

Status Report on WASH through the Youth Lens

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How are youth affected by Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)?



WASH challenges faced by the youth

- WASH challenges substantially impact their education, health, and overall well-being.
- In Bangladesh, women and girls are responsible for water collection in 90% of households. Many girls walk long distances with heavy vessels to fetch water, and often have to give up on school.
- Lack of adequate WASH facilities also affects girls' attendance. More than 1 in 4 girls miss school during menstruation.
- Inadequate WASH facilities affect the learning environment of both boys and girls, undermining their livelihood opportunities later in life.
- SDG 6 is intricately linked with various targets of other SDGs relevant to the youth.



What role can the youth play in addressing these WASH challenges?



Youth Engagement in Improving WASH outcomes

- One of the major factors that inhibit progress in WASH outcomes is the low level of overall awareness at various levels of the society.
- The youth can play an important role in raising awareness to address multiple WASH issues.
- The youth also have the potential to go beyond awareness and come up with innovative solutions to WASH problems in their communities.
- However, there is hardly any initiative that connects the potential of youth in improving WASH outcomes.

There is an acute need to engage youth, enhance their capacity, enabling them to initiate change leading to better WASH outcomes.



Trends and Analysis

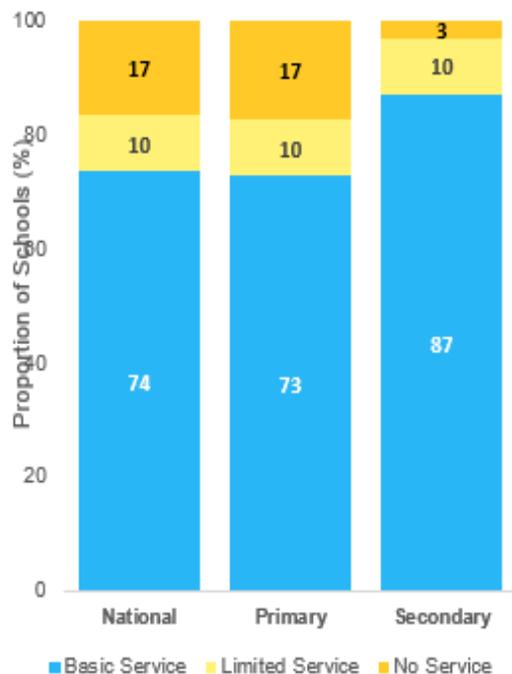
WASH in Schools

- Progress is captured by SDG 4.A, which calls for schools that are child, disability and gender sensitive providing an inclusive and effective learning environment for all
- Data for WASH in schools is extracted from WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP), which reports data up to 2016, and the National Hygiene Survey (2018)

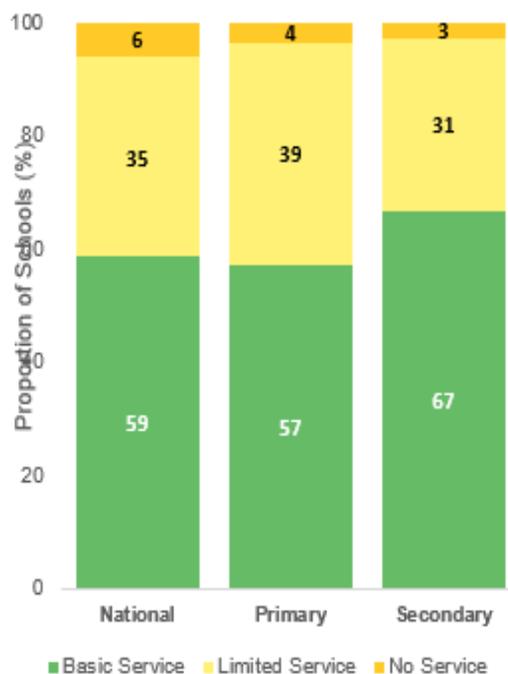


WASH in Schools – findings from JMP

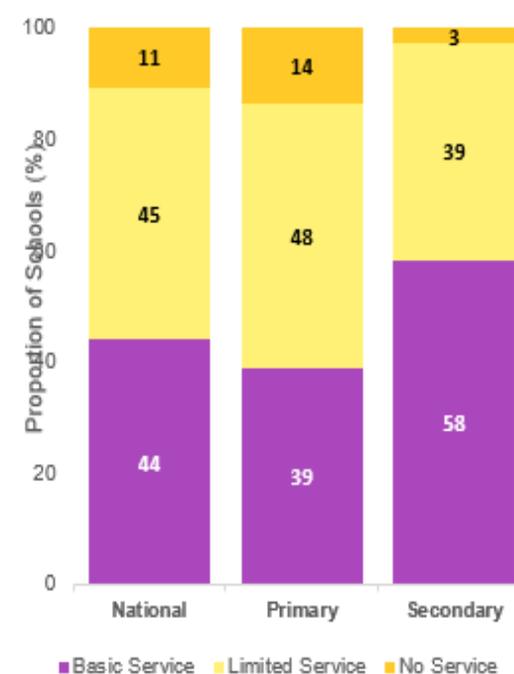
Drinking water



Sanitation



Hygiene



- 74% of schools had access to basic drinking water while 17% had no service.
- 59% of schools have basic sanitation facilities.
- Only 44% of all schools have functional handwashing facilities with soap and water available.

