

Blog on building block assessment dissemination

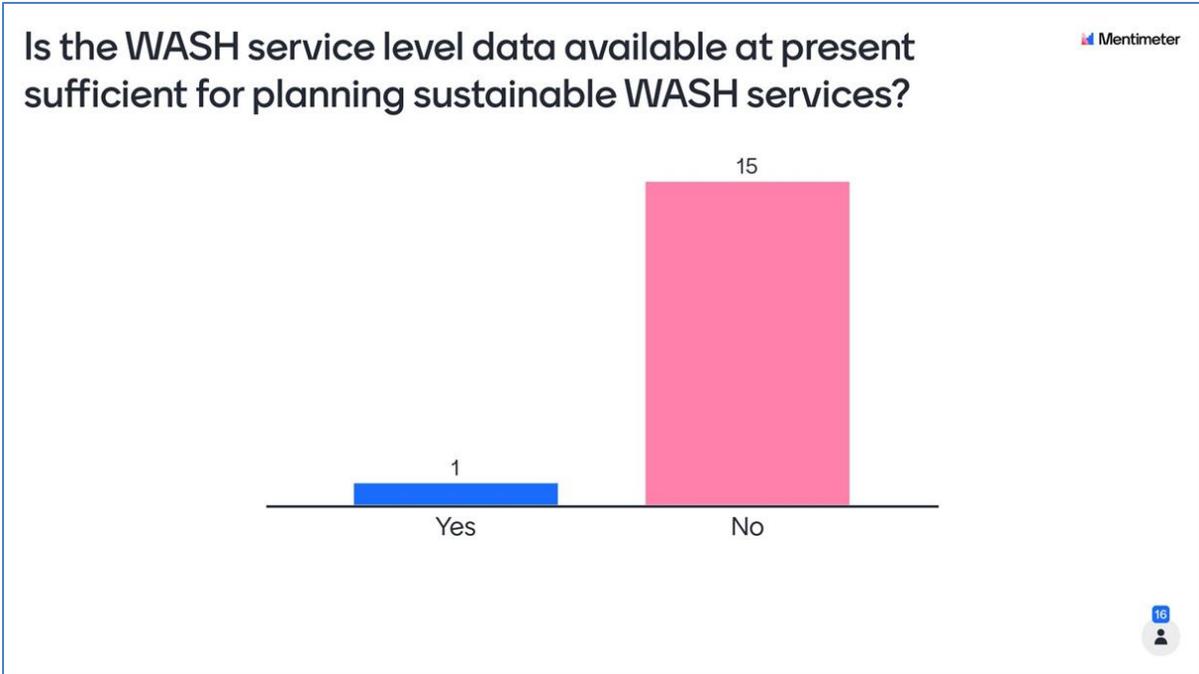
Government is seriously thinking about developing a regulatory authority to support private sector in the WASH sector of Bangladesh. Mr. Numeri Zaman, Joint Secretary from the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh has revealed the plan for commissioning such an authority as government is realizing the importance of increased engagement of private sector in the WASH service delivery in Bangladesh. It was shared during the findings sharing session of the building block assessment of the WASH Service Delivery models in small towns of Bangladesh, jointly organized by IRCWASH Netherlands and DORP Bangladesh on the 8th of March.

The assessment was carried out by IRCWASH with support from DORP from December 2021 to February 2022. Along with desk review, the study collected primary data from 3 towns, two of which are district towns (Bhola and Barguna) whereas the other one is a sub-district town (Ramgati). The virtual findings sharing session was attended by representatives from sector organizations, the joint secretary from LGD was present as the chief guest of the session.

Assessment methodology, individual building block scores and key findings were shared during the virtual event through a powerpoint presentation. The key findings are

- Most of the population rely on self-supply for water and sanitation services (latrines and boreholes mostly), technical skills and spare parts are available for those services
- DPHE and municipality are the two key service providers for WASH. Both have good training and capacity building programmes. However, the training courses are stratified and generic thus lacks content for coastal need
- Hygiene as a service is a neglected issue at local level and no responsible authority/personnel is there in the organogram for hygiene
- Small municipalities lack capacity to generate revenue. Thus with limited finance, WASH becomes a less priority issue for municipality officials
- No proper WASH service monitoring system exists at these small town level
- Knowledge on Faecal Sludge Management found poor among service providers
- Water Resources Management planning is mostly missing in WASH services

The presentation was followed by a feedback and discussion session. Dr. Tanvir Ahmed was present as key discussant of the assessment. He discussed the mythology and findings of the assessment. The key observation he shared is that now it is time to look forward from short-term project based infrastructure establishment to develop long-term institutional management of service. Other discussants in the feedback session have also mentioned the need for making change in the planning process particularly for finance, operation & maintenance and monitoring process of planning such service provisions. Another point raised by the discussants is the poor ownership of hygiene management. It is found in the assessment that hygiene management is neglected at the small town level. The discussants endorsed this finding and urged for institutional changes to provide hygiene service. Another finding that has been granted by all the participants is lack of monitoring data. A round of mentimeter questions confirmed the finding.



The joint secretary in his remarks discussed the findings and updated the participants about ongoing and planned initiatives of the Government. Notable example is development of an ‘Operation & Maintenance Guideline’ for WASH infrastructures. He also mentioned the need for commissioning a regulatory authority for the private sector in WASH which has been cited in the beginning of this blog. Overall, the participants greeted the findings and emphasized the need for contextualizing the methodology for wider use in Bangladesh.

