

Integrating Institution Building and WASH Interventions: Lessons from a Network Governance Initiative for Sanitation in Kerala

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Global South Academic Conclave on WASH and Climate 2025
21st - 23rd February 2025, Ahmedabad

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The Context

- Alappuzha is known for its extensive canal network, but suffering from severe pollution.
- Success in solid waste management, but liquid waste remained neglected.
- Marginalized communities disproportionately affected by inadequate sanitation.
- Groundwater contamination and open dumping exacerbating inequities.



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The Project

- Initiated through a partnership between IIT Bombay, Kerala Institute of Local Administration, and Alappuzha Municipality.
- Bridging capacity gaps via decentralized and participatory sanitation planning.
- Collaboration among academic institutions, local governments, and community stakeholders.
- Multi-stakeholder, participatory approach.

Canal Rejuvenation Project Activities

Winter School 2017
A methodology for
canal rejuvenation

Summer School 2018
Participatory planning
of interventions

Winter School 2018
Design of socio-
technical solutions

Specific studies
For arriving at a total
sanitation plan

Local actions
Specific interventions
in Alappuzha



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Two key interventions:

1. Implementation of a Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System (DEWATS)
2. Institution Building – Formation of Canal Shed Committees (CSCs)



Pilot Intervention at Chathanad Canal

•Chathanad ward selected for pilot intervention with four activities

- **Canal Cleaning Campaign**
- Installation of integrated solid and liquid waste management system
- Institution building



Integrated Waste Management System for Municipal Colony

- Settlement of 48 households primarily of conservancy workers.
- Deteriorated public toilets, malfunctioning septic tank & biogas unit.
- Individual toilets for each house.
- DEWATS plant with an underground pipe network.
- Aerobic composting units for solid waste management.



