

Successful Sanitation: Investigating Gender Equality in India's National Sanitation Programming

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Anonymous
Organisations

*(Intrinsic to research,
unable to publicly
acknowledge)*

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Gender :

“Gender refers to the **socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities** of girls, women, boys, men, **and gender diverse people**. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society.”

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Gender Considerations:

Social:

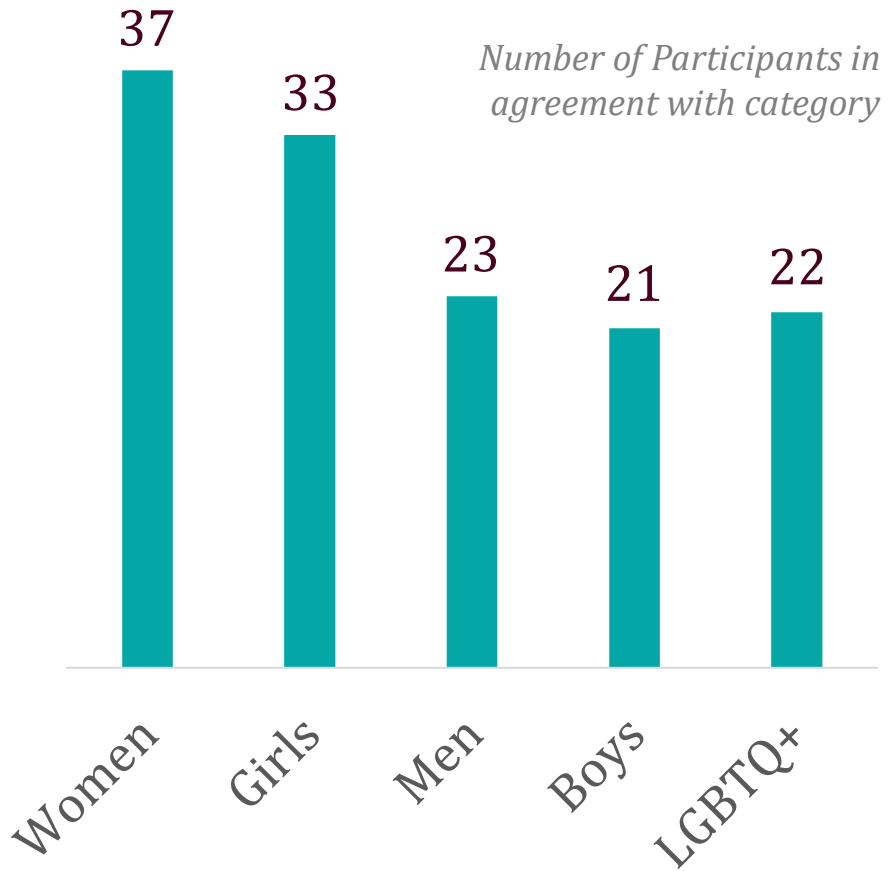
- Access to political spaces...

Technical:

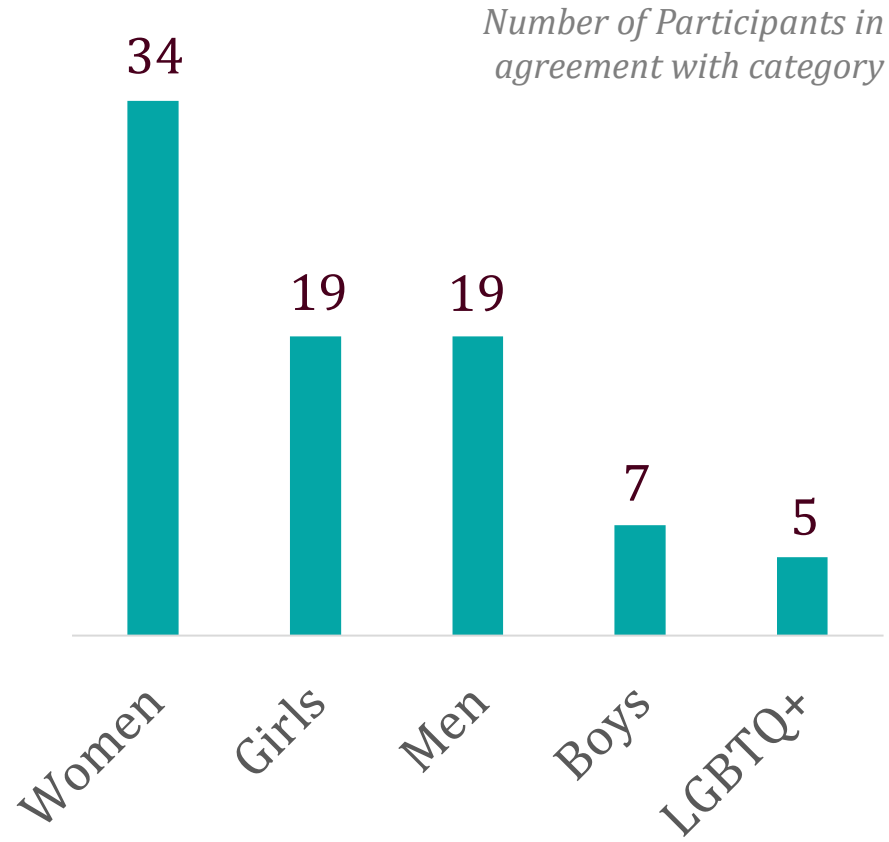
- Available menstrual health facilities...

