

Gender Equity and Social Inclusion at the centre of System Strengthening

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IRC

Global South Academic Conclave on WASH and Climate 2025

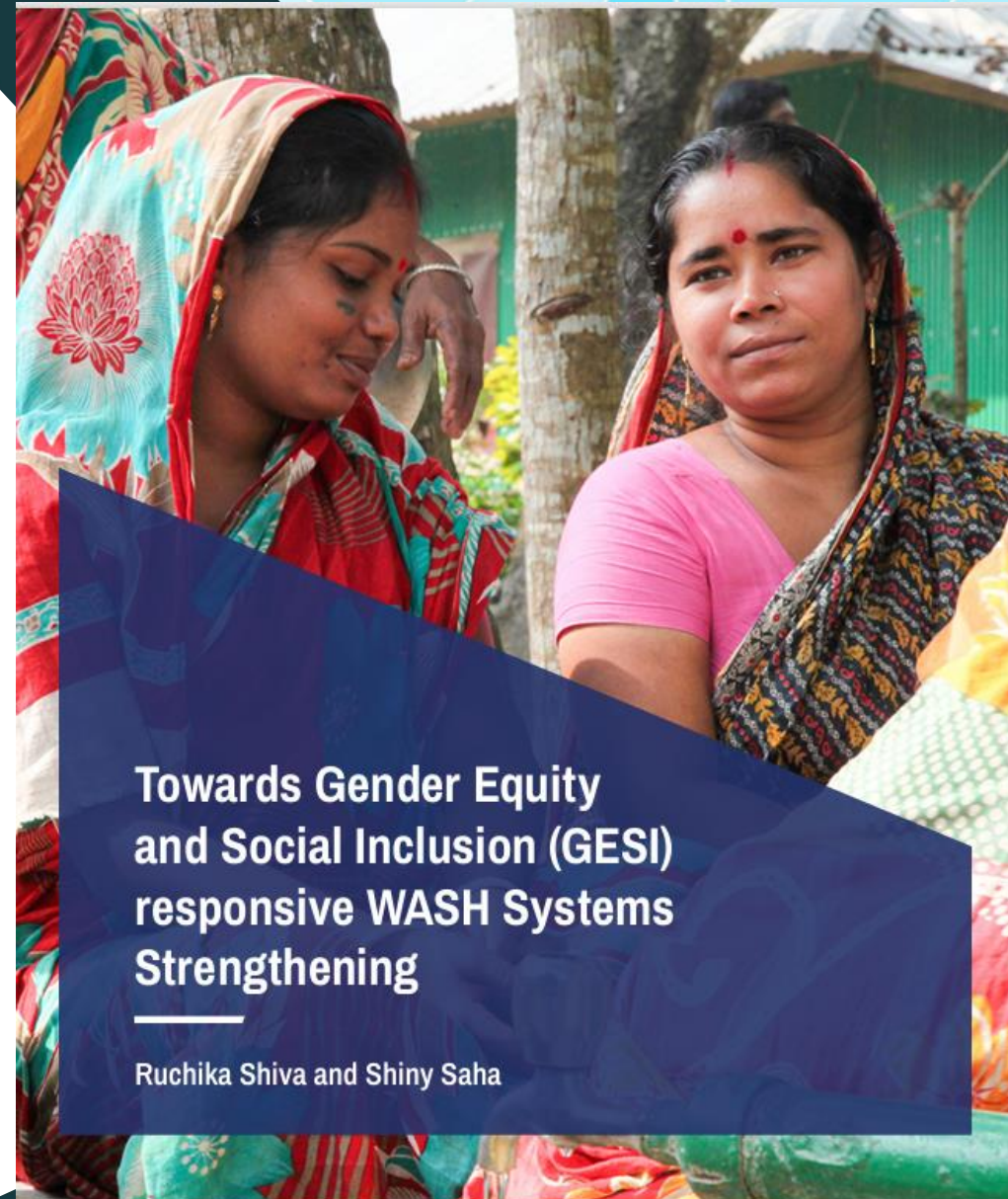
21st - 23rd February 2025, Ahmedabad

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Towards Gender Equity
and Social Inclusion (GESI)
responsive WASH Systems
Strengthening