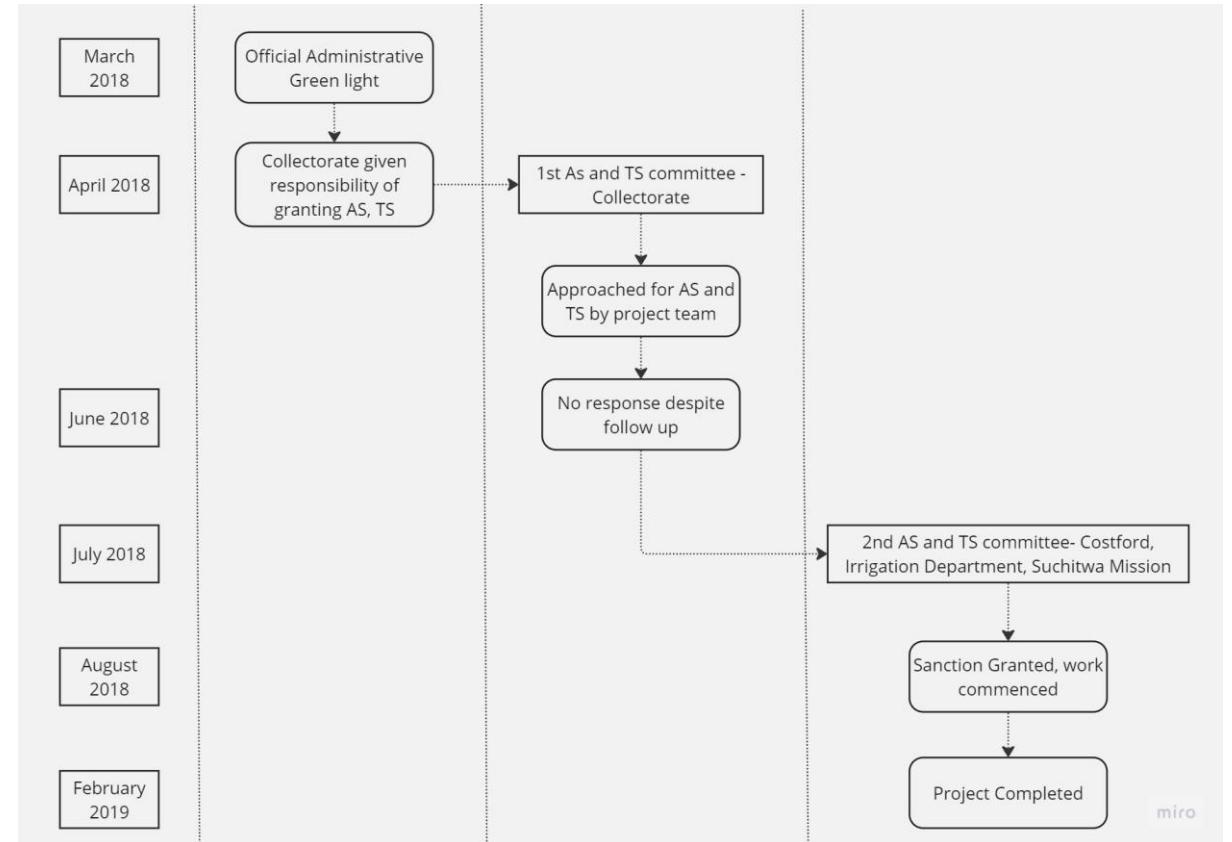
DEWATS

Successes

- Improved sanitation and wastewater management.
- Community ownership – residents maintaining the DEWATS system.

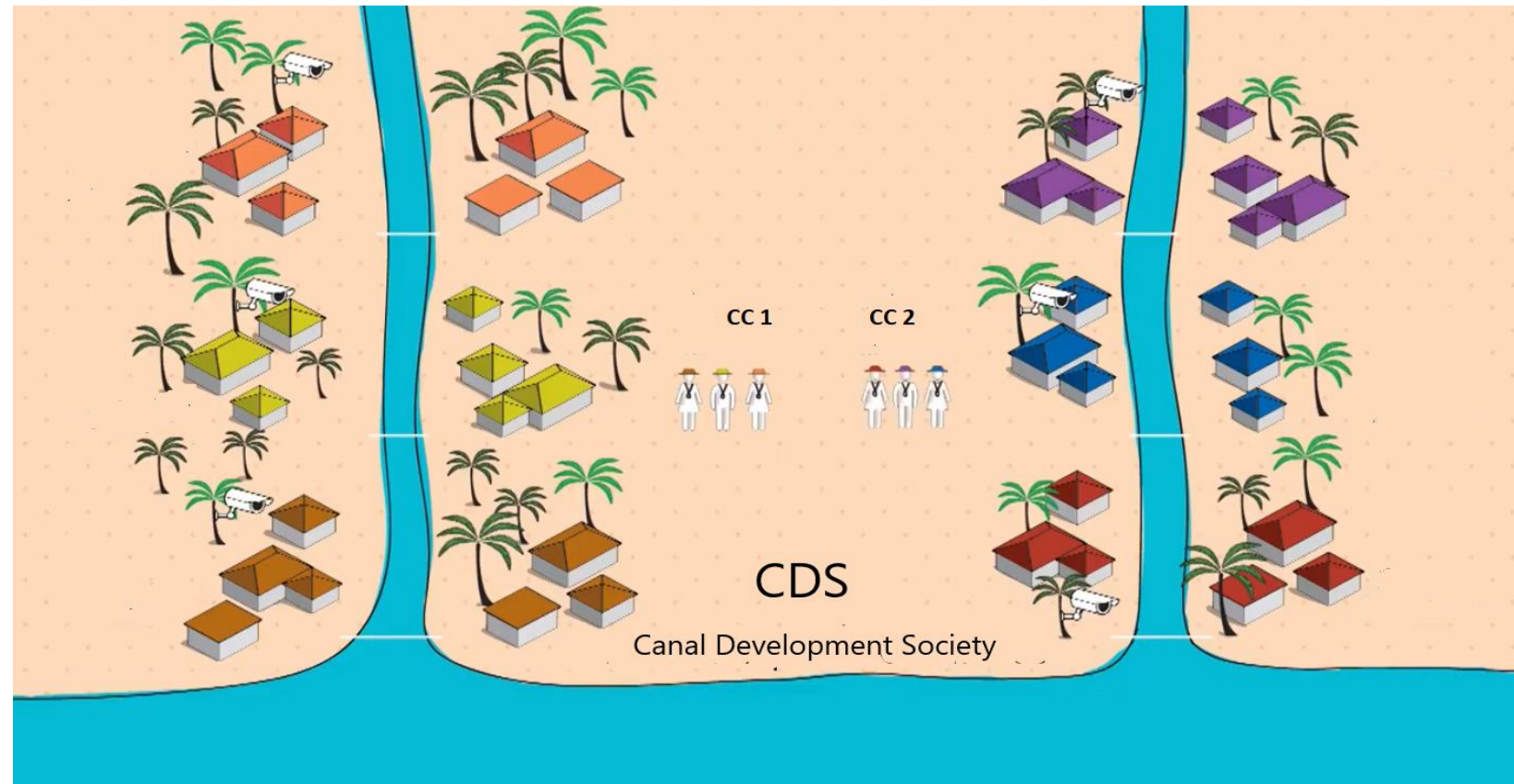
Challenges:

- Bureaucratic delays and institutional inertia.
- Funding gaps and operational constraints.



