

Journey to zero

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 34

backed by clear policy guidance, provided the impetus needed to make sanitation a priority issue. Another reason behind rapid progress is that at the tipping point of the new millennium, sanitation initiatives shifted from supply side-driven projects to a people-centered approach. High level policy directives were translated into effective action in many places through the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) methodology, which focused on igniting the community as agents of change. As different organisations began to work on sanitation with communities, adaptations were made to the original approach, but the essential spirit of grassroots leadership and collective action remained true in each case. Participatory, community-led efforts led to village after village being declared open defecation free as a national social movement took hold. This was supported by the strong role of local government institutions (LGIs), which from the district level



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behaviour. Despite Bangladesh's high population density and rapid urbanisation, public sanitation is in a woeful state, with even the capital city having only 69 public toilets to serve 5.5 million commuters.

Further challenges are presented by rising inequity within Bangladesh. People living in hard-to-reach rural areas and densely populated urban slums are marginalised by inequitable WASH budgeting that favours the well-off in urban centres. At the individual level, women and girls, persons with disabilities, children, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses are often left behind, even as their communities advance.

Finally, as SDG 6 capture to a great extent, we are no longer in a world where WASH is a matter of providing access to taps and toilets. It is imperative that we go beyond building latrines, with long-term support and shared investment involving government ministries, development partners, civil society, the private sector and communities.

As we step into 2016, we have much to celebrate as a thriving nation, defying multiple odds to bring about truly transformative change. However, we must be wary of becoming complacent based on past successes. Water, sanitation and hygiene are interlinked issues with complex, multifaceted impacts on health, nutrition, ecosystems and populations. As the government and civil society go forward, they must address WASH as a much more integrated component of overall development, and one of central importance to achieving a number of the SDGs alongside SDG 6. Only then can we complete the longer journey—of which zero open defecation is only the beginning—reaching everyone, everywhere, always, with improved WASH.

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down to the Union Parishads monitored the sanitation situation in their constituencies, and strove to earn the coveted '100% open defecation free' accolade. At the national level, the

Ministry of Local Government collaborated with academics, civil society and the private sector for shared and harmonious decision-making, a key ingredient of success that is often overlooked.

Alongside national efforts led by the government and LGIs, a vital role was played by bilateral and multilateral development partners. Large scale programmes supported by bilateral and multilateral partners such as Danida, DFID, the Dutch government, UNICEF, SIDA and SDC, reached millions of people across the country with sustained support over many years. Finally, technological progress kept pace with social mobilisation, with community-led innovations driving the development of feasible and cost-effective

sanitation options. Each of these contributing factors played out against a backdrop of broader developments that had their own roles in the overall success. In particular, Bangladesh's drive towards female education through stipend programs, and participation of women in microfinance, and the growing economic and social empowerment of women more generally, led women to act on an issue closely connected to their sense of dignity. Defecation in open is a gross compromise in dignity. Consistent decline in poverty, widespread economic growth, improved communications and household infrastructure, and the ubiquitous mobile phone, led to a rising sense of aspiration amongst people as toilets became

a symbol not of affluence, but necessity. The combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, in concurrence with technological advances, external support, and wider economic and social progress, created the grounds for our success today. However, as we graduate to a middle-income country and face a new development era with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we must respond to emerging challenges and new threats. The flip side of success is the rapid and unplanned construction of latrines in many parts of the country, resulting in second generation issues of faecal sludge management. The proportion of unimproved and unhygienic latrines is high in Bangladesh, and we lag behind many countries in the region in hygiene

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Common CSR Practices of Our Garment Factories

- Free Medical Services
- Free Lunch
- School for Workers' Children
- Ambulance Service
- Fair Price Shop
- Employment of Disabled
- Day Care

Workers Welfare Activities of BGMEA

BGMEA performs a number of regular activities to ensure workers' rights, and welfare such as:

- Run mandatory group insurance scheme for garment workers and staff.
- With the Government of Bangladesh, BGMEA provides aid to lactating mothers working in garment factories. In the last 4 years a total amount of Tk 200 million was disbursed among around 29 thousand mothers.
- BGMEA runs a hospital in Chittagong and 12 health centers that provide with healthcare facilities and medicines to more than 60,000 garment workers per year free of cost. Another 10-storey hospital in Dhaka for garment workers is under construction.
- It runs five schools for the workers' children and provides books, study materials and stipends to the meritorious students.
- The trade body works with different organizations to raise awareness about HIV/ AIDS, tuberculosis, and reproductive health among apparel workers.
- BGMEA runs a total of 35 training centers across the country for producing skill garment workers.
- It organized voice talent hunt programs for the workers titled 'Gorbo' two times where the finalist was awarded with Taka one million.
- A dormitory for 3000 workers in Chittagong has been set up jointly by the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) and BGMEA. One more dormitory is going to be set up in Ashulia.