

Proceedings of the
Roundtable Consultation
on
“Building Climate Resilience of Women and
Children in the WASH Sector”

21st Sept. 2016, UNICEF Head Office, New Delhi





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TARagram YATRA 2016

With an overarching view of addressing the diverse policy issues, challenges and transitions required in the sustainable development process, Development Alternatives initiated its annual flagship event TARagram Yatra (TGY) 2016 on the theme *Policy Shifts for Implementing the SDGs in India*. The Yatra focuses firstly, to comprehend the challenges pertaining to policy sectors that are essentially governed with the principles of horizontal integration among multiple sectors focussing on economic, social and environmental policies. Secondly, to address the policy levels and spatial scale challenges managed by vertical integration at multiple levels from sub-national and supranational levels. The overall agenda of the Yatra 2016 is to review national policies and programme and align them to the SDGs and targets.

One of the themes of this year's Yatra was "Building Resilience of Women and Children in the WASH Sector." A day long roundtable consultation, spread over two sessions was held in collaboration with UNICEF on 21st September 2016. The consultation saw participation from over 30 yatris which included practitioners, researchers, academicians and others. A list of participants can be found under Annexure 1. The main points from the round table discussion were taken forward in the plenary that focused on policy shifts required for an integrated approach in addressing WASH and climate change issues for women and children.

The roundtable consultation consisted of two, hour long moderated sessions on "Practice in Policy" and "Sharing Good Practices." A short summary of the key discussion points from the Consultation are shared below.

Discussion Summary

1. Brief Overview

The year 2015 marked India's commitment to the UN's 2030 Global Agenda on Sustainable Development and its reaffirmation to curb the effects of climate change in sync with the COP21 Paris Agreement. This has brought to focus the significance of the inter-linkages between the sustainable development goals.

Addressing targets from Goal 13 (climate change) on increasing adaptive capacity would also mean providing universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water (Goal 6) which is resilient even in cases of climate-related hazards. The goals help us approach development targets in a more comprehensive manner. The Goal on Gender equality and empowerment (Goal 5) cannot be reached without providing special WASH services to vulnerable populations. The goals are enabling and reinforcing each other in many ways. Therefore, they give practitioners and policy makers to move out of their domains and include a more inter-sectoral approach to developmental planning.

Water as a resource is at risk the most, whether in excess or in scarcity and it is the biggest link to equitable and inclusive development. Climate change impacts the supply and demand sides of WASH delivery systems. Prime climate related hazards for the Water, Sanitation and

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Hygiene (WASH) sector would be experienced through erratic weather events, increased frequency of droughts, flash floods and heat waves.

The direct impact will adversely affect quality and availability of drinking water, critical infrastructure and hygiene and sanitation services. In case of climate induced disasters, the social fabric of our country might suffer adversely and affect the WASH sector. Further, the need and access to water and sanitation is very closely linked to reducing vulnerability of women and children. Impediment of WASH would have a differential impact on women and children; therefore, it is critical to ensure that the concerns are addressed in the policy-making sphere. The primary necessity for adolescent girls and children to attend school or participate in the public sphere is the need for sanitation facilities. Girls require these facilities for specific needs, while in children good sanitation levels ensure better immunity. Poor WASH causes diarrhoea, which is the second biggest cause of death in children less than five years as per WHO. The cumulative vulnerability of children and women to climate change and WASH impacts need to be addressed together and not in silos.