Ruchika Shiva and Shiny Saha

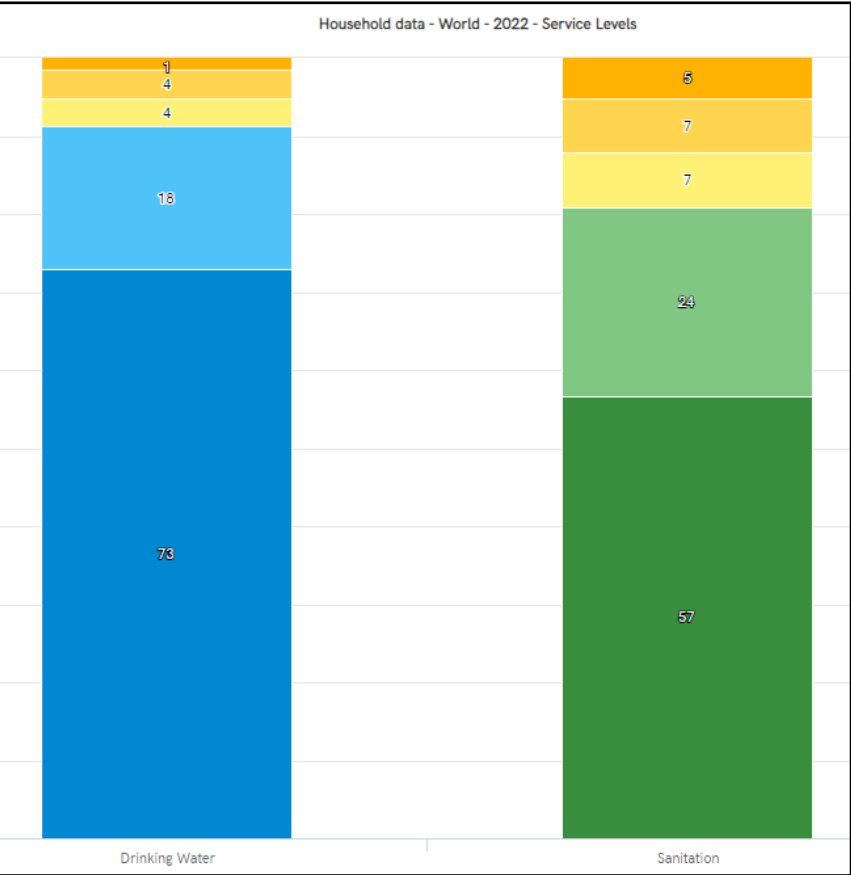
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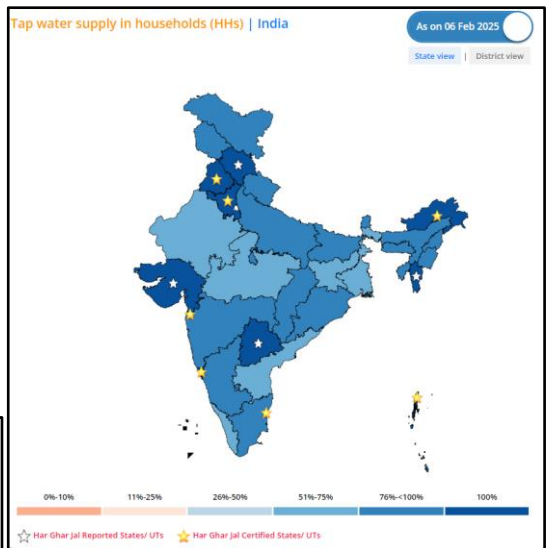
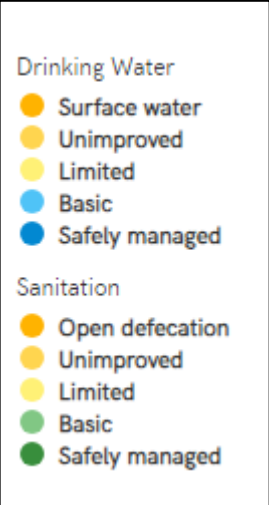
Where are we?



