

# **Title of the Presentation: The Invisibility of Indignity: Assessing Governance Gaps in Post-Disaster Sanitation Recovery and the Right to Dignity in Climate-Affected Coastal India.**

Name of the presenter: Sujoy Chaudhury

Centre for Sustainable Solutions, Kolkata, India

**Global South Academic Conclave on WASH and Climate 2026**

6th – 7th February 2026, Ahmedabad

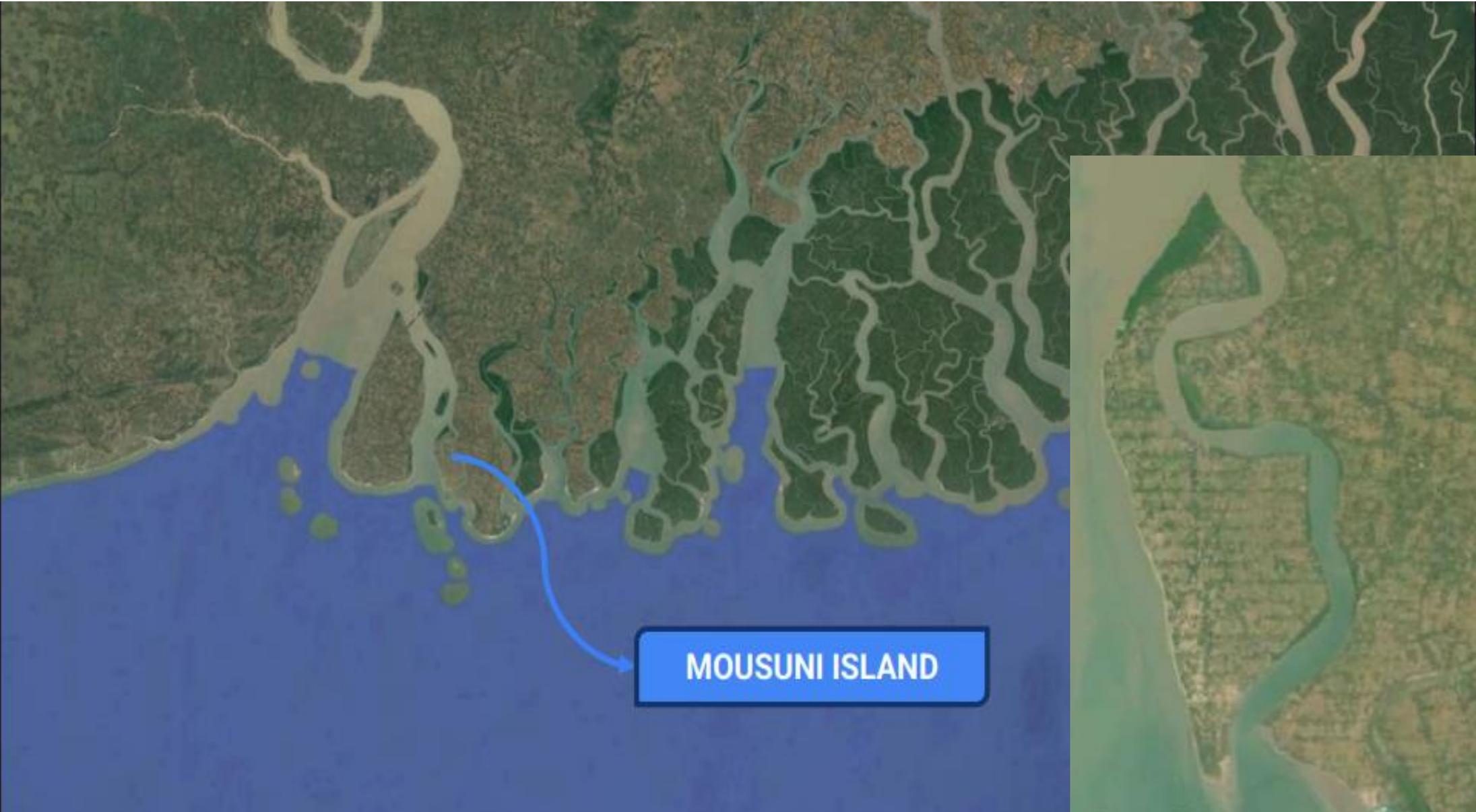
**CWAS** CENTER  
FOR WATER  
AND SANITATION  
**CRDF** CEPT  
UNIVERSITY

**CEPT**  
UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY  
OF PLANNING

**Gates Foundation**

**viega** foundation

**GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION – [ 21° 39' 46 " N to 21° 43 '30 " N and 88° 12 '5 " E to 88° 15 '00 " E ]**



# Sanitation and Climate Change Exacerbated Oceanogenic Hazards in Low-Elevation Coastal Zones: A Longitudinal Exploration at Mousuni Island, Western Indian Sundarbans.



# The escalating crisis of human rights and public health.



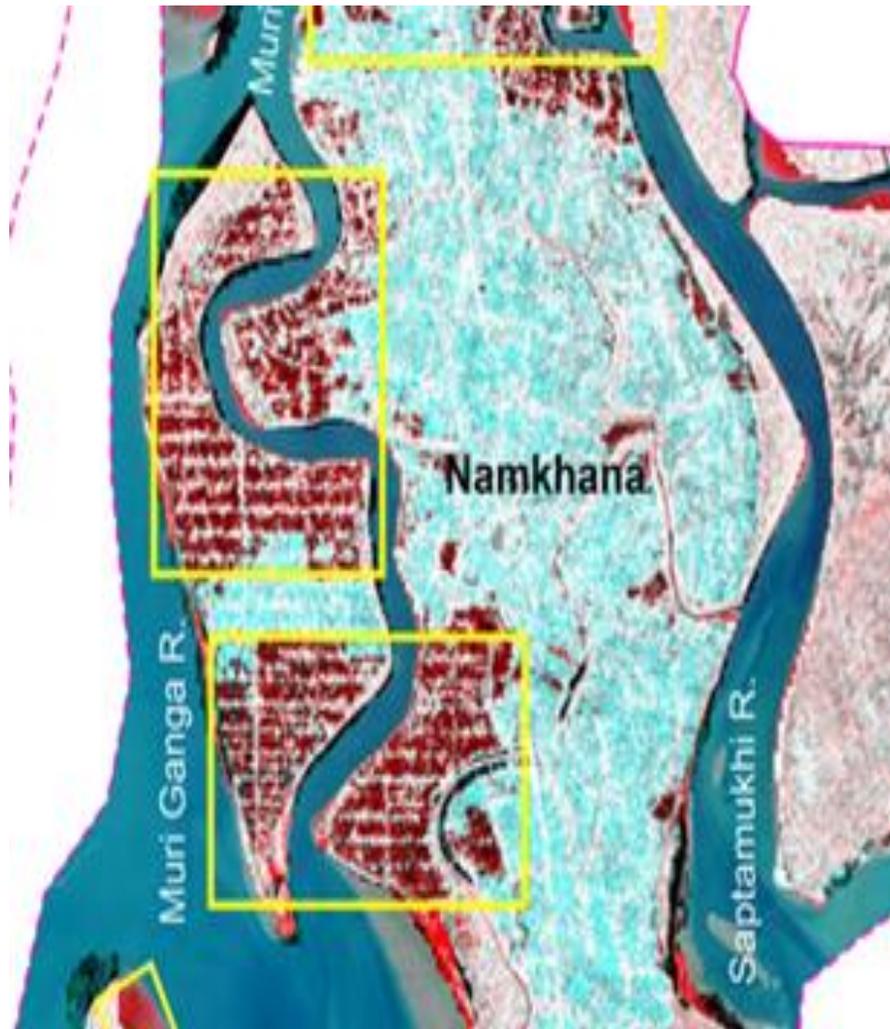
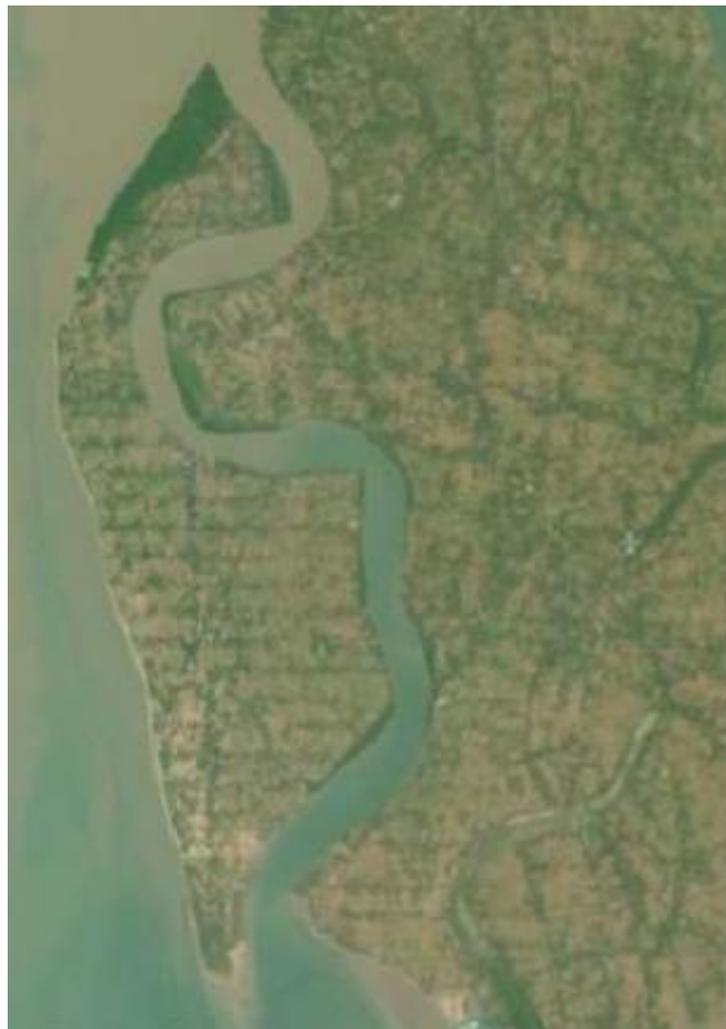
## Timeline:

