

Nepal Country Paper on Sanitation and Hygiene



"Sanitation for All: All for Sanitation"

SACOSAN-V

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Introduction

Nepal, a land-locked country situated between India to the south, east and west and China to the north, is well-known as the country of Mount Everest and the birthplace of Lord Buddha. Although Nepal is a relatively small country with an area of 147,181 square kilometers, the country is rich in cultural and biological diversity. While, politically, the country is going through a transitional process and a constitution is in the process of being written, it is making steady progress in the area of sanitation and hygiene.

Nepal consists broadly of five physiographic regions, which come in the following order from south to north: the Terai or plains (14 per cent of the total land area), the Siwaliks (13 per cent), the Mid Hills (30 per cent), the High Mountains (20 per cent) and the High Himalayas (23 per cent). Nepal has a population of 26.66 million, with an annual growth rate of 1.35 per cent (Central Bureau of Statistics - CBS 2011). About 50 percent of the total population live in the Terai belt. The population density is 180 per square kilometer. The literacy rate is 65.9 per cent (male: 75.1 per cent and female: 57.4 per cent). The life expectancy rate is 68 years for men and 69 years for women. Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual country, with more than 126 caste/ethnic groups and 123 dialects. Nepali is the lingua franca.

Administratively, Nepal is divided into five development regions (Eastern, Central, Western, Mid Western and Far Western), fourteen zones (Mechi, Koshi, Sagarmatha, Janakpur, Narayani, Bagmati, Lumbini, Dhaulagiri, Gandaki, Rapti, Bheri, Karnali, Seti and Mahakali), and seventy-five districts, fifty-eight municipalities and 3,915 Village Development Committees (VDCs). Kathmandu is the capital city as well as the economic hub of the country.

Institutional Setup for the Sanitation and Hygiene Sector

The Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) is the lead Sector Ministry in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector. The Department of Water Supply and Sewerage (DWSS), with its Water Supply and Sanitation Division and Sub-Division Offices (WSSDOs/WSSSDOs), is the leading executing and facilitating department for the WASH programme in all seventy-five districts of the country. Regional Monitoring Supervision Offices (RMSOs) under DWSS have been established in the five regions for capacity building of district offices and for carrying out monitoring and supervision of WASH interventions in the region concerned. Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board (RWSSFDB) under MoUD also facilitates implementation of the rural WASH programme through non-government organisations in selected districts and communities.

The Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MoFALD) with its department, viz. Department of Local Infrastructure and Development of Agriculture Roads (DoLIDAR), and its district technical office in all districts, facilitates implementation of small water supply and sanitation projects. The MoFALD also provides guidance and support to the District Development Committees (DDCs), municipalities and VDCs, which are the lead agencies for implementing WASH programmes at local level. The Ministry of Education (MoE), with its

department and district offices, coordinates and implements school WASH programmes across the country. Similarly, the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP), through its National Health Education, Information, Communication Centre (NHEICC), Department of Health Services (DoHS), district offices and grass roots networks, is responsible for promotion of health, hygiene and sanitation initiatives with specific attention on hand-washing with soap and improved hygiene behaviour through a nationwide campaign.

In order to facilitate and implement sanitation and hygiene programmes in a coordinated fashion, the Government of Nepal (GoN), through its Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan (SHMP) 2011, has constituted a multi-stakeholder coordination structure at all levels, starting from national to grassroots level. At national level, the National Sanitation and Hygiene Steering Committee (NSHSC), which has representation of, among others, the National Planning Commission (NPC) and key sectoral ministries (MoUD, MoFALD, Ministry of Finance [MoF], MoHP, MoE and Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare [MoWCSW]), is the highest coordinating body. The National Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee (NHSCC) is responsible for bringing all stakeholders concerned—governmental and non-governmental—to one platform to review progress, document lessons learnt and recommend the NSHSC and sectoral ministries for appropriate actions.