Institution Building – Canal Shed Committees (CSCs)

- CRP proposed CSCs along every 200 m of the sub canals
- Each Sub canal will have a Canal Committee
- Representation of women, youth and children as members
- CDS to oversee activities of CC
- CSCs aimed at community ownership and participatory governance



Why didn't CSCs take off?

- Community consensus and participation were initially promising but declined over time.
- Initial thrust for institution building from FM, no further follow up after formation of canal committee
- Committee formation dominated by political interests rather than actual interest in the cause

Political and governance barriers:

- Partisan conflicts hindered sustained participation, municipal decision-making
- Lack of incentives for community involvement - Limited youth engagement.
- External actors' influence waned over time.

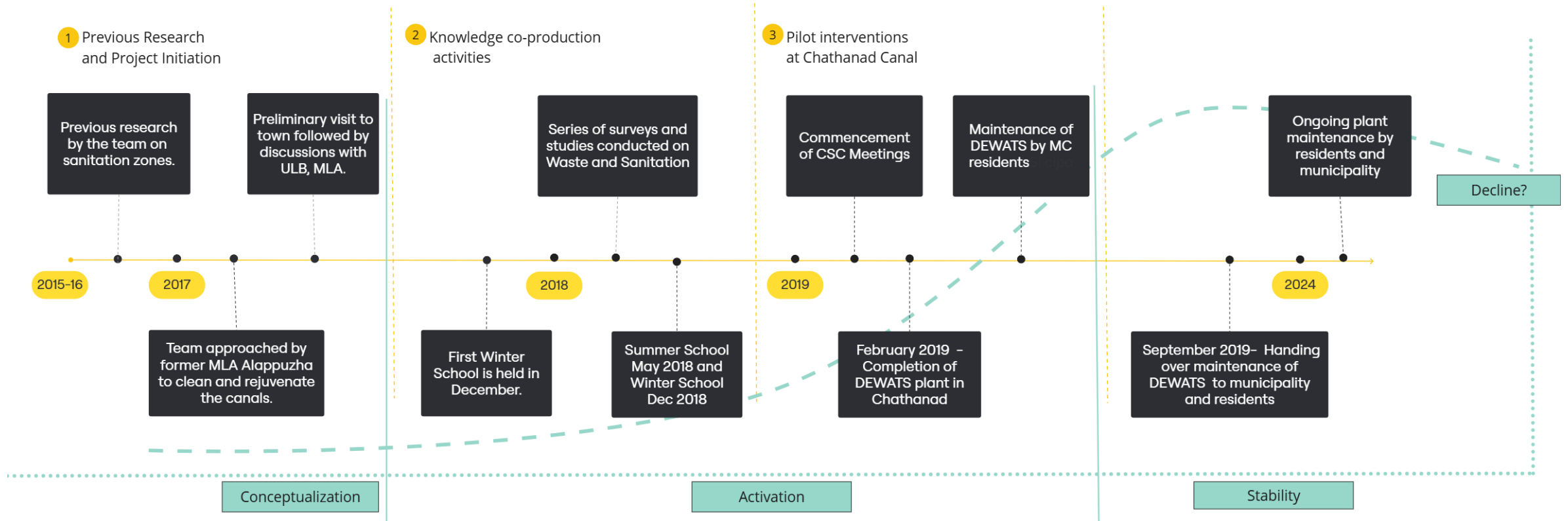
Findings and Implications

Key Findings

- Early successes fostered community engagement and infrastructure development.
- Institutional barriers (political resistance, governance fragmentation) hindered sustainability.
- Integration of social and technical solutions crucial for long-term impact.

Policy and Practice Implications

- Need for inclusive governance frameworks to ensure marginalized voices are represented.
- Strengthening institutional capacity of local governments..
- Addressing political and administrative barriers for long-term project sustainability.



Long-term sustainability requires strong institutions and political commitment.

Thank You

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