Source: JMP Data

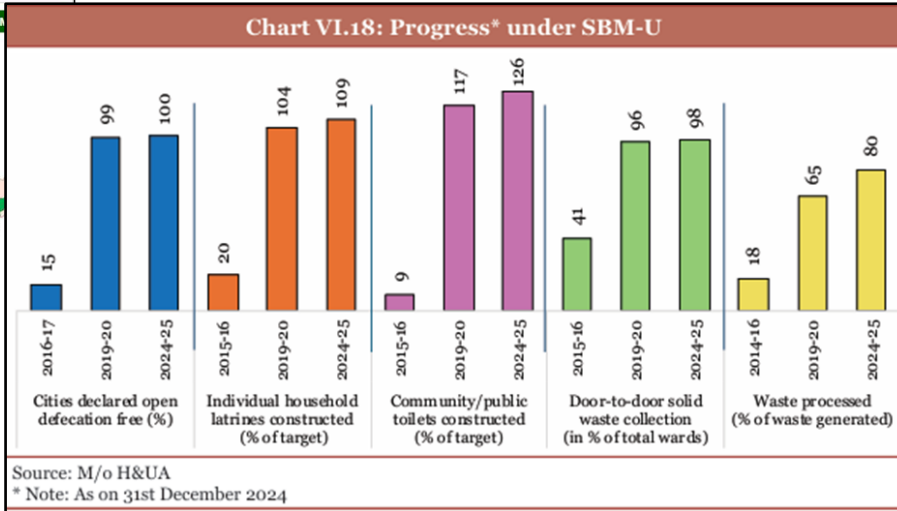
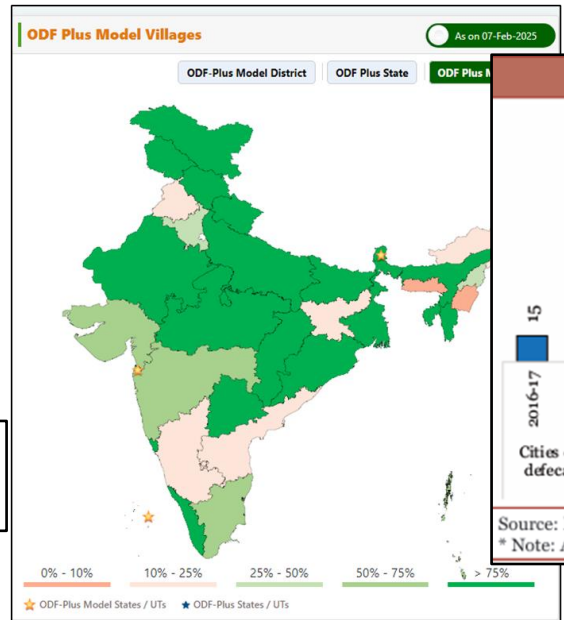
Total ODF Plus villages as on 7 Feb 2025 is 563242 (96%)

An ODF Plus village is one which has sustained its Open Defecation Free (ODF) status along with implementing either solid or liquid waste management systems.



Source: JJM Dashboard, accessed on 6th Feb 2025

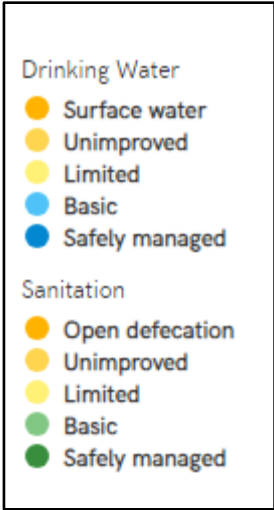
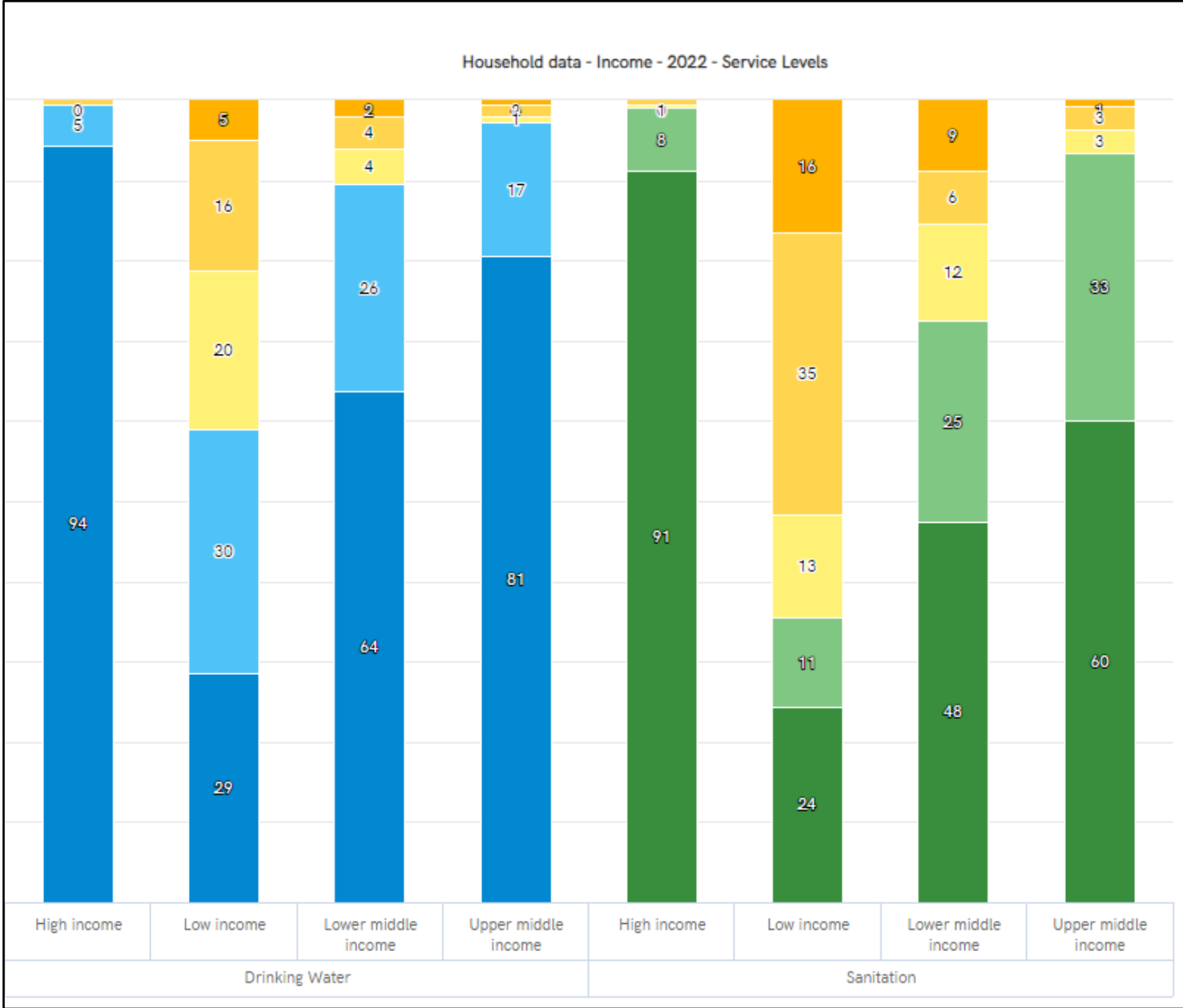
JJM: 79.77% households with tap water connection
 AMRUT: 70% households with tap (Economic Survey 2024-25)