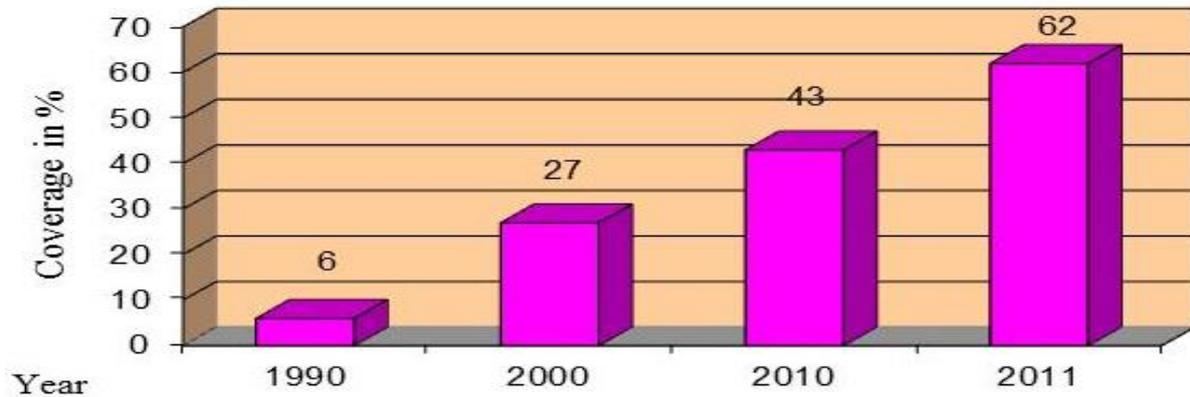
At district level, the DDC is the lead coordinating local body that chairs the District WASH Coordination Committee (D-WASH-CC) and WSSD/SDOs act as Member Secretary. The D-WASH-CC has representation of, among others, government line agencies, development partners, civil society, private sector and the media. The D-WASH-CC is responsible for overall planning, coordinating, monitoring and providing strategic guidance for sanitation and hygiene promotion throughout the district with a common approach and result framework. Similar coordination structures (M-WASH-CC and V-WASH-CC) are established and are operational at municipal and VDC level for planning and facilitation of operation of sanitation and hygiene programmes in their respective areas.

The Regional WASH Coordination Committees (R-WASH-CCs) are operational in the five development regions for providing overall guidance, dissemination of policy documents, capacity building, knowledge-sharing and regular monitoring of sanitation and hygiene campaigns in the region.

State of Sanitation

Although sanitation is a broad term that refers to hygienic separation and management of human excreta in a sustainable manner and cleanliness of household and surrounding environment, as outlined in SHMP 2011, access to improved and hygienic toilets and attainment of Open Defecation Free (ODF) status are considered to be the main indicators for assessing the state of sanitation. In Nepal, the national sanitation coverage, or percentage of households with toilets, was a mere 6 per cent in 1990 (Census 2001/2011, NLSS 2003/2004, NMIP/DWSS 2010 and NDHS 2006/2011). While progress was modest initially, in recent years, as a result of promulgation of SHMP and subsequent initiatives such as aligning for action and sanitation model districts, a solid foundation has been laid for a nationwide social sanitation movement.

Based on CBS 2011, the sanitation coverage has reached 62 per cent in 2011. As of September 2013, 1,030 of the total 3,915 VDCs, twelve of the fifty-eight municipalities and nine of the seventy-five districts have achieved 100 per cent sanitation coverage.



In addition, over seven districts are rapidly gearing towards the ODF status by the end of 2013. These results indicate that around 25 per cent of all Nepalese are living in the ODF environment. This progress also demonstrates that Nepal has already surpassed the MDG commitment (53 per cent) and is heading towards achieving the universal national sanitation target by 2017.



Prime Minister Mr. Jhala Nath Khanal declaring Kaski as the first ODF District in Nepal, 2011

These remarkable results were possible only because of dedicated and continuous leadership of the government, support of development partners, non-government organisations and private sector and, most importantly, active engagement and ownership of local communities. The sector has witnessed collaborations and partnerships among all players concerned at all level by formulating regional, district, municipality and VDC-level strategic plans, systematic

capacity building, strong advocacy and social mobilisation, innovative promotional initiatives and unified implementation procedures. The ODF-declared districts have also developed strategies to sustain improved sanitation and hygiene services and behaviour.

Despite promising achievements in the sanitation and hygiene sector in recent years, visible disparities can be seen between the regions, ecological zones, districts, as well as between rural and urban areas. There are still nine densely populated districts in the Terai where sanitation coverage is less than 30 per cent—far below the national average. Although urban sanitation coverage has increased from 80 per cent to 91 per cent, this has remained almost stagnant over the past decade mainly due to rapid urbanisation and poor mechanisms for addressing sanitation needs of informal settlements and urban poor. Access to toilets is also uneven based on economic status as 97 per cent of the richest quintile have access to improved toilets, but among the poorest quintile only 4 per cent have access to improved toilets (NPC/UNDP 2012).

Nepal's nationwide sanitation social movement has been benefitted from innovations such as national, regional and district-level sanitation conferences, which help in building consensus among all stakeholders, and use of tools such as sanitation commandos, *Danbir* (philanthropist), sanitation card, 'each one teach one' and child clubs at local level, joint monitoring in the field by local bodies, media and civil society organisations and regular reviews, reflections and learning have further empowered, refuelled and propelled the social movement across the country. The ongoing movement recognised sanitation as an integral part of dignity, identity and pride of individuals and powerful societal values, which can be instrumental in triggering all sectoral actors, individuals, families and communities, with special consideration to the Terai and low sanitation coverage districts.