- *E.g. Violence, gender and WASH toolkit*
- *E.g. Female Friendly Toilet Guide*
- *E.g. Guidelines on Gender issues in Sanitation....*

Who Should be included when it comes to Gender?



Who does get included when it comes to Gender?



“The dictionary definition and actual practice don’t match”

(Participant A: Charity Sector, Male)



*Data taken from: Intention vs Reality: An Analysis of Gender Inclusion in WASH Projects, Robinson et al (Under review for Publication)

National WASH Focus, with Explicit Gender Guidance; Awareness of Gender beyond women (*inc. LGBTQ+ identities*)

Multiple Stakeholder levels.

Where:

India
North & South

What:

**Swachh
Bharat**
(2014-2019
originally)

Who:

**Practitioners,
Activists,
Government**

How:

**Interviews
and Focus
Groups**



Swachh Bharat:

- National Mission Phase I: 2014 – 2019 // Phase II: 2020-2025
- Aim: Achieve elimination of open defecation by 2019
- Budget: ₹2,300 crore (*US\$28 billion*), with ₹12,000 (*US\$150*) per toilet
- Phase 1 ≅ 9 Lakh (*90 million*) Toilets Built

Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen (Rural)) Guidance:
Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (now Jal Shakti)

Inc: privacy, menstruation,
gender based violence

Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) Guidance:
Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs

No gendered Components



North India:
New Delhi, Delhi
Japiur, Rajasthan



South India:
Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Hyderabad, Telangana

3 Focus Groups:

2 Women's Self-help, 1 Differently Abled

23 Interviews

WASH Practitioners, Activists, Academics,
Government Personnel

(Purposive sampling across Water@Leeds, Gender and Development Network, LinkedIn & Twitter)

7 Government Officials

22 Wash practitioners and Activists

10 men *(KII only)*

19 Women *(KII only)*



Minimum Standards

Guidelines on Gender issues in Sanitation (SBM-G), 2017, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

“Issues mentioned for your consideration”

Gender Responsive Guideline Under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), 2020, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

“Key recommendations” / “NGOs, donors, governments, and private sector actors—needs to be more intentional about bringing a gender lens to the work”

Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0, 2021, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

“All infrastructure created under the Mission, be it toilets, ... to have gender friendly features”



“Gender equality is a priority, I think has been told to me 10, 20 times. Every time I try and ask what does that mean?”

Does it mean there's an enforceable Act? Does it mean there's monitoring? Does it mean there's 300 rupees going to this specific area to work on gender equality? There's never an answer”

NGO, Telangana

“Government know the guidelines are not being followed, and they're not particularly worried. They know that eventually some organisations like us will step up”

NGO, Telangana

“We are not contemplating more, this is too difficult, and we did not design for that. Also it isn’t necessary, presently everyone is very happy”

Government Personnel, Telangana

Funding

Competing interests

Financing Gender / Sustainability / Climate Change...

Donor Landscape Influenced by Government

External messaging says open defecation free (ODF)