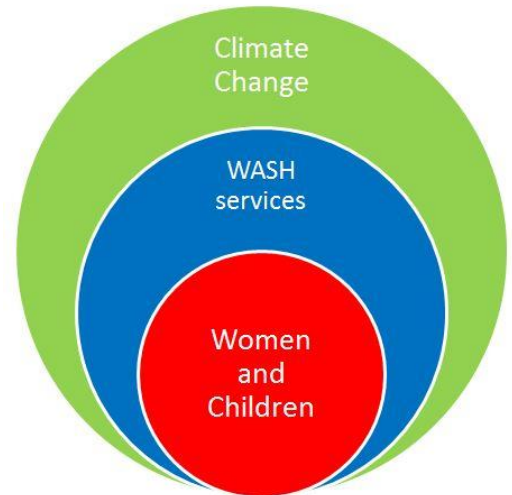


Figure 1: Relationship and approach

In order to improve the ability of women and children to withstand climate impacts is by enhancing their resilience. The central aim of building resilience to on-going and future impacts are being addressed in the sphere of WASH services (Figure 1). This can be achieved by incorporating climate risk in policy and planning, it will make vulnerable communities more likely to withstand shocks and stresses. WASH is often understood in isolation from both climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) when instead, in both practice and policy spheres it is imperative that climate change and DRR be included for effective implementation and adoption of related schemes and policies. WASH strategies and plans must be ensured to align with climate adaptation plans and DRR priorities and actions to equip them with additional stresses. Moreover, these solutions must to include all sectors and stakeholders in order to “leave no one behind.”

2. Practice in Policy

The policy solutions ahead will need to address water, sanitation and hygiene needs for women and children with a climate lens considering the increase in impacts of climate change. An integrated approach will also need to ensure that WASH strategies take into account the State’s Action Plan on Climate Change and Disaster Management Plan, while incorporating additional human vulnerabilities. The questions, mentioned below, gave direction to the first session of the consultation focussing on the on-ground implementation and practice of the policy.

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- **What is the state of existing institutions to facilitate the implementation of WASH interventions for women and children? Are they climate sensitive?**
- **How can the issues highlighted above be mainstreamed in the major policy and planning documents of the states? Spaces for integration of WASH issues addressing vulnerabilities of women and children.**

Chair: Dr. Åsa Torkelsson, Deputy Representative India, UN Women

Discussants:

- Dr. Avinash Kumar, Director, WaterAid,
- Meesha Tandon, Senior Manager, ICLEI

Critical Gaps in Climate Change/WASH Planning

Since the effects of climate change and disasters are felt most strongly by the vulnerable sections of the community (women, children, marginalized), there is now a need to give importance to their needs within WASH interventions. Specifically, as each vulnerable group will experience climate change effects differently, policies and schemes will need to understand and incorporate this multiplicity in order to be truly effective on ground.

A glaring lack of women leadership in policy framing for WASH and climate change was noticed even though the current narrative on WASH in India accepts that women interact with and are affected by poor WASH and climate change the most. In addition to this silencing of women and children's participation, there is also a hierarchy of water use which is derived from its gendered nature. Therefore, agriculture, which is a male dominated activity, is found to dictate the narratives of water scarcity and usage in the country, while water needs for sanitation and household – a domain of women in most parts of the country – is often not addressed as aggressively.

A similar hierarchy, of class, can be observed in relation to policies for WASH which overlook the resource use conflicts in rural and urban India. A lack of policies specific to rural areas and inclusive of the rural demographics and politics of caste, gender, use and other forms of marginalization was noted in the Consultation. Schemes like the Smart Cities have not focussed on the vulnerable sections of the society or given a strong preference to climate change adaptation.

Data collection is a critical issue in policies relating to climate change, WASH and DRR. This is exacerbated even more due to less availability of skilled or experienced surveyors. Additionally, these policies lack transparent monitoring and gender segregated data systems.

Recommendations

A bottom up approach to WASH and climate change policies and implementation would help resolve many of their weaknesses and help include hidden problems (both at the social and operational levels), alternative solutions and local politics. This would also imbue a sense of

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ownership in the community while at the same time sensitize them to the need for better sanitation practices. A call for increased training of policy framers and decision makers to facilitate the use of gendered and climate positive lenses while planning and implementing policies in WASH was raised. Simultaneously, providing communities with not only facilities but also capacity building toolkits to enhance their climate resilience was felt to be the need of the hour.

