

WHAT PROGRESS LOOKS LIKE

BANGLADESH – HANDWASHING

(SDG TARGET 6.2)

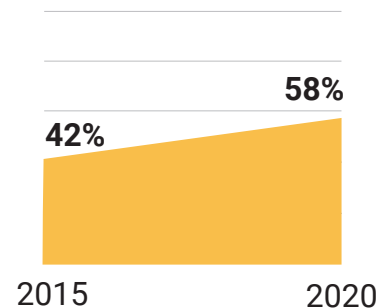


Progress indicator: SDG 6.2.1b Proportion of population with a handwashing facility with soap and water available at home (referred to as ‘basic hygiene services’)

Level of impact: National (167 million people and \$936 billion in gross domestic product)

Result: 58% of the population has access to basic hygiene services, representing an increase of 16 percentage points compared to 2015, and 38 percentage points compared to 2005.

Progress 2015–2020:



SITUATION

Target 6.2 of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 is to achieve universal access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene and end open defecation by 2030. Access to hygiene is measured through the availability of an on-premises handwashing facility with soap and water, which is a cost-effective intervention that improves public health by drastically reducing the spread of infection.

Since 2015, Bangladesh has increased the coverage of basic hygiene services by more than 3 percentage points per year. In 2020, 58 per cent of the population had access to basic hygiene services, compared to 42 per cent in 2015 and just 20 per cent in 2005.

This improvement has taken place in both urban and rural areas; 66 per cent of the urban population and 54 per cent of the rural population now have access to basic hygiene services. However, disaggregated data reveal significant inequalities in coverage between the richest (where 79 per cent have access) and the poorest (where only 17 per cent have access) and between different

subnational regions, ranging from 68 per cent in Rangpur to just 34 per cent in Barishal.

PROGRESS MADE

Between 2005 and 2015, the government of Bangladesh ran an extensive national public campaign on hygiene, paving the way for the progress reported above. Other key government policies and strategies that have reinforced the importance of hand hygiene include the 2021 water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) strategy, the 2022 hand hygiene road map and the Sector Development Plan 2011–2025.

In the last two decades, Bangladesh has managed to eliminate open defecation, which was practised by 12 per cent of the population in 2005 and by less than 1 per cent in 2020. This has had a positive influence on the population’s hand hygiene practices in households, as access to a fixed place for handwashing was simultaneously pursued, in line with the national ‘open defecation-free’ certification protocol.



The shift from hand pump boreholes to motorized systems among households and communities has made running water readily available for handwashing, with more and more people converting their hand pump tube wells to motorized systems. The availability of an affordable public power supply also promoted this change.

There has also been increased participation of private actors, leading to an expansion of the market for hand hygiene products, which are now also readily available in the hinterlands at affordable prices.

Finally, Bangladesh has also invested in extensive monitoring of progress on hand hygiene through dedicated national surveys in 2018 and 2022, as well as the inclusion of hand hygiene in the national census.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

- Government-led extensive public campaign on hygiene between 2005 and 2015
- Inclusion of handwashing component in efforts to eliminate open defecation
- Facilitated access to running water and hygiene products, thanks to technological shifts (motorized pumps and affordable electricity) and private-sector participation

LEARN MORE

- [Bangladesh's 2021 WASH strategy, 2022 hand hygiene road map and Sector Development Plan 2011–2025](#)
- [WASH data from WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme](#)
- [Overall progress on SDG 6 in Bangladesh](#)