Policies and Strategies on Sanitation

Sanitation issues have been reflected in the country's development plans since its Fourth Plan. The current Three-Year Plan (2010/11–2012/13) gives emphasis and priority to the total sanitation campaign. National Sanitation Policy 1994 clearly defines sanitation and hygiene as fundamental rights of citizens and opens new dimension for sanitation promotion. The National Water Supply Sector Policy (Policies and Strategies) 1998 underlines that hygiene and sanitation are integral parts of all water supply programmes. Formulated in 2004, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation National Policy, Strategy and Sectoral Strategic Action Plan have made provision for allocating 20 percent of the budget of water supply and sanitation programmes to sanitation and hygiene interventions. The Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Policy 2009 states that safe drinking water supply and sanitation services are fundamental aspects for improving public health.

Despite these policy provisions, the sanitation sector activities in the past remained fragmented, dependency on external hardware support proliferated; policy compliance, especially with regard to budget allocation, remained poor; software aspects of sanitation got little attention; and the sector lacked inclusive institutional arrangements to reach the unreached and cater the services in a demand-responsive manner. In order to resolve these challenges and honour the regional commitments made in the previous SACOSAN and International Year of Sanitation 2008, the GoN promulgated the Sanitation and Hygiene

Master Plan 2011, which was launched by the President of Nepal. The Master Plan provides clear guidance for maintaining uniformity and standards for sanitation and hygiene promotion in a programmatic and coherent manner through its guiding principles, which are as follows:

- ODF as the bottom line of all sanitation interventions.
- Universal access to sanitation facilities in water supply and sanitation project areas.
- Informed technological choices for household toilets.
- Leadership of the local bodies in sanitation sector activities.
- VDC and municipality as the minimum basic unit of all sanitation programme interventions.
- Locally managed financial support mechanisms.
- Mandatory provision of sanitation facilities in all institutions.
- Mandatory provision of toilets in newly built-up buildings.
- Focus on hand-washing with soap and other sanitary behaviours

The NPC, in collaboration with sectoral ministries and development partners, developed MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) on Sanitation, which systematically assessed the bottlenecks and clearly lays down practical recommendations for high-yielding actions in four areas: i. Coordination structure, ii. School WASH, iii. ODF campaign and iv. Systematic capacity building. This has contributed to effective implementation of SHMP.

Sanitation Monitoring System

The MoUD formulated a WASH sector monitoring and evaluation framework in 2009 with key sectoral indicators. The framework has proposed nine CREAM (Clear, Relevant, Economic, Adequate and Monitorable) indicators, which include: Safe Water, Accessible Water, Adequate Water, Access to Improved Sanitation, Equity, Improved Health, Improved Work/Economy and Sustainability over time. Planning and Foreign Aid Division of the MoUD is responsible for facilitating and periodically updating on the progress and performance of the sector. A dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit under the same division is responsible for collecting and disseminating information on a regular basis. The Sector Efficiency Improvement Unit (SEIU) under MoUD is operational to harmonise sectoral efforts.

For enhancing the M&E mechanism on sanitation, the SHMP 2011 focuses on: a) establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system with WASH coordination committees at different level; b) monitoring indicators compatible with WASH, health, education and local development sectors; c) integration of data and information with the monitoring and evaluation unit at the MoUD; d) development of input, process, output, outcome and impact level indicators; e) strengthening of documentation and reporting mechanism at DDC, municipality and VDC level; f) mobilisation of the monitoring team at VDC, municipality, district, regional and national level; and g) declaration and validation of ODF/post-ODF initiatives.

Majority of districts have developed strategic plans on sanitation and clearly spelled out and operationalised monitoring and reporting systems. The WASH coordination committees are

fully accountable for validating the sectoral results and ensuring reciprocal feedback, as well as vertical and horizontal coordination and communication among stakeholders belonging to different sectors, through regular review meetings, consultations and joint field visits. Community-led self-monitoring and joint monitoring approaches have given considerable impetus to ensure quality and ownership for the sanitation movement. Clear provisions and guidelines have been operationalised to monitor, validate and certify the ODF status by the respective upper-level coordination committees before formal ODF declaration in mass gatherings.

Sanitation Promotion Approaches

The Government started making formal efforts for sanitation promotion after the launch of the International Decade of Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation (1981–90), and since then, sanitation promotion has taken place in various processes and approaches, ultimately emerging in the form of a social movement. This process has emerged mainly through four ways: a) sanitation as part of water supply projects, b) school-led independent programme packages, c) community-led sanitation and d) local body-led sanitation social movement as guided by the SHMP.

Initially, sanitation promotional activities were carried out as an add-on activity of drinking water supply projects, aimed at meeting physical targets of toilets through supply-driven tendency with subsidy. To formalise sanitation as an integral part of the WASH sector, Basic Sanitation Package (BSP) was introduced in 1999/2000 and Water Sanitation Users Committees (WSUCs) and sector officials trained at all level.