It was noticed however, that in many instances traditional knowledge systems, users and communities are not consulted or included in implementation and planning by the government which prevents a higher success rate of interventions. Knowledge materials should be made available in order to enable community management of interventions. Other stakeholders would also have to be brought in to bring balance in policy and implementation. The technology involved should also be context and condition specific.

Importance of sensitising school children to understand the need for better sanitation was stressed upon. Additionally, it was highlighted that schools play an important role during disasters as relief shelters. Community contingency plans during disasters could include schools as disaster shelters. This will help co-benefit schools by making their infrastructure highly resilient to withstand shocks. Toolkits such as Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) must be integrated in the community plans. Community designed tool kits also help revise the technical options available to people.

3. Sharing Good Practices

The second session of the Roundtable Consultation focused on examples of good practices from the WASH sector in India. It was pointed out that as climate change is happening at a fast pace, a deeper understanding of WASH and climate change is required. A call was made for alternatives in order to answer the rising demand on natural resources. Ground water is considered a common good and its over use is a tragedy of the commons; this is same with other water bodies and natural resources. This can be partially due to their historical neglect by the government. With good practices dealing with overcoming these issues the second session focussed on the following questions:

- **How programme implementation can be integrated with community action in order to address WASH, DRR and climate change? Especially focussing on reducing vulnerabilities of women & children**
- **What are the useful / practical tools and methodologies of participatory assessment and awareness generation for enhancing climate resilience?**
- **What are the pathways/ best practices to sensitising and enhancing climate resilience – good practice adaptation options for communities, village panchayats and district governments?**

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Chair: AVM (Retd.) Dr. Ajit Tyagi, IMD
Dr. Renu Khosla, Director, CURE

Discussants:

- Dr. Urvashi Chandra, DRR Officer, UNICEF
- Rudresh Sugam, Senior Program Lead, CEEW
- Manish Wasuja, WASH Specialist, UNICEF
- Sanjay Vashist, Director, CANSA

Best Practices Shared:

The success of a participatory approach to policy implementation can be exemplified by UNICEF’s Community Approach to Total Sanitation (CATS) which works to motivate people to build toilets for use and not simply construction and to foster a move away from subsidies and towards encouraging social change and self-reliance. Here external agencies provide guidance rather than regulation while the design and material is decided by the communities thereby making it more sustainable and scalable. In India this was done as part of the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC). However, it was highlighted that these processes should not come at the cost of alienation of members of the community who do not participate in these campaigns.

Another approach to creating community participation in environmental issues is by creating ‘eco – warriors’ in schools. This will ensure the functionality of eco clubs to help create platforms for these voices as demonstrated by UNICEF’s previous work. Integration of WASH into students’ curriculum as well as strengthening the role of school management committees within schools to create a need for toilet usage was discussed by the participants. This can be seen in ICLEI’s Adopt Integrated Urban Water Management project for students in Kishangarh and Jaisalmer which was cited as a successful attempt to sensitize students towards good sanitation practices and waste management.

A successful community rain water harvesting system in Vasant Kunj, Delhi which dealt with water overflow during the monsoon season and Pani Samities of Gujarat were cited as successful examples of participatory water resource management. The PANI committees consist of 10-12 members and are constituted in the Gram Sabha to plan, implement, manage, own, operate and maintain village water supply systems Apart from this, they claim to have adequate representation from women and marginalized groups. The members also contribute to ten per cent of the capital costs which helps inculcate a sense of ownership within them.

As a best practice data collection must zero-in on documenting what works and what doesn’t. This will require obtaining functional data. Focus should be on measuring number of people using toilets in order to identify the health of the WASH sector rather than measuring of number of toilets built. Documentation of case studies is required rather than just data from state level.

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There are funds available in National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) that should be utilised in order to create resilience. The 14th finance commission, schemes such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan (SBA), State level funds have allocated funds for delivering climate goals via creation of climate change cells. These must be used to create a climate lens in all other sectors. The focus should move away from funds spent to behaviour change in communities. Finance is also an important component and there has to be avenues for revenue generation to maintain the sanitation.

