Caritas Bangladesh initiates to promote WASH at school level



Caritas Bangladesh (CB) and the Daily Kaler Kantho, on behalf of Swiss Water & Sanitation Consortium, jointly organized a roundtable discussion on 'The importance and expansion strategy of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) at school level' at the Auditorium of East West Media Group Ltd. in Dhaka on 7 November 2016.

Mr. Nurul Islam Nahid, MP, the honourable Education Minister was the Chief Guest of the event moderated by Imdadul Haq Milon, eminent litterateur and Editor of Kaler Kantho. While delivering welcome speech, Mr Francis Atul Sarker, Executive Director of Caritas Bangladesh said, CB has been implementing project titled Ensured healthy life and well being of the target communities through improvement of WASH and small scale irrigation with the funding support of Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) and Caritas Switzerland which aims to improve the WASH condition of people including school children. With this view CB has introduced Blue School." Professor Dr. M. Feroze Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of Stamford University Bangladesh presented the keynote.



The education minister said, "Bangladesh is top among the South Asian countries in sanitation management. Schools and colleges are still facing various problems to address this issue due to scarcity of resources but we are trying to overcome those." He also said, "Only 50 percent children used to come to the schools in 2009. But now as many as 99 percent children are admitted to the schools. It is proved that the girls will go ahead if equal opportunities are given. At this moment, 51 percent girls are reading at

primary level, 53 percent at secondary level and 45 percent at university level," he added. He also said "We are arranging separate toilets for boys and girls to ensure the sanitation facilities for the students. Drinking water facilities are made available in educational institutions."

In the keynote paper, Prof. Dr. M. Feroze Ahmed said, "Currently 85 percent schools have the facilities of hand-washing with water. Of them, 35 percent schools have soap at hand-washing place while 32 percent students use it. The percentages are 27 and 49 in primary and secondary schools respectively." He further added that, "On average 187 students have access per toilet in primary school while 200 students per toilet in secondary school. Sixty-eight percent schools have separate toilets for boys and girls. Distance between toilets and the water sources are around 15 meters in 64 percent schools," he added. He also said, "Ten percent of female students use disposable pads during menstruation."

Mr. Imdadul Haq Milon said, "Sanitation and other problems should be discussed with the students with due importance. Sense of patriotism should be instilled in the minds of the new generation by introducing stories and facts on the Liberation War in the textbooks. Teachers

and guardians should also play an important role for this."

Other speakers included Professor Dr. Md.
Sharfuddin Ahmed, Pro-Vice Chancellor of
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University
(BSMMU), Md. Wali Ullah, Chief Engineer of
Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Dr.
Mohammed Jahangir Hossain, Director (Planning &
Development) of Directorate of Secondary & Higher



Education, Dr. Md. Khairul Islam, Country Director of WaterAid Bangladesh, Ms. Hasin Jahan, Bangladesh Country Director of Practical Action, Md. Moktadir Kabir, Program Chief (WASH) of BRAC, Mr. Alok Majumder, Country Coordinator of WASH Alliance, Dr. Mahbubur Rahman, Director WASH of ICDDR'B, Mr. Talat Mahmud, Program Director (SHIKHON) of Save the Children, Ms. Amrita Rejina Rozario, Country Representative of Caritas Switzerland, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Canon Rozario, Director of Major Seminary, Sister Mary Dipti, SMRA, Headmistress of Bottomley Home Girls High School, Mr. Denis C. Baskey, Regional Director of Caritas Rajshahi Region and Md. Kamal Uddin, Deputy Assistant Engineer of Thakurgaon.