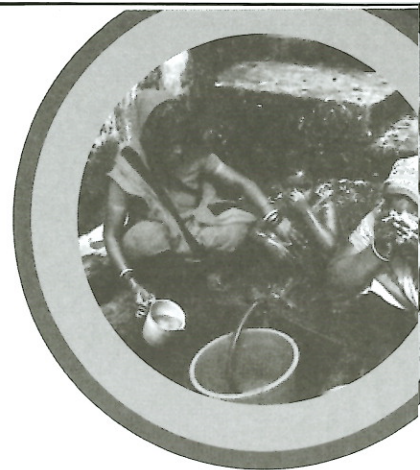


3

WATER AND SANITATION SITUATION OF DALITS IN BANGLADESH



Safe water and hygienic sanitation situation is the prime need of all human being. But the developing countries like Bangladesh cannot ensure these for all citizens properly. If we would do intensive analysis, we could identify that discrimination exists in distributing these small resources. State considers social status, caste, work and descent to provide the support to all. In urban areas, there are facilities of supply water at kitchens and toilets. Modern sewerage systems are also there in the toilets. At the same time, the Dalit colonies adjacent to the city suffer for safe water.

According to the Local Government Division of Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives, there are only 10 million tube wells as the main source of water for 22 million households. Among those, 9 million tube wells are privately owned. Rest 1 million is used by the 'Poor communities'. Dalits are included in the 'poor communities' where the population is around 13 million. Among the poor, 60 percent are beyond the modern sanitation facility.

Telegu community lives in 'PWD-Pangu Dalit Colony' situated at Sher-e-Bangla Nagor of Dhaka. Inhabitants of the colony use a pipe of Dhaka Water Supply Authority (DWASA) for water which is totally illegal. And they have to bribe the authorities for this. The community people has made 7/8 sub-lines of the pipe of DWASA to meet their water requirement.

Gabtolli Beribadh City Colony is another Dalit colony in Dhaka. There were no water sources in this colony for a long time. Later, a tube-well was installed which was the only water source for 35 Dalit families. However, the inhabitants installed 4 tube wells later and now these are the only source of water there till now. All the bathrooms here are without roof and there are only 6 toilets for the Dalit community.

Approximately 450-500 family live in Ganaktuly City Colony of Hajaribagh thana (administrative area), Dhaka. There is no water connection for individual families there. There are 6 toilets for inhabitants of 10 rooms of a building. They have to collect drinking water, water for shower and toilet from a reserve tank. Other than Dalits, there are also 200 families live there and depend on the water of that reserve tank. At the colony, there are only two reserve tanks for all the inhabitants. There is only one toilet for 10 families.

Around five thousand people live in Nazirabazar Pakistan Colony. Scarcity of water is the main problem here. The inhabitants of this colony get water through an old pump which is not even regular. Usually water comes every 2/3 days after. And many times the pump becomes deactivated and the inhabitants fall into great crisis. There is another water point with four tapes for 200 families. At the same time, there are only two toilets for 50 families, one for male another for female. In summer, inhabitants of the colony have to buy water as the water sources become dry.

There are around 700 people of Telegu and Kanpuri community live in Tikatuly-Wari city colony. All of them collect water from an open reserve tank. In the hot summer, water goes down and they have buy water from outside by paying extra money. It is worthwhile to mention that they have to buy 'drinking water' for round the year.

There are no public water supply facilities in Dhonpur Telegu Community Sweeper Colony. Without legal permission, the inhabitants of the colony set a connection with the nearby pump of ward no. 49 and constructed two taps as water source. All the families collect water in large vessels and bottles from these two taps to drink and cook food. Besides they also have installed two tube wells more in another side of the colony. There are 28 common toilets in the colony and the drains of the toilets are open. The drain overflows in the rainy season and flooded the colony.

In 2005, Local Government Division of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives has declared the 'Pro-poor strategy for water and sanitation sector in Bangladesh' and determined the 'Basic Minimum level of service' of water and sanitation for the hard-core poor. The standard is as below:

Water: 20 litres water for every person each day is must.

Sanitation: One hygienic toilet for each family; if it is not possible, then maximum two families can share one toilet.

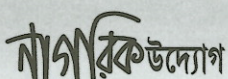
In practical, Dalits are living far beyond the above mentioned standard. Getting 20 liters of water per person per day is a dream for them. Actually, aged, women and children are the most sufferer of this situation. Water and Sanitation situation of Dalits are yet to get the proper attention in national development activities.

Immediate tasks

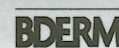
- Advocacy to ensure special allocation in the national budget for water and sanitation facilities in the Dalit colonies;
- Mobilize the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives to provide specific directions to all local government institutes to upsurge the water and sanitation facilities of the Dalit community.

Reference

- 1) Altaf Parvez, Dalit Jibon: Desher Dalit colonigulor pani o sanitation babosthar chitro, Nagorik Uddyog 2013 Dhaka. (Yet to publish)


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