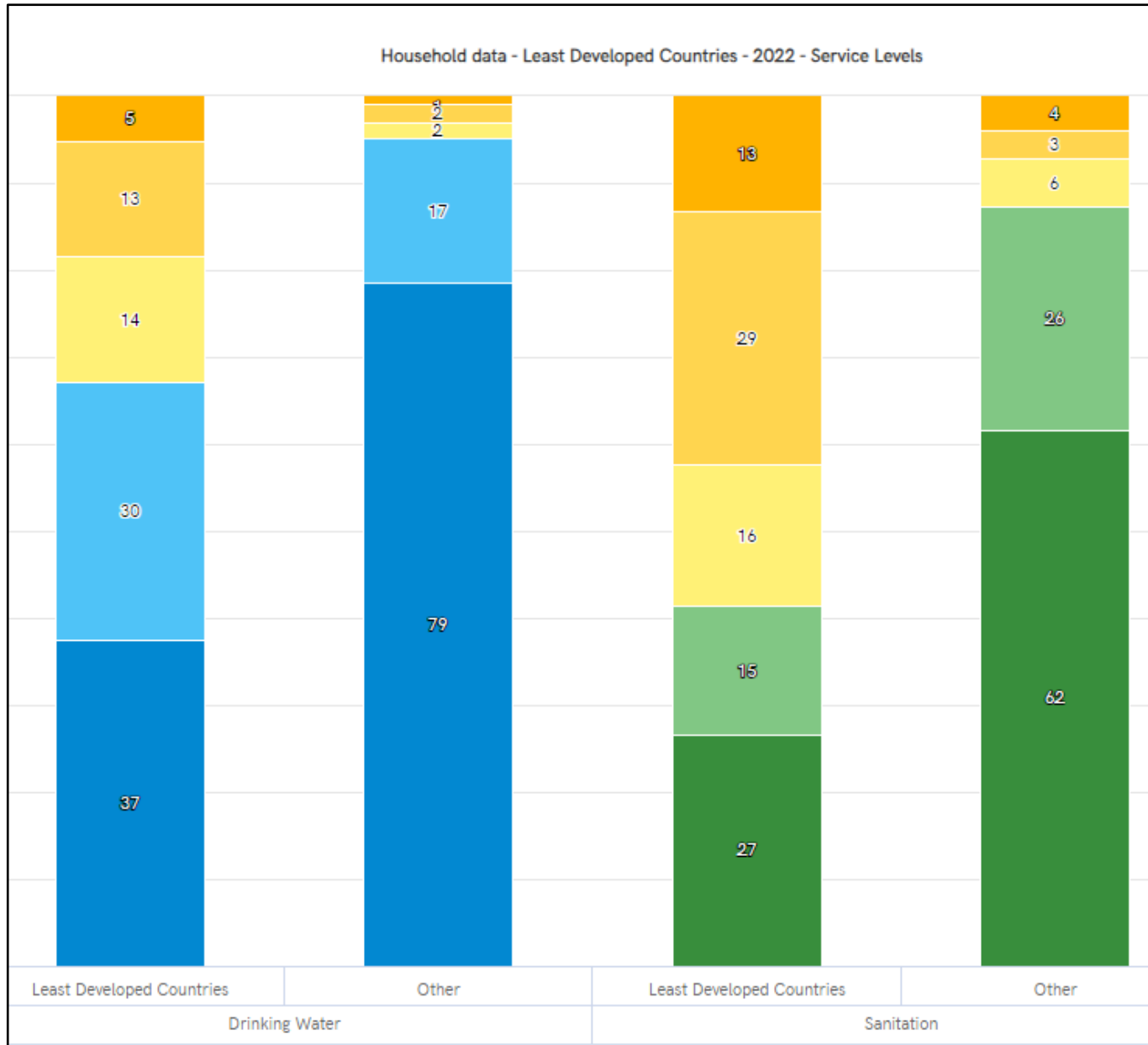
Source: Economic Survey 2024-25

Source: SBM-G Dashboard, accessed on 7th Feb 2025

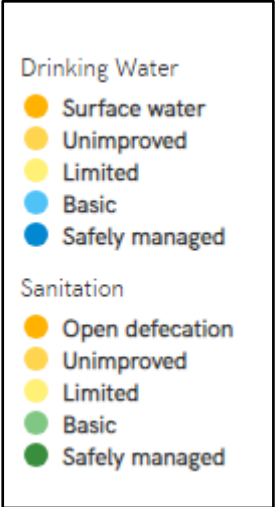
Income wise coverage



Development wise coverage



Political stability



How is it going?

'Water Wives': How Lack Of Water In This Maharashtra Village Led To Polygamy

NEWS / CITY NEWS / PUNE NEWS / Waterborne Diseases Flare Up In Maharashtra, Nearly 15 Distic...

TRENDING

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Maha Kumbh 2025

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Kolkata Water Supply



Waterborne diseases flare up in Maharashtra, nearly 15 districts affected

Water: not any drop to drink