WASH in Schools – findings from National Hygiene Survey

- 92% of schools have improved functional drinking water source, the indicator which corresponds to JMP's basic service level
- This is up from 80% in 2014 when the baseline hygiene survey was conducted
- Given that the 2016 estimate from JMP is lower than the 2014 estimate of the baseline hygiene survey, the variation may be due to different methodologies.

Snapshot of findings from National Hygiene Survey

Indicator	NHS 2014	NHS 2018
Functional improved latrines available at school for students (% of schools)	84	99
Number of students per functional, improved, unlocked toilet	-	113
Water available inside the toilet or nearby (<30 feet from toilet) (% of schools)	45	91
Water and soap available inside or nearby (<30 feet from toilet) (% of schools)	32	85
Schools with separate improved, unlocked toilets (% of co-ed schools)	-	65
Use of pads during menstruation while at school (% of adolescent schoolgirls)	10	62

Source: National Hygiene Baseline Survey 2014; National Hygiene Survey 2018

Major Developments in WASH in Schools

- Increasing acknowledgement by the Government is a major achievement.
- Using findings from National Hygiene Baseline Survey 2014, the Ministry of Education issued in June 2015 instructing relevant authorities to improve WASH scenario in schools, including gender-friendly sanitation and menstrual hygiene management (MHM).
- The ministry issued another circular in January 2019 calling for an enabling learning environment, including separate WASH blocks.
- This acknowledgement reflects continued advocacy efforts of INGOs/NGOs operating in this sector

Major Obstacles for WASH in Schools

- Limited WASH facilities in hard-to-reach areas, such as the southwest coastal belt, undermines progress.
- Empirical evidence shows that a rise in salinity increases the chance of girls dropping out of school to collect water. There is no such increase for boys.
- Low budgetary allocation for hard-to-reach areas affects provision of WASH services. In FY 2018-19, expenditure for coastal WASH was just BDT 364 crores, less than 1% of total expenditure.
- Several institutional bottlenecks also affect progress in WASH in schools. This includes lack of a harmonized monitoring system aligned with WASH indicators, and lack of a reporting mechanism to line ministries.

Youth as Changemakers



Potential of the Youth

- 30% of the population is aged between 15 and 24 years. This segment would be instrumental in the national development process.
- From a WASH context, the youth can utilize their potential as changemakers to markedly improve WASH visibility and importance in the public domain.
- According to the Labour Force Survey 2016-17, youth unemployment (aged 15-24) is 12.3%, nearly triple the national average.
- 13.4% of total unemployed are youth with a tertiary degree. This suggests a mismatch between education curriculum and the job market requirements.

Unlocking Youth Potential

- From a WASH context, the youth can utilize their potential as changemakers to markedly improve WASH visibility and importance in the public domain. This would be critical in moving towards SDG 6.
- However, they need the right opportunities to enhance their skills which would enable them to become changemakers.
- These would also enhance their employability and economic prospects.
- WaterAid Bangladesh has launched the Youth for SDG 6 platform in 2019 in an effort to engage youth in the journey to reach SDG 6.
- This platform and similar youth engagement platforms of other CSOs are playing a key role in achieving the SDGs. These are directly linked to SDG 4.4 (increasing number of youth with relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship) and SDG 8.6 (reduce the number of NEET youth)

Policy Recommendations



Policy Recommendations

- Increase investments and budgetary allocation to ensure access to WASH services, particularly in hard-to-reach and climate vulnerable areas, so that girls do not miss school in order to collect water.
- Although the Ministry of Education issued circulars requiring schools to improve WASH situation, there is no policy or legal framework for WASH in schools. These need to be developed in consultation with local stakeholders. An accountability framework for WASH in schools for duty bearers and stakeholders needs to be developed.
- Collaboration between the government, academia, private sector, and CSOs on increasing youth engagement should be enhanced.
- Efforts to onboard youth in the national development process may be considered in line with the UN Youth Strategy, prioritizing their health, education, and livelihood opportunities.

Thank you

