



# Definition matters

## Do JMP definitions of access to improved water and sanitation take the focus away?

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### Abstract

JMP report (2012) suggest that in urban areas in Bangladesh, 85% people use improved water sources and 58% people use improved sanitation. However, this study suggests that this definition does not necessarily describe the real situation. This study conducted in low income settlements in three major cities in Bangladesh suggests that average 90.5% households use improved water sources as per the JMP definition. However, 40% of these sources do not produce safe water. In most cases, poor people face difficulty in accessing water. On the other hand, although JMP (2012) reported that the national coverage for urban is 58%, this study found that only 6.1% households in the low income settlements in the urban areas use improved sanitation. The picture drawn using such definitions and the progress shown in such reports have a big influence in the national level. A recent budget trend analysis sponsored suggests that the overall allocation to WaSH is in a downward trend. The analysis furthermore suggests that although over 81% of the total national budgetary goes to the urban areas, most of the money is spent on big infrastructure development and maintenance work in the big cities with negligible allocation for the urban poor.

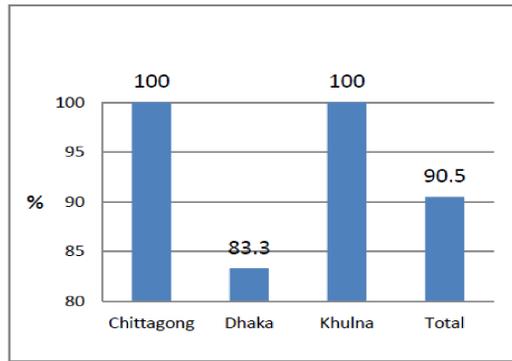
### Introduction

Water and sanitation sector globally depends on JMP definitions to measure progress. MDG targets are also set considering these definitions. However, empirical evidence suggest that progress measured using these definitions only provide us a partial picture which do not necessarily describe progress with quality and progress with equity. MDG progress report suggests that Bangladesh is on track to meet water targets but off track on sanitation target. According to the recent JMP report (2012), in urban areas in Bangladesh, 85% people have access to improved water sources and 58% people have access to improved sanitation. However, this study suggests that having access to improved water and sanitation sources does not necessarily mean that people use safe water or all the people have access to safe sanitation.

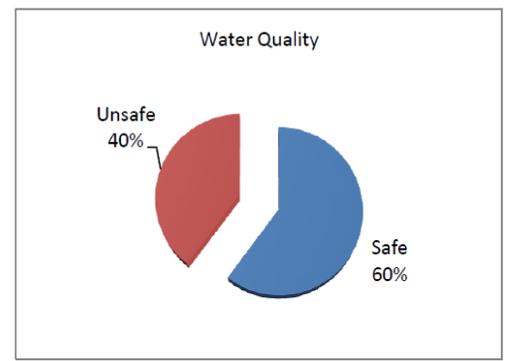
A recent study conducted in low income settlements in three major cities in Bangladesh suggests that average 90.5% households have access to improved water sources as per the JMP definition. However, water quality tests conducted on several parameters show that 40% of these water sources were not producing safe water; thus, showing a completely different picture. This study furthermore suggests that access is difficult for the poor people and that many people do not have access to minimum accepted quantity of water that they might need.

The study suggests that 18.1% people have to travel more than 50 meters to collect water, 30% people have to wait more than 15 minutes in the queue to collect water, 23.7% people do not get more than 20 liter water per person per day in their households. 39% people reported that location of the water point was inconvenient for them to collect water, 11.5% people reported that water was not available when they needed and finally 3.2% people reported that they face social restriction in accessing a particular source. Only 9.7% of the water facilities were owned by the poor people individually or collectively and 33% water sources were not legally accessed; thus, water insecurity is extremely high among these low income people. On the other hand, although the JMP (2012) reported that the national coverage for urban is 58%, this WaterAid study found that only 6.1% households in the low income settlements in the urban areas have access to improved sanitation.

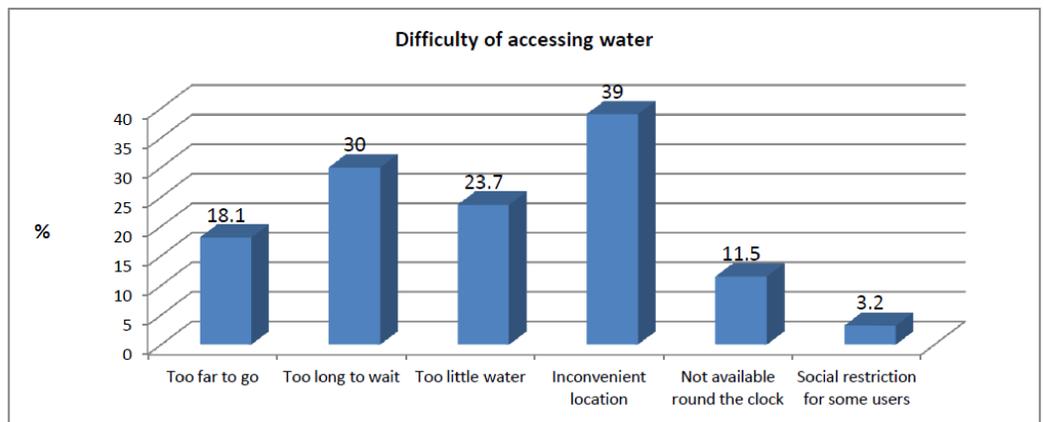
The picture drawn using such definitions and the progress shown in such reports have a big influence in the national level. A recent budget trend analysis sponsored by WaterAid suggests that the overall allocation to WaSH is in a downward trend. The analysis furthermore suggests that although over 81% of the total national budgetary goes to the urban areas, most of the money is spent on big infrastructure development and maintenance work in the big cities with negligible allocation for the urban poor. The proposed paper will argue for a more inclusive definition as well as targeted programme.



