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### **In Need of Help: Bangladesh's Water Crisis**

With a large population of 158,570,535 the small country of Bangladesh is overcrowded. In comparison, Bangladesh is only about the size of Iowa, whose population is 3,007,956. Bangladesh is considered to be a water-scarce country which means that there is not enough water in the country to supply of the Bangladesh citizens. Most of Bangladesh's fresh water is contaminated due to the "Green Revolution." With the low rate of economic growth and the large population, Bangladesh is in much need of help to supply the people with sanitized water.

Bangladesh is located in South Asia with a terrain that is mainly flat with hills in the Northeast and Southeast. Bangladesh's climate is mainly semitropical with temperatures ranging from 78 degrees Fahrenheit to 96 degrees Fahrenheit. There are two major rivers that run through Bangladesh, the Ganga River and the Brahmaputra. Bangladesh is also very vulnerable to natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, and earthquakes. The people of Bangladesh depend on agriculture for not only food, but for their jobs as well. For the Bangladeshi who do have jobs, they earn their living from the agricultural practices. The main crops in Bangladesh are rice and jute. Bangladesh has a few natural resources: timber, coal, and natural gas. In the 13th century Bangladesh was known as East Bengal. Then in 1947 the area became part of Pakistan. A difference among Bengalis and Pakistanis caused a war, and in 1971 Bangladesh was officially founded after seceding from Pakistan.

Bangladesh is in need of help due to the problems that the country currently has. The country is prone to natural disasters, which in the past have destroyed over 40,000 hectares of the Bangladesh's crops. With some sort of protection or precaution from these natural disasters, many of the crops can be saved. Also sanitation is an issue that Bangladesh still has not resolved completely. Many Bangladeshi people are still being infected with diseases due to bad sanitation. These diseases are mostly waterborne such as cholera, diarrhea, dysentery and typhoid. There are thousands of people who die each year due to these horrible diseases. Healthcare is a problem for many Bangladeshi since it is inaccessible due to costs. Many Bangladeshi's are unemployed or have very low income. With an average of five hundred and ninety-nine dollars per capita a year, it is quite difficult to afford healthcare.

Out of Bangladesh's large population, there are only two main religions, Muslim and Hindu. The main languages spoken in Bangladesh are Bangla (Bengali), English, and Urdu and the main ethnic group is Bengali. The life expectancy for Bangladeshi is about 67 years of age for males and 72 years of age for females. The average Bangladesh family consists of four to six family members. Schooling in Bangladesh is quite different from the United States. The average amount of schooling for the people of Bangladeshi is only about eight years. With way less schooling than Americans, Bangladesh is undereducated and will not be able to work at the different paces that us American citizens do.

The health of the Bangladeshi is a concern as well. Only 53% of the Bangladesh population is using improved sanitation facilities. The sanitation of Bangladesh's water is quite unhealthy and the consumption of it is leading to diseases such as bacterial and protozoa diarrhea. Also HIV/AIDS is developing more and more throughout the minuscule country. There are about 13,000 Bangladeshi adults currently living with the horrific disease. It does not seem like a vast amount compared to the overwhelming Bangladesh population, but the numbers of people infected with the disease are increasing every year. The lack of health care attention in Bangladesh is depressing. Most Americans have more access to healthcare that Bangladeshis. A majority of Bangladeshi's do not have an income high enough to afford healthcare.

Bangladesh issues that relate to healthcare are pitiful. Healthcare is inaccessible for many Bangladeshi people. Near half of the population is considered living in the poverty level, so healthcare is not affordable for many Bangladeshi's. Also there are not many doctors in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Government opened up 13,000 community clinics throughout the country, but there are still not enough doctors to hire to work in all of the clinics. There is already space for medical attention, the only thing missing are the doctors. Prenatal healthcare for women was a concern for many Bangladeshi's. Many pregnant women were not receiving the proper medical attention to keep themselves and their baby's health. This problem has already been taken into action to reduce the amount of pregnant women with no medical attention, but there are still women out there who are still in need of a doctor.

Bangladesh has a high poverty level. With 53% of the Bangladesh rural population considered poor, Bangladesh does not have a good economy. The country's government is a Parliamentary Democracy, so all citizens are considered equal. Unfortunately, the government is not as strong as it should be since there is such a large poverty level. Some type of change should be made to make the government stronger so overall it can help Bangladesh become a better place for the Bangladeshi to live.

Income is something many Americans are used to getting. Many Bangladeshi's do not receive any or very little income leaving them with few options for shelter, clothing, food, and other necessities. Unfortunately men are treated better than women in Bangladesh when it comes to pay. This is because men end up having and overall average of more education than women. This concludes that men will have more jobs than women since they are more educated. Bangladesh's per capita income is about five hundred and ninety-nine dollars per year which is not enough to live a happy, healthy life. With such a little amount of money, there is not a way to enjoy life since these people are not making enough money for basic everyday needs such as food and water.

At one time Bangladesh had 250 rivers throughout its country. Now water is a scarce necessity that many people of Bangladesh are not able to access. Most of the water that is accessible in Bangladesh is contaminated due to the "Green Revolution" also known as the "Fertilizer, Pesticide Seed, Water" infected the ground water of Bangladesh. The revolution introduced new diseases to Bangladesh, such as fungal infections. Some of Bangladesh's water contains arsenic that is naturally found in the soil. Arsenic is an element that forms a poisonous compound and if it is consumed it can increase the risk of developing cancer. If this issue is not resolved and it continues to be consumed, the rate of deaths and diseases will skyrocket in Bangladesh.

