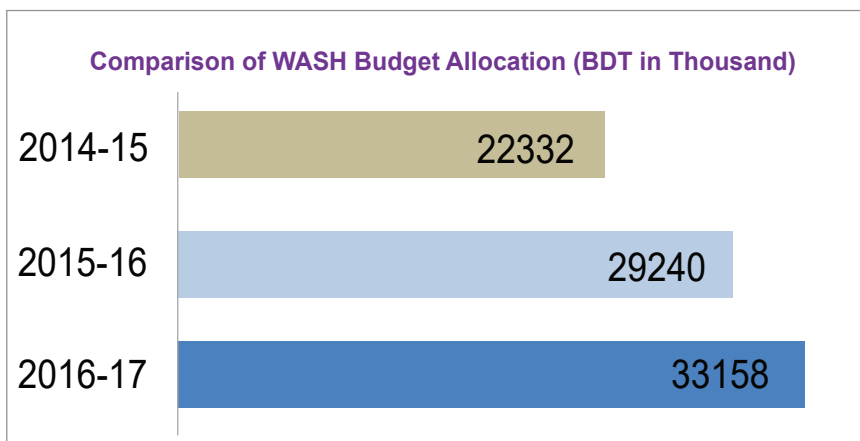


Conclusion

The 2 CSOs who are being coached by the ‘Watershed-empowering citizen’ program are using ‘Budget Monitoring Tool’ to collect and assess data quarterly. After analyzing the data collected from the tools, interprets that the allocated budget for Union Parishad under Annual Development Program-ADP cannot be used timely due to delay in distribution of budget from relevant ministries at national level. However, from our previous experience, a total of 25 open budget sessions have been conducted in 25 Unions in different geographical location of Bangladesh. Participants were Upazila Nirbahi Officer , Upazila Family Planning Officer, Chairman of Union Parishad, Secretary Union Parishad, Members of Union Parishad, Health village group members, DPHE mechanic, NGO network members, Teachers, Budget club members, local elites etc.

The discussions were mainly about the budget of Union Parishad that has been publicized by respective secretary of Union Parishad. We found that Total budget allocated in the Union Parishad’s in the open budget sessions are BDT 360,445,492 and allocated in WASH are BDT 29,238,436. ADP² budget in the Union Parishad are BDT 26,120,608 where budget for WASH of ADP budget are BDT 6,169,200 which is 24%. The participants shared that this type of session needs to be arranged every year for proper allocation of budget, which will also ensure the transparency and accountability of the Union Parishad.

WASH budget has been increased on an average 31%³ than previous year which happened due to lobby and advocacy of CSOs. Therefore, more people especially the marginalized are getting access to safe water and improved sanitation.



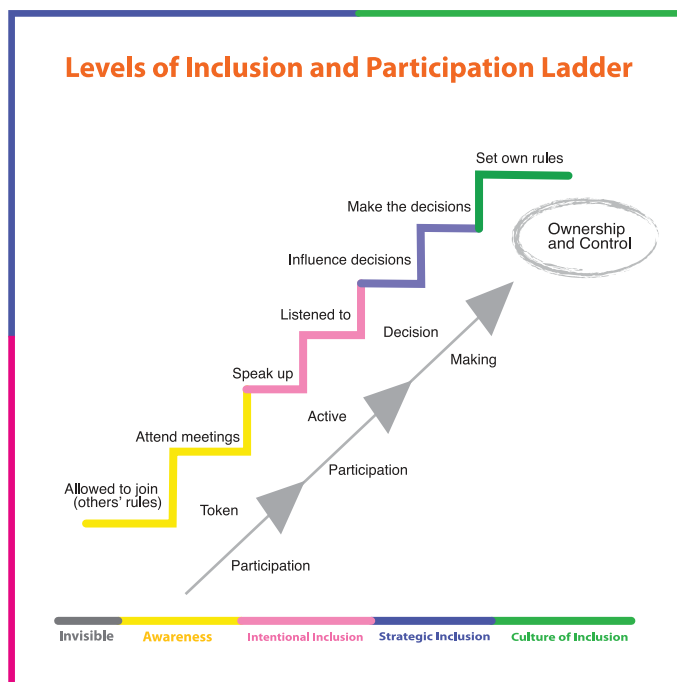
The evidences envisage that budget will increase in all areas where community people’s involvement in the budget process is more and Union Parishad open their budget substantially.

² According to “Upazila Parishad Development Budget Utilization Manual” November 2014, Annual Development Budget-ADP has a condition that water supply and sanitation sector will receive 15% of the of the total ADP budget.

³ Union Parishad-UP, 2016, Open Budget Booklet of 24 Unions of six Upazilas of six Districts.

Major outcomes of Budget Tracking

- Peoples Participation in Budgeting process increased leads to proper allocation of budget;
- Annual both (revenue: Tax and Development) budget increased;
- Resources duplication avoided;
- Overall Governance improved.



Recommendation

- Operationalize the government policies, acts, manual etc. on WASH and IWRM at grassroots level.
- Encourage CSOs to be involved in the budgeting both at national and local level.
- Consult with the community people during budget preparation so that demand based budget has been allocated in a particular area.
- Improve coordination mechanism among the relevant departments (duty bearers) who are providing services to community.

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This "Briefing Paper" has been prepared by Partha Sarathi Kuntal, Program Coordinator, DORP, Bangladesh under the "Write Shop" organized in April 2018 at Ede, The Netherlands by IRC.