As summer advances, there is fear and apprehension about the availability of water, especially in rural India. On March 22, World Water Day, PARI presents the many inequalities and injustices in access to clean drinking water – a basic right, but not for everyone

PARI Team

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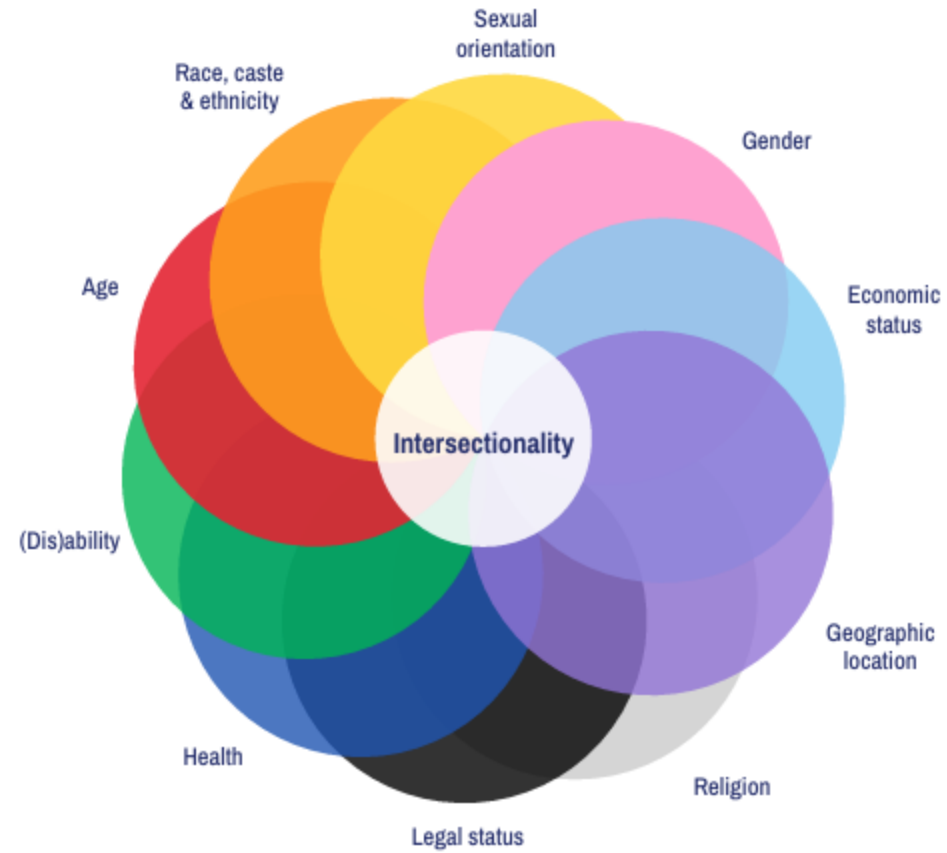
Read the story in pictures

Share



- not everyone has access to safely managed water and sanitation services.
- income levels, political stability and development affect access to services.
- not to say that all people living in high-income and politically stable countries have access to safely managed services.
- the marginalised, even in such contexts, get left behind

Who is left behind?



