

Safe and affordable drinking water



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Bangladesh's journey with water has been fraught with many challenges. However, despite all the setbacks, huge achievements have been made – including the fact that the country successfully reached the Millennium Development Goal for water – a point we need to keep in mind during the long journey ahead to the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the past, a large part of Bangladesh's population obtained most of their drinking water from surface water sources, such as ponds and rivers. As a result, there were widespread deaths from diarrheal diseases such as cholera due to the presence of microbiological pathogens in surface water sources.

In the 1970s, there was a campaign led by UNICEF to promote tubewells throughout the country. They provided an easy solution to obtain drinking water that was not contaminated with pathogens. This campaign was highly successful and by the early 1990s, millions of tubewells were installed across rural areas of Bangladesh, providing drinking water for over 90 percent of the population. These were mainly shallow tubewells, i.e. they pulled up water from shallow aquifers. During this time, there was a significant decline in deaths from diarrheal diseases in the country, both due to availability of safe water as well as the use of oral



PHOTO: BRAC

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rehydration solution.

However, this apparent success also had a major downside. A growing number of people were starting to be diagnosed with symptoms of arsenic poisoning. Large-scale water quality

screenings took place, and widespread arsenic contamination of groundwater was discovered. It was found that arsenic levels in shallow aquifers were much higher than permissible limits, with highest concentrations in the

central and southern rural areas of the country.

Since then, much effort has been taken at the policy level to combat this issue. The government established policies and strategies such as the

National Policy for Safe Water Supply (1998), National Water Policy (1999), National Policy for Arsenic Mitigation (2004) and the Water Safety Framework (2011). Efforts have also been taken at the implementation level.

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We are Committed to Ensuring Dignity, Well-being & Safety of Our Workers

MADE IN BANGLADESH WITH PRIDE

Common CSR Practices of Our Garment Factories

Free Medical Services

Free Lunch

Day Care

School for Workers' Children

Ambulance Service

Fair Price Shop

Employment of Disabled

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 at 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.