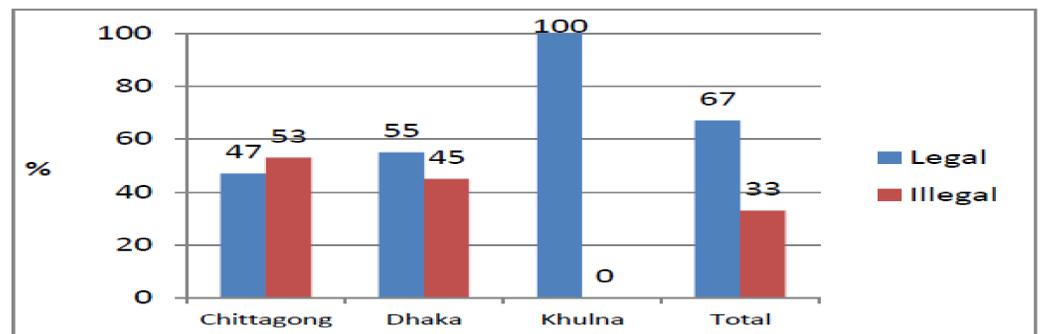
Access to improved water sources as per JMP definition is as high as 90.5%



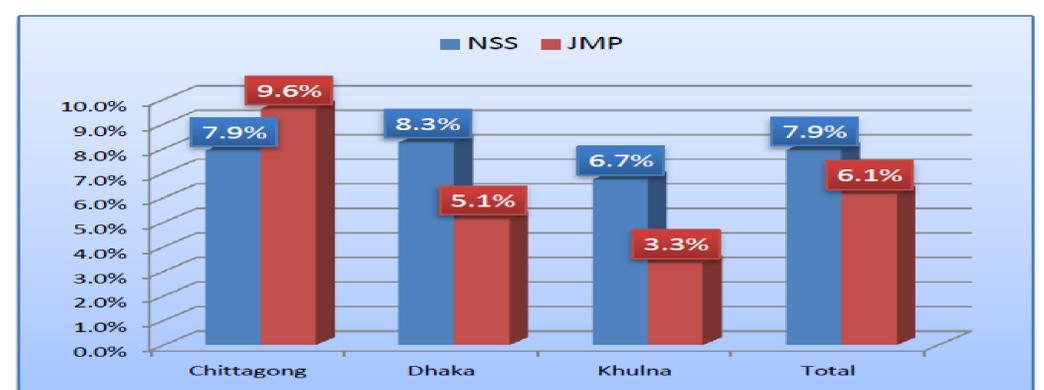
40% of the improved water sources do not produce safe water



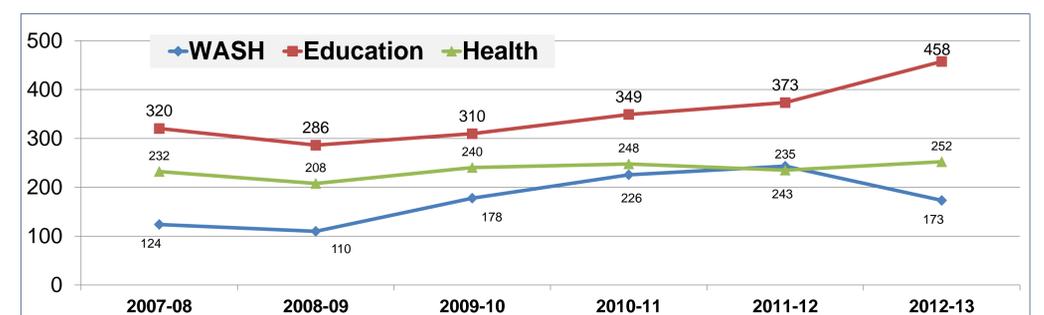
Distance : 18% people have to travel more than 50 meter to collect water  
 Time : 30% people wait more than 15 minutes to collect water  
 Quantity : 23.7% people do not get 20 litre water /day/person  
 Convenience : 39% people collect water from inconvenient locations  
 Availability : 11.5% water points are not accessible round the clock



33% water sources are illegal; water is highly insecure for the poor



Access to improved sanitation is extremely low by any definition



Trends of Per Capita ALLOCATION in Education, Health & WASH Sector: FY2007/08-FY2012/13 (Tk. in 2011-12 constant price)