Why GESI based System Strengthening?

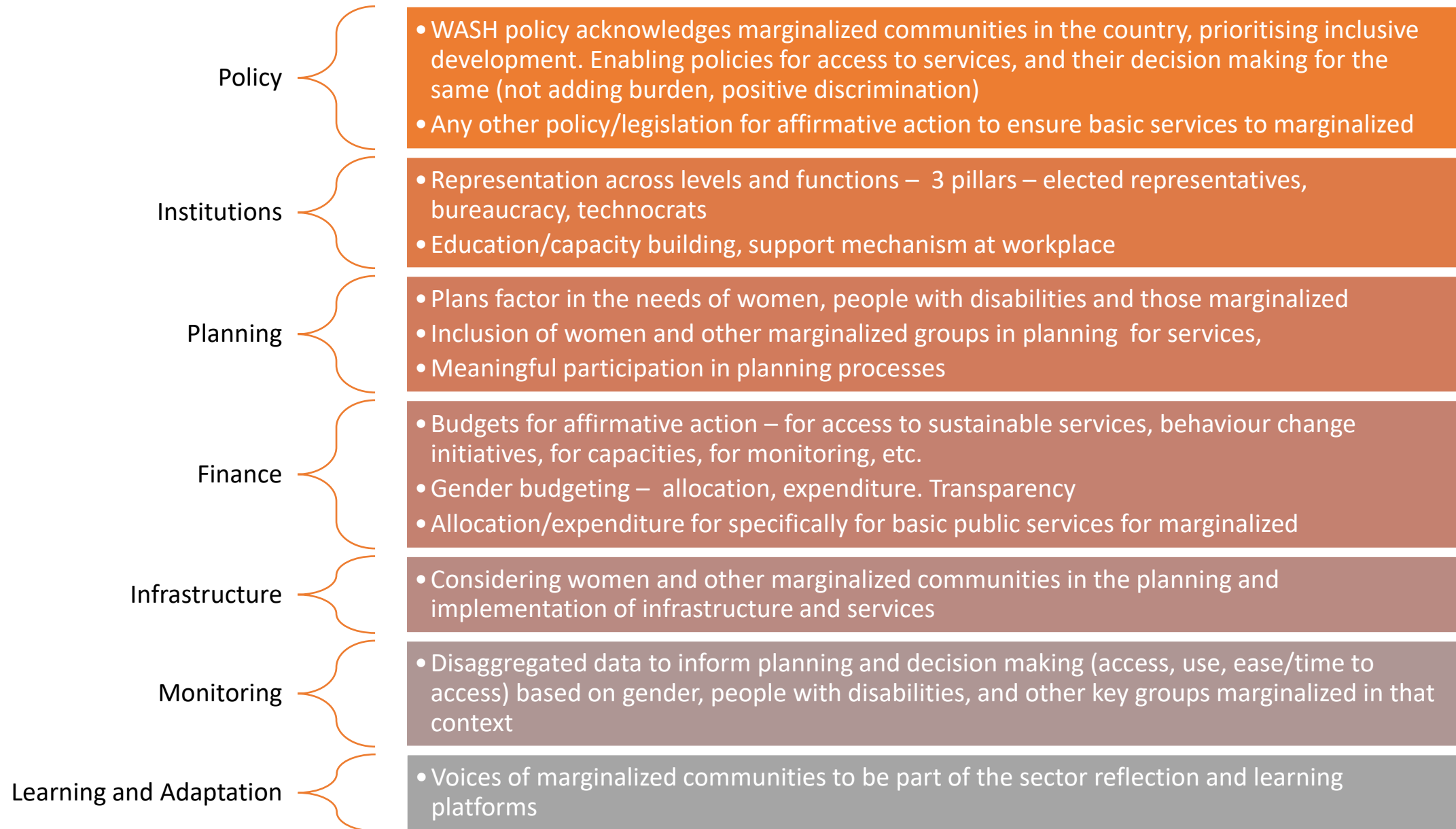
WASH System



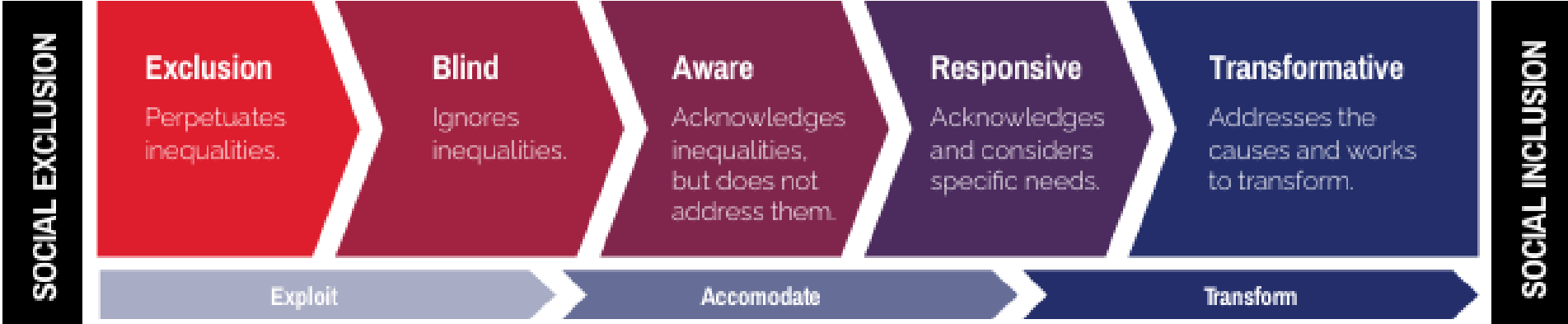
- Individuals/households/communities left out are often an afterthought
- Services as planned for everyone may not work for those marginalized
- Exclusion, of even a few, impacts overall public health, economy, environment and well-being.
- Effective WASH systems strengthening requires integrating social and technical initiatives, with Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) as a core component

Source: WASH System, Source: Huston and Moriarty, 2018

Integrating GESI in the WASH system



Scale of Integrating GESI in WASH System



Source: Adapted from: Pederson, A., Greaves, L., and Poole, N. (2015). 'Gender transformative health promotion for women – a framework for action', Health Promotion International, vol. 30, no. 1, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25231058.

How?



Institutions: coordination, roles, responsibilities, capacity, sector mechanisms

- On average, women hold only 18% of jobs in water utilities (World Bank, 2019).
- Women are the minority in government WASH jobs (GLAAS 2021/2022 data, UN Water, 2022).
- Less than a third of countries report having high participation of women in rural water supply management (GLASS 2022)

Essential

- Institutions, including ministries, line departments, elected governments, and civil society organisations ensure representation, or even participation of women and other marginalised communities, in all processes (policy formulation, planning, decision-making, implementing, monitoring, and more) and multi-stakeholder platforms (with the help of quotas, dedicated spaces, collaborations with rights holders organisations) across all levels and functions.
- Capacity building and training initiatives to encourage and facilitate participation of women and other marginalised communities exist.
- An environment for raising awareness and sensitisation of the wider community (such as duty-bearers, service providers, civil society organisations, media, business, policy makers and population at large) against discriminatory practices and on the importance of GESI is created through education.
- Information, education and communication (IEC) activities and behaviour and behaviour change communication materials developed need to be aligned with the GESI approach.
- Barriers to participation (in the workplace/ platforms/ meetings) are addressed through investments in childcare, enabling infrastructure such as ramps and toilets, scheduling meetings at convenient times and locations, and so on.

Desirable