- 2021-** Cyclone “Yaas”: Tidal surges > **4 m** and **1159** mm of rainfall, inundated over **300 KM<sup>2</sup>** in the Indian Sundarbans.
- 2023-** An assessment conducted with 612 Households and health workers in Mousuni island confirmed slippage and a revert to open defecation, damaged and dysfunctional latrines and prevalence of diseases linked to fecal-oral transmission, including **anemia, episodic diarrhea, and soil-transmitted helminth (STH) infections in women.**
- 2024-** An assessment of **251** Public Drinking Water Sources [DWPS], presented a worrying scenario with **45%** of the DWPs demonstrating bacteriological contamination, **18%** being dysfunctional, and **31%** having broken platforms [WHO-UNICEF SDG-JMP Framework]
- 2025-** A **PAR** study undertaken to investigate the complex policy and lived consequences of protracted sanitation asset loss on women and how systemic governance and financing failures impact the human right to sanitation and the loss of dignity, confirmed policy and governance inertia, escalating public health crisis, challenges with the ODF metrics and mental health issues associated with loss of dignity in women.

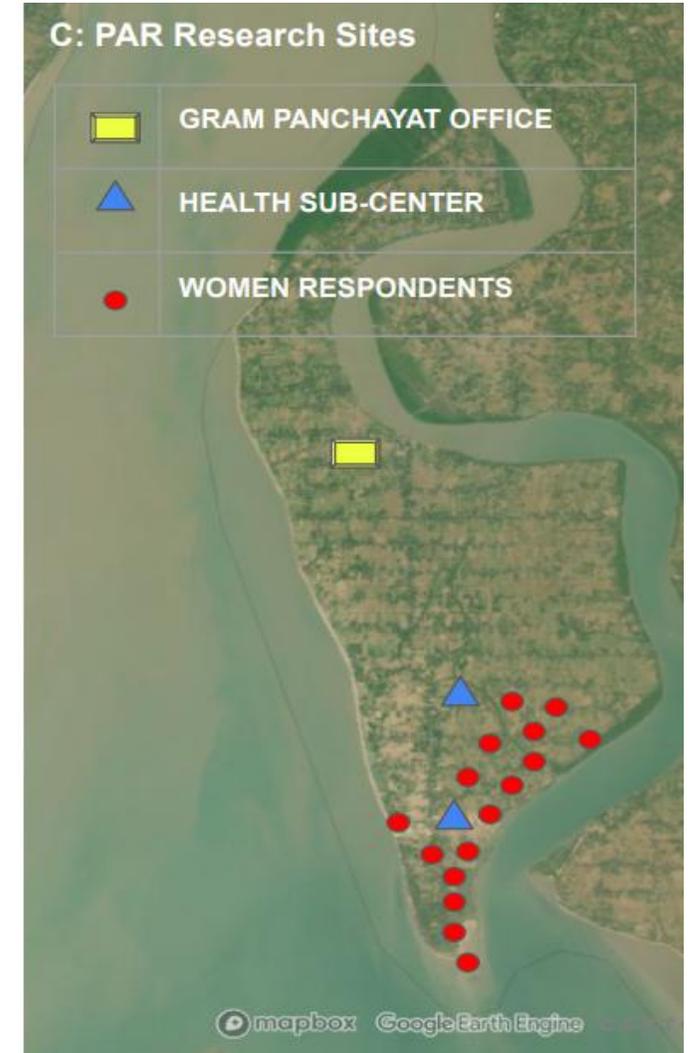
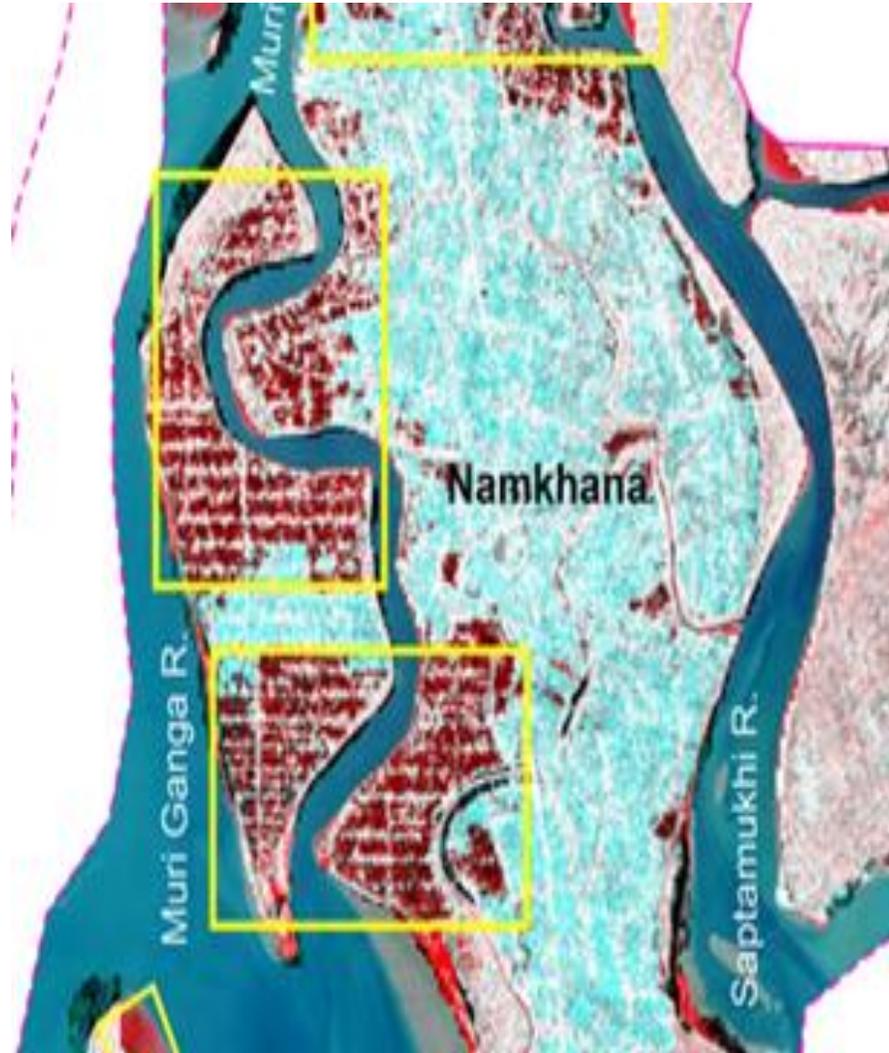
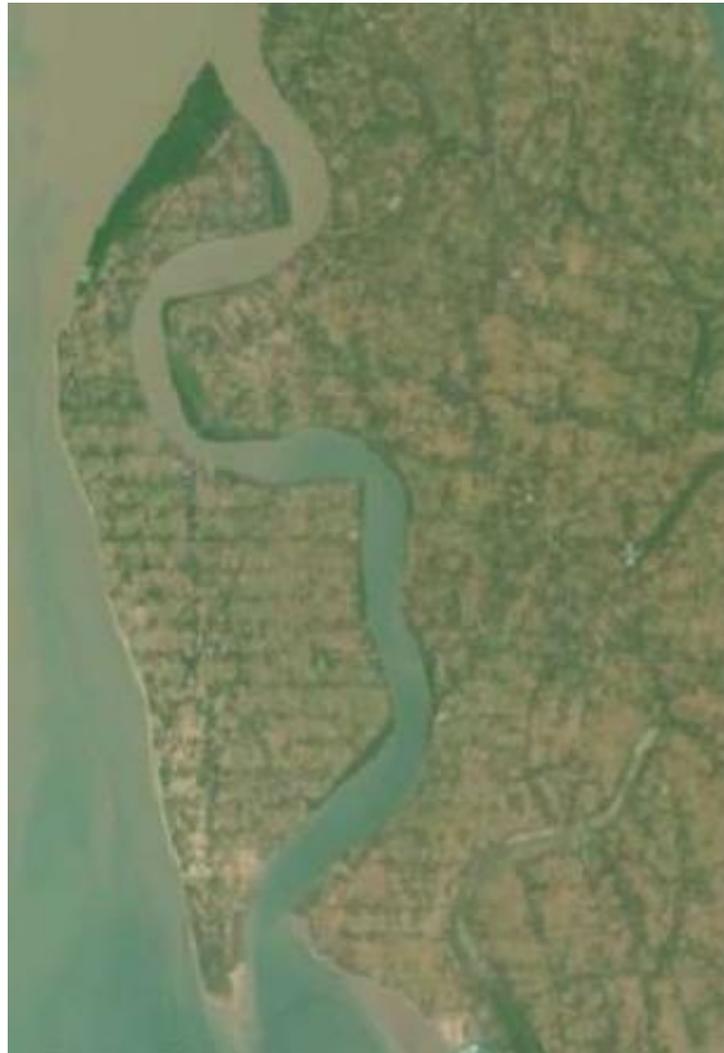
## meanwhile:

Post disaster recovery and reconstruction activities did not include sanitation assets.  
The Gram Panchayat continues to be categorized as an ODF+ panchayat.  
Recurring episodes of flooding /water logging.  
The number of people without access to safe sanitation continues to increase.

# 2021 INUNDATION MAP & PUBLIC DRINKING WATER POINT MAPPING, 2024 [ Red indicating bacteriological contamination]



# 2021 INUNDATION MAP & PAR Study, 2025.



## PAR STUDY – RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q.1: How does the prolonged lack of access to sanitation post-disaster correlate with the realization of the Universal Right to Sanitation and the "Leave No One Behind" principle in climate-affected rural coastal communities?

Q.2: To what extent do existing national sanitation frameworks, particularly the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase II, align with "Build Back Better" principles for resilient WASH recovery in the context of recurring climate risks in low-elevation coastal zones?

Q.3: What is the unquantified public health and dignity threshold at which the loss of a partial number of sanitation assets negates a community's established Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, and what are the implications for policy and financing models?

## PAR STUDY – RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS:

The findings inform a critical need to **redefine climate-resilient WASH governance in INDIA & the Global South**. The study concludes that the current **"out of sight, harmless" treatment of sanitation non-recovery** fails the **"Build Back Better"** and **"Leave No One Behind" principles** and constitutes a **clear violation** of the **"right to sanitation"**.



## PAR STUDY – RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS:

**Effective climate resilience must shift its focus:** not only must policies look at the mega-events but also strategically note that smaller, recurrent events like nuisance flooding are sufficient to **degrade public health resilience through fecal reintroduction**. Crucially, the public health risks will be magnified if appropriate **technical and social considerations** are not adopted in the design and siting of future assets proposed under the current SBM [G]-II program, particularly those related to Fecal Sludge Management (FSM)



## PAR STUDY – CONCLUSIONS:

**Policy reforms** are urgently needed to establish ring-fenced, climate-aligned financing mechanisms and responsive, **decentralized governance rules that mandate immediate sanitation asset reconstruction, ensuring that post-disaster recovery is rapid, rights-based, and genuinely resilient to both major and minor climate shocks.**



## SCENARIO:

**Low lying coastal communities** are increasingly at risk of climate change exacerbated environmental hazards. Sea-level rise (SLR) accompanying climate change is already causing significant and costly impacts across low elevation coastal communities and these are expected to continue in the 21st century and beyond. (Hauer, M.E., Hardy, D., Kulp, S.A. et al.).

The **Relative Sea Level Rise [RSLR]** over the last 100 years has driven **large increases in annual water level exceedances above minor coastal elevation thresholds.**

In 2000, the global population living in Low Elevation Coastal Zones [LECZ] was estimated (Neumann et al., 2015) at **623 million** which accounted for **10.9 %** of the global population, this number is expected to grow to **949 million** people in 2030 and more than **one billion people** globally by 2060 with an average population density of 405 people/km<sup>2</sup>.

India, could experience a three-fold increase of its LECZ population between the baseline year 2000 (**64 million; 6.1% of its total population**) and the year 2060 (**216 million; 10.3% of its total population**). (Neumann et al., 2015).

## **CHALLENGES TO RESILIENCE:**

- **Data gaps [ numbers and geospatial]**
- **Design compendiums / Design Trap**
- **Standardized National Flagship Program - not risk specific.**
- **National WASH adaptation plan.**
- **Risk specific financial planning and clear utilization guidelines.**
- **Public health monitoring.**
- **ODF metrics and**
- **Social behavior change communications**

# Thank You.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Im3XRY9OzBcw1cXAtm7O03Twzt-2Ekx2/view?usp=sharing>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FwbRtuwKXXD-jTvmbvUiVyAQPHmnYlor/view?usp=sharing>

**Global South Academic Conclave on WASH and Climate 2026**

**CWAS** CENTER  
FOR WATER  
AND SANITATION  
**CRDF** CEPT  
UNIVERSITY

**CEPT**  
UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY  
OF PLANNING

Gates Foundation

**viega** foundation