Conclusion

The way to create resilience is to utilise traditional knowledge and decentralised governance along with creating community ownership in managing resources. Communities with poor sanitation practices and in danger of climate change effects would have to understand the importance of components under WASH and how they could contribute towards better sanitation practices. In order to leave “no one behind”, listening to children/vulnerable populations by the authorities is a key component. An inter-sectoral approach would require focus on evidence generation, creation of a robust methodology of measuring what matters and awareness generation at all levels in the communities.

The insights brought forth during the roundtable discussions highlight the need for utilising finance in the right way, approaching critical issues such as data, the required policy interventions, and capacity building initiatives while suggesting enhanced roles of community institutions.

The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals are tools, instruments that can provide required resilience on long term, sustainable basis. They help in better policy formulation, increased awareness of policies and its respective shift towards including a climate lens in the WASH sector. As a guiding framework India must utilise them when addressing its developmental needs so as to co-benefit climate resilience and including the vulnerable populations.

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List of Participants

(Annexure 1)

S. No	Name	Designation	Organisation
1.	Dr. Åsa Torkelsson	Deputy Representative to India	UN Women
2.	Lars Bernd	Chief - DRR Section	UNICEF, Delhi
3.	Dr. K Vijaya Lakshmi	Vice President	Development Alternatives
4.	Dr. Renu Khosla	Director	CURE
5.	Dr. Ajit Tyagi	Former Director General	Indian Meteorological Department
6.	Dr. Avinash Kumar	Director, Programme and Policy	WaterAid, India
7.	Sanjay Vashist	Director	CANSA
8.	Dr. Urvashi Chandra	DRR Officer	UNICEF, Rajasthan
9.	Manish Wasuja	WASH Specialist	UNICEF, Delhi
10.	Meesha Tandon	Senior Manager	ICLEI
11.	Rudresh Sugam	Senior Programme Lead	CEEW
12.	Dr. Shyamli Singh	Assistant Professor	Indian Institute of Public Administration
13.	Lalit Sharma	Director, Adaptive Technology - Water	Sehgal Foundation
14.	Esrhad Ahmad	Officer on Special Mission	UNDP
15.	Vishal Vaswani	DRR Officer	UNICEF, Chhattisgarh
16.	Shipra Saxena	Team Lead	FICCI, India Sanitation Coalition
17.	Vandana Nath	Programme Manager	FICCI, India Sanitation Coalition
18.	Sushmita Malaviya	Communications Officer	PATH
19.	Ruchika Shiva	Country Coordinator	IRCWash

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S. No	Name	Designation	Organisation
20.	Subhash Jain	Water Expert	Global Water Partnership
21.	Pramod Kumar	Manager, Product Development	TARA
22.	Sanghamitra Misra	Manager, Environment Management	Development Alternatives
23.	Sutul Srivastava	Manager, Development communications	Development Alternatives
24.	Desh Raj Singh	Manager, Behaviour Change Communication	Development Alternatives
25.	Nora Wagner		GIZ
26.	Parina Einjen	Regional Manager	AFPRO
27.	Dr. Sudhakar Pawar	National Director - Micro Enterprise Development	Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI)
28.	Uma Krishnamurthy	Sr. Programme Assistant-DRR	UNICEF, Delhi
29.	Xavier Thomas	DRR Consultant	UNCIEF, Delhi
30.	Kangkanika Neog	Research Analyst	CEEW
31.	Priya Chawla	Board Member	Indian Youth Climate Network
32.	Richa	Executive	Sycom Projects Consultants Private Limited
33.	Syed A A Farhan	Deputy Manager, Research and Policy Communication	Development Alternatives
34.	Vandana Saini	Deputy Manager	Development Alternatives
35.	Midhat Moini	Deputy Manager	Development Alternatives
36.	Tarang Singh	Deputy Manager	Development Alternatives

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(Annexure 2)



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