- Capacity development on tools such as GESI-responsive budgeting is carried out.
- Trainings are provided to women and members of marginalised groups on rights, duties, and opportunities to make their voice heard.
- GESI is considered in intra-organisational policies, such as increasing team diversity, promoting leadership by members of marginalised communities at different levels, providing career enhancement opportunities for women and other marginalised groups in the workforce (certifications, trainings, professional enhancement, exposure, creation of opportunities).

How?



Planning: planning & budgeting, capacity & frameworks for planning

3 questions to ask for effective planning:

1. What has been planned?
2. For whom?
3. By whom?

Essential

- Inclusive and participatory (multi-stakeholder) planning processes exist at key (administrative) levels in government and non-government organisations, enabling members of marginalised groups to participate meaningfully.
- The plans to ensure equitable access, with specified targets, timeframes and responsibilities.
- The inter-departmental planning to leverage other development programmes specific to marginalised communities to ensure holistic provision of services.
- Plans to address the impact of climate change on marginalised communities (such as basic services for the urban poor, who face (first/most) challenges of water being too much, too little and/or dirty and sometimes too expensive).

Desirable

- Planning processes are participatory across **all** levels.
- Periodic review and improvement of action plans are carried out with a GESI lens.
- Community representatives, CBOs/CSOs are involved in the periodic reviews.

How?



Finance: flows & responsibilities, clear frameworks including life-cycle costs & source identification

- Dedicated budgets
- Targeted investments (subsidies)
- Use of inclusive budgeting tools
- Budgets to make interventions in other building blocks inclusive.
- Budget tracking capacity.

Essential

- There are dedicated budgets for equitable and accessible WASH services to reach everyone (including capital expenditure, operation and maintenance, direct, and capital maintenance costs).
- Affordable tariffs (price benchmarking) of services, providing support (subsidies) to low-income households is ensured.
- There are dedicated budgets for institutional strengthening on GESI, such as for capacity building, and awareness raising.
- Dedicated resources exist to facilitate participatory planning and decision-making (such as childcare support/facilities, transport allowance).
- There are dedicated budgets to address the impact of climate change, disaster preparedness for women and marginalised communities.