National Sanitation Action Week (NSAW) campaigns have been observed annually since 2000 to raise awareness of toilet promotion and hand-washing by targeting local politicians and decision-makers. By recognising schools and new generation as role models for expanding their practices in nearby communities, School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) programme was piloted in 2000. SSHE has contributed to making children, school teachers, management committees and parent–teacher associations aware of the importance of sanitation and hygiene, establishing sanitation facilities and demonstrating behaviours as an integral part of life skilled-based education in schools.

In 2003, the WASH sector adopted the Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach, developed in Bangladesh. The core element of CLTS includes triggering and motivating communities to end the deep-rooted malpractice of open defecation by making them aware of the harms caused by open defecation and its grave implications for human health. This approach has empowered communities to collectively eliminate open defecation practices.

Based on the experience of SSHE and CLTS, Nepal introduced an indigenous and innovative approach of School-led Total Sanitation (SLTS) in 2006 by integrating the core elements of the BSP, SSHE and CLTS. The SLTS is a complete package that mobilises the strength of school and communities. It adopts child-to-child, child-to-adult, motivation, triggering and mobilisation. While SLTS has been successful in establishing and institutionalising the leadership of schools, along with children, to catalyse change in the sanitation environment in schools as well as communities, the CLTS has succeeded in stimulating communities through intensive triggering and social mobilisation. However, the importance of multi-sectoral

collaborations was realised to bring all these approaches and tools to further accelerate sanitation from a mere project-based and fragmented approach to a more coherent sanitation campaign for wider impact.

Recognising the inevitable role of all sectors and actors in view of decentralisation and the role of local bodies in overall planning and coordination of local development process, the SHMP 2011 formalises the leadership of local bodies through formation and operationalisation of WASH coordination committees at district, municipality and VDC levels. This has created innovative framework of Local Bodies-led Total Sanitation (LLTS) which has transformed the sanitation campaign to a nationwide sanitation social movement. This framework has generated a strong enabling environment and opportunities for unifying all sectors—WASH, local development, education, health, political, media, civil society and private—in order to work collectively, align efforts and accelerate actions for advancing sanitation and hygiene as integral parts of health, wealth, dignity and development.

Different Aspects of Sanitation

School Sanitation

Basic sanitation and hygiene are integral parts of quality education in school. School Sector Reform Plan (2009–15) intends to make sure that all schools are equipped with minimum enabling conditions that cater to the diverse needs of students, which include provision of adequate classrooms, separate toilets for girls and boys, drinking water facilities and playgrounds.

In Nepal there are about 34 thousand schools (public and private), including primary, lower secondary and secondary schools. DoE Flash Report 2011 shows that only 76.8 per cent of the schools have water supply facilities and 80 per cent have sanitation facilities, but only 65 per cent have separate toilets for girls. Furthermore, functional status of these facilities is

relatively poor and inadequate. As a result, children lack a favourable learning environment. It has affected retention, completion and performance of children, particularly girls.

The Government in partnership with UNICEF and other development partners, implemented the SSHE and SLTS programmes with special focus on promotion of institutions (child clubs), facilities (urinal, toilet and hand-washing facilities), including menstrual hygiene management, and improved behaviour (hand-washing with soap in critical times, personal hygiene, face washing, nail cutting).



Demonstration of hand-washing with soap campaign by school children in Chitwan district in 2011

The SSHE and SLTS empowered children and teachers, who now act as change agents to promote sanitation situation and achieve the ODF status in over 3,000 school catchment areas. These approaches were intensively applied initially in three model districts, Chitwan, Kaski and Tanahun, with the broad objective of expanding learning throughout the country. Recognising the profound multiple implications of WASH intervention for quality education, MoE has introduced dedicated school WASH programme with standard design considering child, gender, and disabled-friendly aspects and has been earmarking significant budgets for it throughout the country since 2010. This component is a core element of the ongoing WASH movement, and provision of WASH facilities in all institutions has been made mandatory for declaring ODF.

Urban Sanitation

According to the 2011 Census, 4.52 million people (17 per cent of the population) live in fifty-eight municipalities in Nepal, but this number does not include the floating population and people living in small towns. The urban population is growing at 3.38 per cent per annum, which is much higher than the national population growth rate of 1.35 per cent. As urban sanitation is more complex than rural sanitation it includes issues such as management of wastewater, storm water and solid waste, and as it involves multiple agencies and heterogeneous communities, this is recognised as a major challenge.

