

WHO WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

The WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) initiative has been taken by various countries in order to provide safe drinking water, proper sanitation facilities and a hygienic environment and livelihood to its people.

This is a World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative considering the health and hygiene of people across the world. Global facts and data collected have suggested that:

- Some 8,27,000 people in low and middle-income countries die as a result of inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene each year, representing 60% of total diarrhoeal deaths. Of these, 4,32,000 people die because of poor sanitation
- Better water, sanitation, and hygiene could prevent the deaths of 2,97,000 children aged under 5 years each year
- In 2017, over 220 million people required preventive treatment for schistosomiasis – an acute and chronic disease caused by parasitic worms contracted through exposure to infested water
- As of 2020, 2.2 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water services and 4.2 billion people lack safely managed sanitation services

The above-mentioned information points towards the alarming condition of water and hygiene across the globe and the importance of WASH. It is estimated that if the conditions do not improve, by 2025, half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas.

About WHO WASH - Global Cause for Clean Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

- The WHO WASH Strategy has been developed in response to Member State Resolution WHA64.4 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- It takes on board the need for the progressive realisation of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2010
- WHO's 13th General Programme of Work 2019–2023 brings forth two indicators which would accelerate the Organization's work to increase access to safely managed drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in households

Objectives of WASH

WHO has strategised a 2018-2025 plan for the improvement in the condition of sanitation and hygiene for the people across the globe and provide them with sufficient and clean water for the purpose of a healthy life.

Given below are the key objectives of the WASH initiative:

- Improving the quality of drinking water to reduce the risk of human health
- Monitor healthcare facilities is another important aim of WASH

- Improving the safety of sanitation and wastewater management
- Monitor the data presented by the Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS)
- Coordinate with multi-sectoral partners, lead or engage with global and regional platforms, and advocate for WASH
- Integration of WASH with health and other programmes such as AMR, cholera, climate change, emergencies, IPC, NTDs, nutrition, UHC, water security to increase synergies and impacts

WASH in India

- **India is the second-most populous country** in the world and almost **60% of the population lives in urban areas**, which is multiplying each day. **This has put stress on water and sanitation services in the country.**
- Due to the limited access to functioning, safe toilets **as recently 2014, 40% of the population defecated in the open, contaminating water and leading to India having the world's highest number of diarrhoea-related deaths in children under five**
- Many Indian and International Organisations have joined hands in the WASH initiative to curb this issue of safety and hygiene. A few of these include:
 - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
 - USAID
 - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
 - UN-Water
 - Welthungerhilfe India
 - WaterAid India, and many more
- WASH interventions in India has adopted the rights-based approach for improving water and sanitation conditions through mass mobilisation and mainly targets the rural and peri-urban population
- **Two-thirds of India's 718 districts are affected by extreme water depletion**, and the current lack of planning for water safety and security is a major concern
- Given below are some key stats announced by WaterAid, UNICEF:

People in India with no access to safe Water	Nearly 76 million
People in India with no access to adequate sanitation	Over 770 million
Children dying from Diarrhoea caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation in India every year	Over 140,000 children
Percentage of Indian households not treating drinking water even though it could be chemically or bacterially contaminated	67 per cent

(source: https://welthungerhilfeindia.org/thematic_areas/wash-and-water-security/)

Data & Observations of WASH - UNICEF India

- UNICEF in partnership with the Swacch Bharat Abhiyan launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has worked tremendously in the health and sanitation sector
- To support states and districts that are lagging, **UNICEF WASH works in 16 states and 192 districts in India** and supports government
- UNICEF also supports monitoring and evaluation including conducting third-party verification and spot checks to help authenticate the real-time monitoring and information dashboard hosted by the Ministry Jal Shakti
- UNICEF also plays an important role in the flagship programmes like:
 - National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP)
 - WASH in Schools (including preschools called '*Anganwadi*')
 - WASH in health facilities
 - District-wide WASH interventions
- Inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in India's health facilities, contributes to the high neonatal mortality rate, which is currently 24 deaths per 1000 live births
- As per a survey conducted in 2013-14 on schools in India has shown:
 - 22 per cent did not have appropriate toilets for girls
 - 58 per cent of preschools had no toilet at all
 - 56 per cent of preschools had no water on the premises

Achievements by WASH - UNICEF India

- As per their reports, **until 2015, nearly half of India's population of around 568 million people suffered the indignity of defecating in fields**, forests, bodies of water, or other public spaces due to lack of access to toilets, **By 2019**, according to the latest estimates, the number of people without access to toilets has **reduced significantly by an estimated 450 million people**
- In 2015, the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) with support from UNICEF** instituted the **KAYAKALP scheme** to recognize and reward the excellence of health facilities in promoting cleanliness, thereby improving the quality of health care services
- **In 2016**, UNICEF along with the MoHFW and the erstwhile Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (now Ministry of Jal Shakti) instituted the **Swacchh Swasth Sarvatra (SSS)** scheme
- UNICEF's technical support has been successful instrumental for **40 high-priority districts to come up with concrete action plans to institutionalise WASH in healthcare facilities during 2019-20**
- **UNICEF has been the 'development partner of choice' for the Government of India** and has played a key role in the revamping and implementation of the Government of India's flagship National Rural Drinking Water Programme
- **UNICEF also supports the Swajal initiative**, which seeks to enable communities to self-manage safe water sources within their habitations, through policy development, training of trainers, and communication campaigns