Desirable

- Budget tracking exercises by community representatives or civil society organisations are undertaken to capture allocations and expenditures to address inequalities in access to services.
- GESI responsive budgeting processes are adopted across different levels of governance (from local to central).
- Budgets are available and utilised to ensure a GESI workforce (training, capacity building) in institutions.
- Subsidies (taxation), incentives, and support are provided to encourage businesses led by members of marginalised communities.

Context matters

an understanding of the socio-cultural norms is crucial for selection/prioritising appropriate interventions/efforts that are:

- Relevant and appropriate
- Efficient and effective
- Not causing harm

In your context, what challenges or enablers do you see in strengthening WASH systems with GESI?

Thank You

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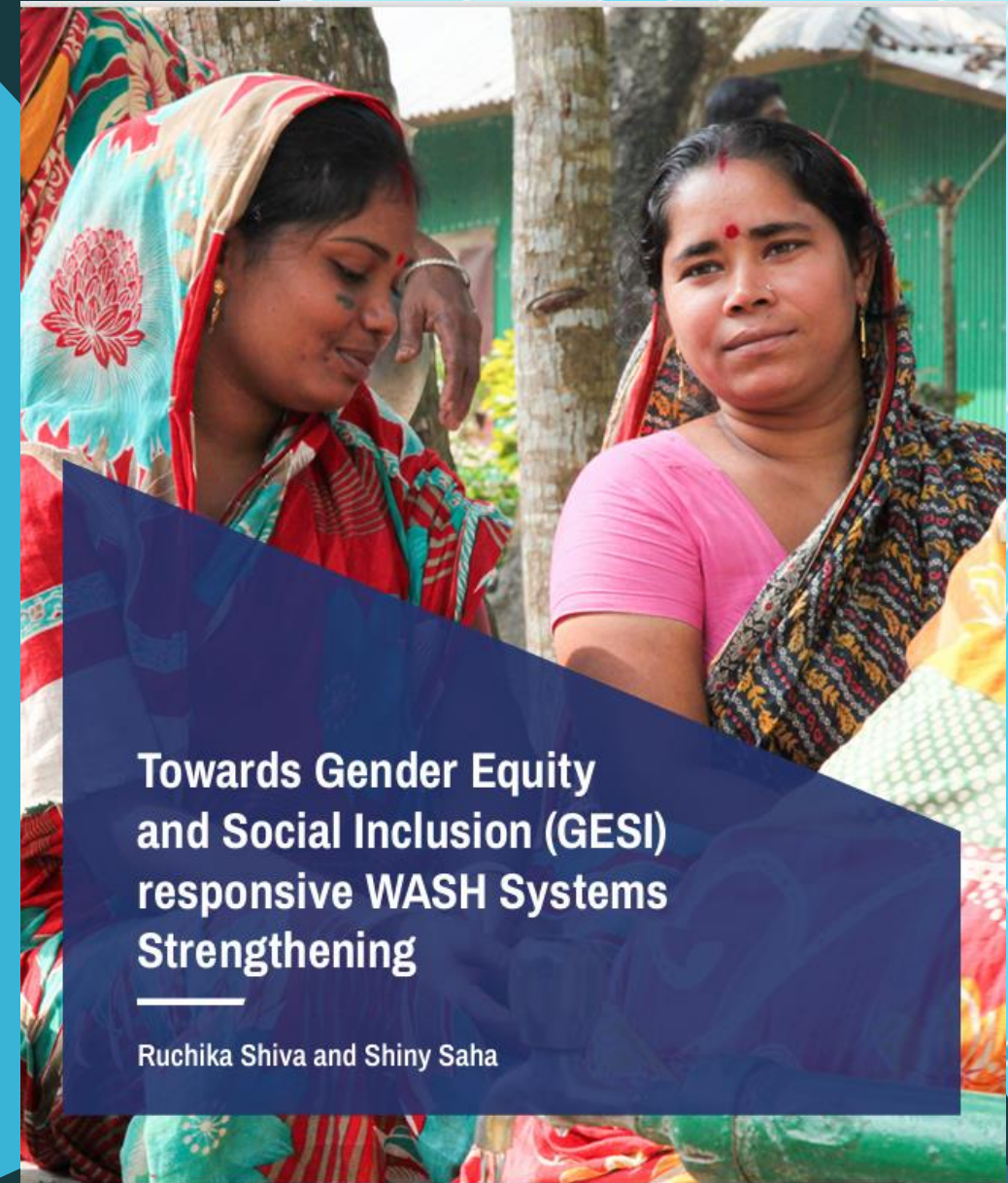
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