The Government has introduced policies such as Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Policy 2009, Bagmati Action Plan 2010 and Solid Waste Management Act 2012. The key challenge now is to effectively build the local capacity and implement these policies in close coordination and collaboration with all stakeholders. The Census 2011 shows that 91 per cent of urban households have toilets. However, urban sanitation coverage has not significantly improved over the past decade, and most of the toilet waste, along with other wastewater, is disposed of into water bodies without treatment. According to the Census 2011, 30 per cent of the urban households have toilets connected to sewer systems, while 47.5 per cent have toilets connected to septic tanks. As almost half of the toilets in urban areas are connected to septic tanks, effective management of sewage from septic tanks is also an important issue. Besides wastewater, solid waste is also a major challenge in cities. The M WASH CC developed and implemented a municipal strategy plan on sanitation and subsequent action plans. As a result, over twelve municipalities have achieved the ODF status. In addition, some of the municipalities have been undertaking waste recycling and six cities have built sanitary landfill sites.

The Government, with support from its development partners, viz. ADB, WB and JICA, has initiated an integrated urban development programme with particular emphasis on improving urban water supply and sanitation situation, which includes small town water supply and sanitation sector project and urban environment improvement projects under MoUD in over twenty-five cities and emerging towns. In Kathmandu Valley, where the situation is most critical, efforts are underway to manage solid waste and clean up the Bagmati River. Similarly, some municipalities, such as Dhankuta in Eastern Nepal and Ghorahi in Mid-Western Nepal, have set up waste management facilities that include recycling facilities and sanitary landfills. Madhyapur Thimi and Dhulikhel have also promoted community-managed decentralised wastewater treatment systems. The MoUD introduced a vision paper on Clean

City Programme (Safa Sahar Karyakram) in 2013 to improve key elements related to urban environment such as waste management, drinking water, wastewater and drainage, pollution control, greenery drive and city beautification.

Sanitation and Health

WHO estimates that improved water supply reduces diarrhoeal morbidity by 21 per cent, while improving sanitation by 37.5 per cent. Nepal Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) 2011 shows that 14 per cent of Nepalese children under five suffered from diarrhoea. Prevalence of diarrhoea was highest (24 per cent) among children 6–23 months old.

The tragic episode of cholera outbreak in Mid and Far Western Regions in 2009 has drawn considerable attention to the two sectors, WASH and health, calling for working collectively to tackle preventable diseases and casualty. Health Sector Implementation Plan II (2010–15) has integrated preventive health measures through water, sanitation and hygiene interventions in the Health Sector Programme. NHEICC is accountable for overall coordination at national level, and it has developed, endorsed and launched a business plan on hand-washing with soap in public–private partnership for Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) in twelve districts. Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Plan 2012 includes sanitation and hygiene as integral measures to reduce widespread malnutrition among children. This programme, known as a 1,000 golden days (*Sunaula Hazaar Din*) campaign is being launched across the country.

The health sector network is represented at all levels of WASH coordination committees and leading BCC on hygiene promotion. As a result of multi-agency collaboration, significant and visible health impacts have been achieved, especially in reducing WASH-related morbidity and mortality. NDHS 2011 shows significant reduction in both under five and under one mortality from 235 per thousand in 1990 to 56 in 2011, which indicates a strong correlation between sanitation and health. In addition, DoHS report (2010/11) shows strong linkage between ODF campaign and WASH-related diseases for the past two or three years. For example, the Out-Patient Department (OPD) visits in the first ODF-declared Kaski district are 8.82 per cent, whereas the trend in Saptari—the lowest sanitation coverage district—is as high as 22.62 per cent. Similar trends are observed in other ODF-declared (Chitwan, Parbat, Tanahun, Myagdi, Pyuthan and Makawanpur) and low sanitation coverage (Dolpa, Rautahat, Salyan, Dhanusha, Bajura and Rukum) districts.

Reaching the Unreached

The Government, in its WASH policies, strategies and guideline, has ensured explicit provision to address equity issues. In 2011, MPPW, then WASH sector lead ministry, formulated guidelines for mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion in the infrastructure sector. These guidelines aim to ensure that gender and social-responsive approach is adopted to improve access to resource among the poor and excluded and gender equality and social inclusion issues. The SHMP, through D WASH CC, V WASH CC and M WASH CC, stresses universal access to sanitation and clearly mentions special support packages for unreached and vulnerable groups. Similarly, MAF defines action points to

practically address the needs of the poor and disadvantaged through local-level coordination and support mechanisms.