Limited Targeted Funding specified

Government annexure does not highlight budgets

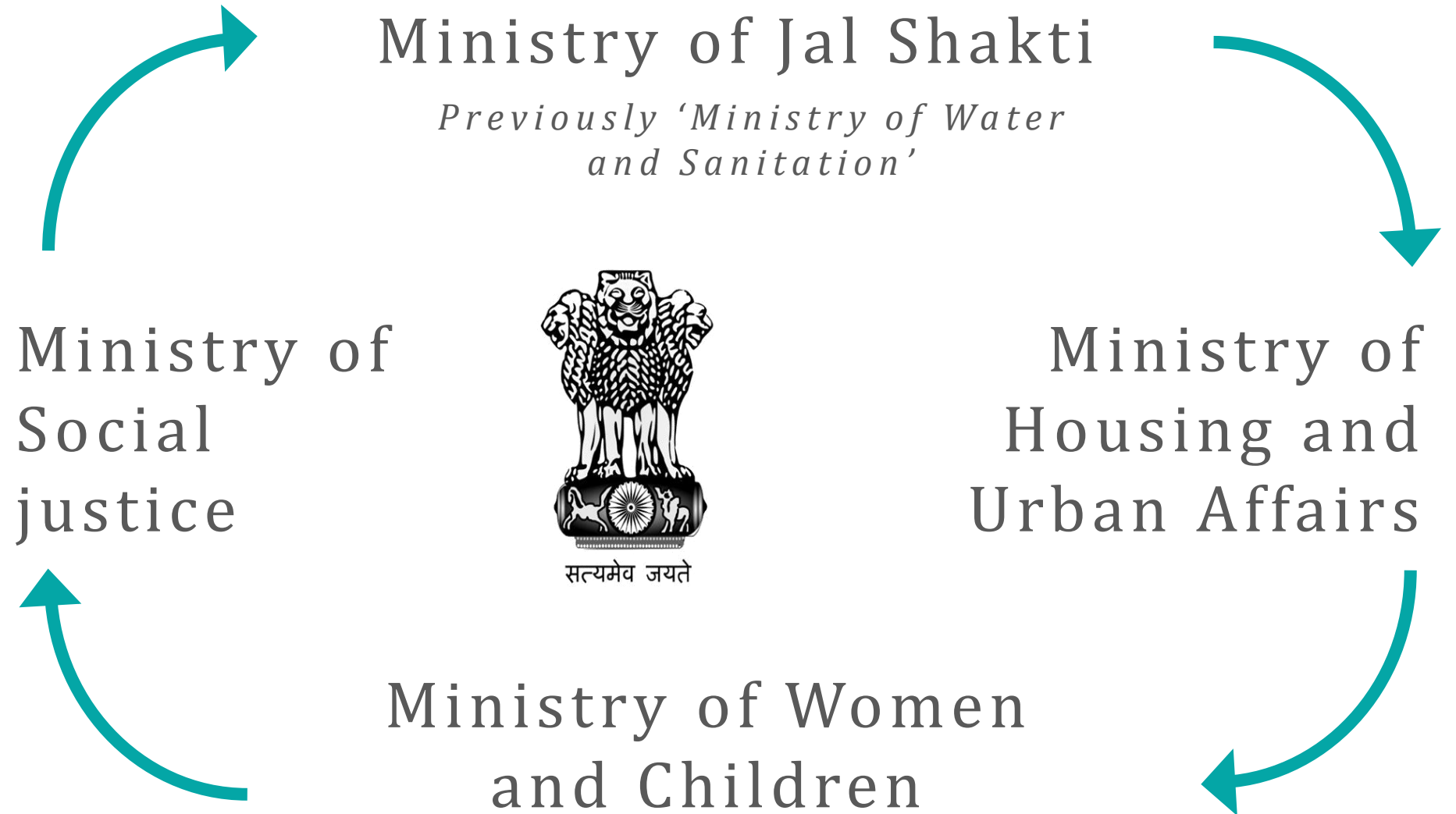


**“Donor eco-system is saying
*‘We thought India is already ODF. Why are you
talking about sanitation?’***

**So, it's very difficult to ask for money for
sanitation today.”**

NGO, Telangana

Government Coordination



**“You are mistaken, you need women and children
as this is a gender issue”**

**“For Anything transgender related you need to go
to social justice”**

“You’re dealing with WASH, go to Jal Shakti”

*Government Personnel across various Ministry
departments, New Delhi*

Gender Identity visibility

Transgender Persons Bill, 2016

“(1) A transgender person shall have a right to be recognized as such, in accordance with the provisions of the Act”

National WASH Conclave, 2022

“Transgender people shall be allowed to use gender-based toilets as per their self-identified gender”

.... This does not account for social barriers...



“They have their own choice of selecting which toilet they want to use. But when there is no facility, how? when there is no acceptance, how? If They are standing at the door, but you are not letting them in, then how”

NGO, Rajasthan

**“I have not ever seen any discrimination
for transgenders in any way”**

Government Personnel, New Delhi

**(in response) “I do not have words to say
much I disagree *Laughter*”**

NGO, Rajasthan

“People are speaking up but they are not getting proper platforms [to actually] speak. Only few activists, few leaders are talking, talking, talking, but then the others are not getting a proper platform to speak.”

NGO, Rajasthan

Transparency around language for decision makers

Increased clarity for Government coordination

Prioritisation of targeted funding alongside policy

Consequences for avoiding guidelines

Open platforms to raise issues and be heard



Thank You!

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