Achievable Toilet Sanitation

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The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) began tracking water and sanitation access towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for water and sanitation for 2015. However, many countries still do not have widespread access to water and sanitation. For example, Ethiopia went from 92% practicing open defecation to 29% by 2015. More than 47 countries still do not have widespread access to water and sanitation. As of 2019, India claims they have gone from 39% to now 95% of rural households having access to various types of toilets as shown in Figure 2.

In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set a goal of an open defecation free India by the 150th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi in 2019. Young professionals were recruited to interact with village councils, utilizing smart phones to track locations and upkeep of toilets, media and the internet to spread the message, and also using celebrity participation. Modi publically used the taboo Hindi word for excrement. Officials participated in photo ops while helping to build toilets. Women were trained as masons and encouraged not to marry unless the prospective husband put in a toilet. Railies were organized. A real-time public dashboard showed numbers of toilets (Curits, 2019b).

As of 2019 Indian claims they have gone from 39% to now 95% of rural households having access to various types of toilets as shown in Figure 2. The WHO (2012) estimates $1 in sanitation produces an average of $5.50 benefit (see Figure 1).

### International Monitoring & Goals
- The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) began tracking water and sanitation access in 1990.
- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for water and sanitation from 2000 to 2015 planned towards 88% and 77% by 2015, respectively.
- By 2010, MDG met project target for safe drinking water.
- By 2015, 2.1 billion gained access to sanitation (WHO/UNICEF, 2015).
- Ethiopia went from 92% practicing open defecation to 29% by 2015.
- 2.4 billion still without access to improved sanitation.
- More than 47 countries still do not have widespread access. The 2015 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations (UN, 2015).

### Improved Sanitation Options

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2018) invested $200 million and announced another $200 million for sanitation technology. Innovations in unimproved sanitation include open defecation, shared latrines that lack privacy, or other sanitation methods with insufficient pathogen reduction of fecal material. The most affected regions are sub-Saharan Africa, Southern and Eastern Asia, Afghanistan, and Iraq (CDC, 2016). Without private toilets, girls reaching puberty are also less likely to continue school. Improved sanitation can contribute to increased human potential, human rights, and gross domestic product.

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### Clean India - Swachh Bharat

Two children from the ‘untouchables’ caste in the village of Bhavkhandi were apparently beaten to death for open defecation. One of the fathers said they lack toilets and have struggled to gain access to the government subsidies available to finish one (BBC News, 2019a).

Sanitation work is reserved for Scheduled Castes, officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged communities” (BBC News, 2019b, paragraph 2). They not only contract diseases, but the work perpetuates discrimination and stigma for these groups, especially when they must scavenge for excrement from the higher castes and carry it away from households by hand or pails or baskets (BBC News, 2019b).

Many say they preferred open defecation as it “provides them an opportunity to take a morning walk, see their field, and take in the fresh air” (Coffey et al., 2014, p. 53). It is felt a part of a ‘wholesome, healthy, virtuous life.’

Success at improving sanitation has been exaggerated. In particular, many locations have been declared open defecation free while conditions have not improved. The subsidies are not paid all at once, making it difficult to start the building or quickly finish. Many toilets being counted are non-functioning (Allur, 2019).

Areas were pressured into twin leach-pit toilets not suitable for their location, such as either in a low-lying year-round with access to the personal flooding, compelled to hand over subsidies to certain contractors, left using improper materials, and even prematurely remove waste (Das & Sengupta, 2019).