However, a large number of people still remain unreached due to various barriers such as financial, technical, geographical, poor planning, cultural, etc. The poor people living in remote corners of the country, the marginalized *Janajatis* and *Dalits* in the Tarai, hills and mountains, the low income families living on rent and informal settlers in cities, girl students, senior citizens and the physically challenged do not have easy and adequate access to sanitation services. A recent study conducted by Lumanti in 392 informal settlements in nineteen municipalities in the country shows that 51 per cent of the settlements do not have access to toilet facilities. Travellers, pedestrians, street vendors, street children and homeless people living on the road in the central areas are unreached due to the lack of access to public toilets. Ownership to land and housing is mandatory for households to have access to WASH services, which has proved to be a big hindrance in reaching them. There is still a low level of awareness of the special sanitation need of girls, women, *Dalits* and senior citizens. Systematic implementation of sectoral policies and local innovations of WASH coordination committees, with consideration to disadvantaged groups, informal settlers, physically challenged and senior citizens, are required to reduce the existing gaps.

Sanitation Technology and Marketing

Various sanitation options needed to be introduced considering country's socio economic and ecological diversity. The SHMP emphasises promotion of toilets having permanent structures at least up to the pan (plinth) level. Upgrading of technologies is seen as a continuous process. The DWSS developed a standard latrine design and drawing in 2011/2012 for proper installation of toilets in different ecological zones, considering specific needs of local communities. The plain areas have technical difficulties in the construction of toilets due to the high water table. Single and double pits of concrete rings are promoted there. Ecological sanitation systems, eg. urine-diverting toilets and biogas-connected toilets, are being used in some areas. In rural areas, offset pit latrines are being promoted. In urban areas, septic tanks are common and in some places decentralised wastewater treatment systems that include anaerobic baffle reactors and constructed wetlands are also being used.

V-WASH-CC and other local committees and schools have been making arrangements for the supply of construction materials in local areas. Some committees produce materials themselves, some in partnership with private parties and some make arrangements for such materials at local level at the lowest possible cost, covering transportation cost. Some committees partly cover the cost of materials for the poorest families with funds raised from donations and VDCs' own funds. The role of the private sector has become vital to leverage resources and market expertise. To cater to higher demand generated through the social sanitation movement, the concept of sanitation marketing was piloted in four Terai districts by IDE Nepal with financial support of UNICEF in 2011/12. It had carried out an in-depth study to understand the real interest of local communities and offer most suitable and cost-effective latrine options and choices. Local ring producers were trained to produce standard latrine options (slabs attached with pan), and over 3,000 latrine sets were sold. UN-HABITAT, in collaboration with CODEF, as part of the Global Sanitation Fund (GSF) programme, developed a sanitation marketing strategy after a detailed market study of five

districts to address the needs of the sector and to engage the private sector in close collaboration with the WASH coordination committee. These pilots need further review, validation and revision by the WASH sector.

Knowledge Management and Networking

The different levels of WASH coordination committees are the key knowledge hubs of the sector, and they need to be more active in respect of knowledge management. The GoN's Country Paper on SACOSAN, the WASH sector status reports, a journal of water, environment and public health of Society of Public Health Engineers Nepal (SOPHEN), *Sarsafai Sandesh*, a newsletter on sanitation produced by the NSHCC Secretariat, *Sanitation Newsletter* and WASH training resource book produced by R-WASH-CC in the Mid-Western Development Region, publication of *WASH Newsletter* by Small Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project, report on NSW developed by DWSS and publication of e-newsletter by WASH Resource Centre Networks–Nepal are some of the key sectoral initiatives for knowledge management.

Similarly, the Central Human Resource Development Unit (CHRDU) and the National Information Management Project (NMIP) under DWSS have been collecting and documenting sectoral data and knowledge base. District, VDC and municipality-level strategic plans on sanitation systematically collect and document WASH sector data, list of stakeholders, including media and civil society organisations, technological options, key sectoral learning and monitoring indicators. National, regional, district, municipality and VDC-level conferences, workshops/seminars and learning visits are major platforms for gathering and exchanging knowledge and translating them into practice. The Joint Sector Review and Sector Stakeholders Group, the Municipality Association of Nepal, Federation of Drinking Water and Sanitation Users–Nepal, NGO Forum for Urban Water and Sanitation, WASH Resource Centre Network–Nepal, GSF programme and SOPHEN are promoting sectoral learning through networking and sharing of good practices.

Media Advocacy

The role of mass media has been clearly highlighted by the WASH sectoral policies, plans and strategies. The SMHP states the need for a separate communication strategy to mainstream media in hygiene and sanitation promotion and their participation in different coordination committees. It encourages local and national media (print and electronic, including FM radios) for study, cross-visits and monitoring, as well as dissemination of sectoral learning through print and electronic means.

The provision of WASH media fellowship, establishment and mobilisation of WASH journalist forums, press meets and press conferences are other supportive measures for strengthening media advocacy. NSAW, Nepal WASH campaign, International Year of Sanitation, End Water Poverty Campaign, Global Handwashing Day and World Toilet Day are platforms to engage media in the WASH sector.