Some help is being contributed to Bangladesh through foundations. UNICEF is helping Bangladesh by making sure that the Bangladeshi children's health does not decrease any further. UNICEF has been helping these children ever since the lack of Vitamin A has become a problem. They provide the Bangladeshi's with Vitamin A capsules that help increase the amount of Vitamin A in their systems to help eliminate the vitamin deficiency. The organization SOS Children's Villages have been helping Bangladesh by taking in children off of the street. These children are usually abandoned and undernourished. When they are brought to this organization they are given the medical attention they need. This organization also helps the children with education. SOS Children's Villages is helping by getting the Bangladesh children on a road to a better life.

There are a variety of things that can be done to help solve the problems Bangladesh is currently going through. Firstly, UNICEF should continue to help the country by providing vitamin A capsules. By continuing this it keeps the Bangladeshis healthy which can eventually help in improving the populations overall health. Also if certain areas are sanitized it can help stop spreading diseases or infections due to the germs produced by insanitariness. What can be done is volunteers can go into areas needing attention for cleanliness. The volunteers can help clean the areas and showing the Bangladeshi how to keep areas

and objects germ free. Another solution can be to educate the Bangladeshi. Since the average schooling for them is not a good enough amount to engage in productive job fields. Helping the Bangladeshi with education in schooling could further their intelligence and help make the country smarter as a whole. Since HIV/AIDS is also becoming a problem, the ways diseases are spread through contact would help the amount of people in Bangladesh infected with the horrid disease. Educating them in precautions for natural disasters would help them immensely. The country is very prone to natural disasters and if they learn what can be done to avoid some of the damage done; it can help them in the long run. By knowing this information the Bangladeshi can avoid the ruining of crops and shelters.

The only way to put these solutions into action is by being helped by foundations and to have volunteers help as well. There are many organizations such as UNICEF and WHO that would be willing to help. UNICEF is already putting interest into the health of the Bangladeshi. UNICEF is also subsidizing water tanks in some areas of Bangladesh that are purifying its water. If the organization is willing to place more water tanks throughout Bangladesh, it would contribute to the health of the Bangladeshi's immensely. UNICEF might even help in other areas that need attention as well. Volunteers are key in helping the people of Bangladesh. With several concerned and caring people in the world, there will obviously be a large amount of people wanting to help the less fortunate. There might be volunteer teachers that would be interested in educating the Bangladeshi. Volunteers can help in many areas. An example is governmental professionals that might be able to give Bangladesh tips on how to make their economy stronger. Chances are that there might even be doctors who are willing to volunteer in Bangladesh to improve the health of its citizens. The volunteers could examine some of the ill Bangladeshis and conclude their sicknesses. By concluding what is exactly making them ill or what disease or infection they have can help organizations know what kind of medicine they should fundraise for.

What needs the most attention in Bangladesh is the water. There are a couple problems with Bangladesh's water. The supply of water is scarce, and the water that is available is mostly contaminated. First of all, the water that is contaminated is poisoning the Bangladeshi. If the water is sanitized it can reduce not only the Bangladeshi that are sick due to the water but it can reduce the amount of Bangladeshi that have no water. Boiling water helps minimize the amount of germs and bacteria that it contains. If someone supplies the Bangladeshi's with materials to boil water, (boiling point source/ fire and pots) they will be able to have healthier water for themselves. Also since the supply of water is not very much, something needs to be done to obtain more water that will be able to be drunk. One way to produce more water is to filter rain. By filtering rain water it will purify it so it is edible. By developing a way to filter rain water, it will be inexpensive and benefit the Bangladeshis immensely. UNICEF has placed water tanks which have the ability to purify rainwater. If there are more of these tanks throughout Bangladesh, it would help solve the water crisis massively.

If I was able to help the Bangladeshi, I would in a heartbeat. I would find ways to educate them in many areas including book knowledge, street knowledge, sanitation, and the spread of disease. Finding volunteer teachers that would educate the Bangladeshi in these areas is a start to making Bangladesh a better place to live. Also taking precautions for damage of natural disasters will help Bangladesh's crop production from being damaged. It will help stop the damage done to shelters and other buildings in Bangladesh. Sanitizing and producing more water will help Bangladesh out the most. If Bangladeshis gain the skill to sanitize water, there will be healthier Bangladeshis. Producing more water is the main thing that will help Bangladesh the most. By filtering rain water, it will be inexpensive for the Bangladesh citizens to obtain healthy water.

Bangladesh currently has issues that are improvable. The country needs help to be able to grow and become more developed and it is quite possible. With these problems, the one that should be focused the most on is the water crisis. Since most of it is contaminated and is very limited, it should be the first problem taken into action to resolve. The scarcity of the water can be improved drastically if the

Bangladeshi have the equipment to purify rainwater. Contamination of water can also be resolved due to the fact that there are simple ways of sanitizing water such as boiling it. If Bangladesh is assisted in improving its downfalls, it can recover the issues that are classifying it as an underdeveloped country. If the people of Bangladesh stay strong and work through their problems with the help of people from outside countries, they can make it through these tough times. Stanley Arnold once said, "Every problem contains within itself the seeds of its own solution."

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