- UNICEF has also supported the development of the national framework for benchmarking schools along 39 WASH indicators – through the national school awarding system **Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar (SVP)**
- **UNICEF India's** field offices are working at the state level to ensure that **WASH in Schools** is a key agenda for **School Management Committees (SMC)**

Data & Observations of WASH - USAID India

- USAID partners with the Government of India to create healthier urban communities by increasing access to clean water and sanitation
- USAID and the Government of India test and identify models for safe, affordable drinking water and sanitation services
- USAID partners develop methods to make clean water available at a low cost, establish clean water kiosks and train community members in how to turn the kiosks into a profitable business
- It also works with community members in designing community toilets

Achievements by WASH - USAID India

- A **USAID-supported cleanliness survey** helped government officials identify specific issues related to sanitation in **73 cities of India**
- **300,000** more people now have access to household toilets
- **25,000 communities** are open defecation free and healthier
- **175,000** more people now have access to safe drinking water
- Secured more than \$5 million funding from the private sector to implement WASH solutions identified by USAID and its partners
- **42,000 toilets** have been located on **Google Maps**

Data & Observations of WASH - Welthungerhilfe India

- **Welthungerhilfe's Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** initiatives have been implemented in the states of **Bihar, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh (MP)** in India
- It has been working in selected Indian states with the **WASH initiative since 2011**
- WHH follows the two-pronged strategy to capacitate community leaders (**Jal Sahelis and Jal Mitras**) for their institutional development through raising awareness on water security, sanitation and personal hygiene as well as provision of various small drinking water supply schemes for safe and potable water to the targeted population
- **WHH implements the WASH activities in collaboration with the Ministry of Water Resources, River and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education**

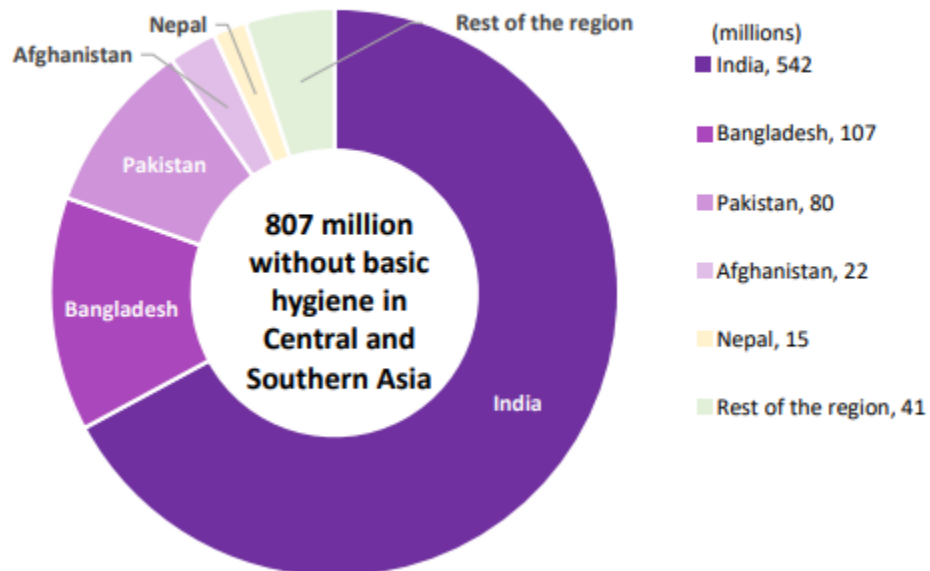
Achievements of WASH - Welthungerhilfe India

- **Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)** and **School Led Total Sanitation (SLTS)** techniques have been adopted to motivate people on taking actions to free their areas from open defecation

- Strengthened community based institutions (WASH Committee, SHG)
- A meaningful dialogue has been initiated with the national and local government to provide more space for bottom-up planning which is done through micro-planning at the village level and to connect it with the Panchayat level in India through a campaign called **Jal Jan Jodo Abhiyan (People's water alliance)**

WASH in India - Conclusive Analysis

In Central and Southern Asia, two thirds of the population without a basic handwashing facility with soap and water at home live in India



The above image shows the alarming situation of hygiene and sanitation. It shows the distribution of the population without basic hygiene facilities at home, Central and Southern Asia, 2017.

Moving forward, India should adopt the methods of water management and sanitation. If the unhygienic and unsafe water consumption is not stopped in the coming years, India may face serious damage and deaths due to water-borne diseases, especially among children.