Nepal's sanitation movement is significantly benefited by media advocacy. Media have contributed to the sector by taking part in the monitoring and verification of the ODF

declaration process, publishing news, views and case stories about sectoral activities and highlighting success stories. The mass media have effectively highlighted pertinent issues like policy compliance, sustainability of ODF, gender sensitivity and social inclusion, user-friendly technology, issues of unreached, sanitation-related epidemics, etc.

Media's creative engagement in sanitation events and festivals, ODF declaration ceremonies and joint monitoring process has helped make sanitation issues more prominent, lively and appealing. For example, propagation of hot news on diarrhoeal outbreaks in the western part of the country in 2009, live broadcasting of the launching of the SHMP event by the President of Nepal, and live broadcasting of ODF declaration and WASH conferences are some of the remarkable contributions of media which helped facilitate policy-level dialogues and discussions and wider advocacy and sensitisation. Besides, mass media have published and highlighted many emotionally charged stories, which has contributed to propel the ODF movement.

Local Leadership

The local body's leadership and implementation of joint plan of action on sanitation at local level are the key essence of the Master Plan. Based on the spirit of decentralisation and Local Self-Governance Act 1998, local bodies have developed sanitation strategic plans to achieve the ODF status within the national target of 2017. Strategic plans have been endorsed by the respective councils. District WASH coordination committees are initiating a single basket programming approach, where all the interventions and estimated budget are proposed for implementation by all governmental and non-governmental agencies. Regular review and monitoring of progress status are carried out through field visits and quarterly and annual review workshops.

Municipalities and VDCs are leading local-level coordination, stakeholder mobilisation and monitoring and are propelling the overall sanitation social movement innovatively. Community-level actors, such as child clubs, female community health volunteers, Community-based Organisations (CBOs), social mobilisers and local social leaders, are taking responsibility for household and community-level promotional activities and awareness building. They are generating resources from different sources at local level, sharing responsibilities among all actors and applying innovations in the field. Local partners are effectively participating in the planning, mobilisation, campaigning and capacity-building processes. This ensures local-level leadership, empowers individuals and institutions, enhances ownership, builds trust among each other and strengthens collective work culture. All these learning gained in the WASH sector through horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms could be adopted and replicated in other development sectors for synergy and impact.

Examples of Good Practices

A Practical Model for Sanitation Promotion in Morang District

Morang district, with sixty-five VDCs and one municipality, lies in the Eastern Development Region of Nepal. A District-level Strategic Plan on sanitation has been developed, which stakeholders have adopted along with the slogan ‘San 2015 Morang Basi Ko Mul Mantra’ (ODF by 2015 is the motto of the people of Morang). As of now, eight VDCs have been declared ODF and twenty-two other VDCs are in the pipeline of being declared ODF. Strategically, this year is being marked as the Year of Sanitation, and personnel concerned of all VDCs have prepared VDC-level ODF strategies and action plans. District WASH coordinating committee has ensured required support to all V-WASH coordination committees for realising their plans.

In Mirgaulia VDC, there are about 3,000 households. A local NGO named Matri Bhumi, formed by local women groups, is facilitating awareness-raising programmes. V-WASH-CC has been formed with representation of all wards. For each ward, one member has been assigned as coordinator. Many of these coordinators are women and also members of Matri Bhumi. The VDC has appealed to each and every household to construct a toilet in the given timeframe. It is raising awareness among people and also motivating them to become a role model in sanitation. The cost for conducting sanitation campaigns, including establishment of a revolving fund, rewards and recognition to be offered during the ODF declaration event, mobilisation of CBOs, conducting training and provision of local transportation for staff comes out to be only Rs 300 (US\$3) per household, which is quite nominal. The VDC is also planning to provide some support to ultra-poor families using locally available resources. This could be considered as a practical model. The success of this model is a result of empowered women groups, minimum use of financial resources, strong local leadership, innovative approach and wider application of locally promoted tools. Therefore, this innovation could be a viable model for scaling up sanitation.

A Motivational Message from Gela VDC in Kalikot District

Gela is one of the VDCs situated in a remote part of Kalikot district in the Mid Western Development Region. Brahmins, Chhetris and Dalits are the major castes living in the VDC. There are 693 households in the VDC, of which only 5 per cent had toilets before the sanitation movement. Human faeces could be seen everywhere—foot trails, public places, villages, stream banks, in and around the jungle and school surroundings, which gave off smell and had grave health impacts. A local saying ‘Gu Aayo Gaun Aayo’ (If you see faeces, you are entering the village) had been the identity of the local communities. People were not aware of the importance of toilets, hand-washing with soap, washing utensils, proper management of domestic waste and human excreta, safe handling of water and caring of children's health. Various diseases like cholera, worms and diarrhoea were frequent and were the main causes of child deaths under five.

In order to address the problem of their village, the villagers undertook a number of steps such as i. Formation of task force committees; ii. Activation of VWASH coordination committee and mobilisation of women groups, students and child clubs, teachers, local CBOs, youth network, mass media and cadres of political parties; iii. Formation of ward subcommittees and mobilisation of volunteers; iv. Assessment of local problems and development of plans of action; v. Implementation of plans of action through awareness programmes, training in and demonstration of hand-washing with soap, use of safe water and food, demonstration of sample toilets; vi.

Generation of local resources and development of a special support package for the ultra poor; and vii. Mobilisation of local resources such as stones, stone slates as pans, tree branches and bushes for super structure as part of local knowledge, skills and innovation. Finally, the local people achieved 100 per cent sanitation coverage and successfully declared the VDC as an ODF zone.

For sustaining and moving towards total sanitation, the VDC also formulated norms such as prohibition of open defecation, imposing of fines, regular monitoring and distribution of sanitation identity cards. Now, people in this village have been enjoying comfortable life and have been able to de-tag the stigma of 'Guhe Gaun' (village with faeces).

Proper packaging of local knowledge and skills, ownership and leadership has become a unique innovation to falsify the commonly-held notion that ODF is difficult in geographically and economically deprived communities. This is why Gela VDC's initiatives could be considered as a way forward for other VDCs working to achieve sustainable ODF status.

Future Plan for Meeting National Targets

Nepal's national target is to achieve universal sanitation coverage by 2017. The Master Plan focuses on sustainable changes in hygiene behaviour, proper use of toilet and proper waste management in urban and rural areas. For achieving the national sanitation target, it has set three milestones: toilet coverage of 60 per cent by 2012/13, 80 per cent by 2014/15 and universal toilet coverage by 2016/17.

Majority of districts, municipalities and VDCs have developed area-specific plans and targets and extracted commitment through local conferences and gatherings. Their plans and leadership have been fully accepted and honoured by sectoral line agencies and development partners. Training of local triggerers is taking place in a coordinated manner and trained triggers have been intensively mobilised to achieve the set targets at all levels.

In this process, local bodies have allocated significant resources available from local block grant provided by the central government to ensure each and every household, including the most disadvantaged and deprived household, has installed a latrine within the given time frame. The concept of a revolving fund, sanitation mart, reward, donation and other innovative approaches and financing modalities have been introduced by addressing the specific requirement at local level.

The Government has recently developed a special sanitation package for eight Terai districts having the lowest sanitation coverage. Regional and district-level conferences have been held to build consensus for jointly implementing the plan. The GoN will give special priority to operationalisation of the commitment, and all development partners have heartily welcomed this initiative and expressed their commitment to support this special initiative. In order to address emerging challenges of urban areas, integrated urban environment programmes have given special emphasis to management of waste and wastewater. In addition, the Clean City Programme launched by the MoUD gives special emphasis to systematically addressing the challenges of the urban sector.

SACOSAN Commitments

At the fourth South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN), held in Colombo in Sri Lanka in 2011, the SACOSAN member countries made various commitments for better sanitation. These include recognising the right to sanitation; time-bound plan with increasing fund allocation; context-specific equitable and inclusive sanitation programme; WASH in school; one national body for coordination; monitoring mechanism with indicators and defined roles.

The draft constitution of Nepal acknowledges the right to sanitation, and the Government is committed to achieving universal sanitation coverage by 2017 through a country-wide sanitation programme, adopting the Master Plan.

The data released by the CBS in 2011 indicates significant increase in sanitation coverage (62 per cent) at national level and massive expansion of the ODF campaign across the country. Fund allocation at centre, district and community level is gradually increasing.

The concept of one body coordination (WASH coordination committee) has been formally institutionalized and is operational from centre to local level. D-WASH-CC is the focal body in the district for formulating strategies for district-wide sanitation.

The total sanitation movement led by VDCs and municipalities with initial target of ODF communities gives due consideration to equity and inclusion issues and issues in the community.

Communities have realised that toilet construction is a prime responsibility of the family, and community-managed funds are required for supporting the ultra-poor and marginalised people.

Schools, public buildings and public places are part and parcel of the ODF movement. The MoE has taken full responsibility of ensuring basic WASH facilities in school.

Self-monitoring at school and village level has become a basic norm for all sanitation and hygiene interventions. Village-level ODF initiatives and toilet standards are monitored by D-WASH-CC.

The MoUD has been keeping record of the results of the sanitation movement and disseminating them through sectoral meetings and publications. The monitoring mechanism, with all indicators, needs to be further strengthened in line with the spirit of the SHMP, SACOSAN declarations and decisions of the Inter Country Working Group (ICWG) meetings.



Vice President Paramananda Jha inaugurating the first Terai Conference on Sanitation in Janakpur, 2013

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