

Introduction

Tamil Nadu is one of the most important states in the country being the seventh most populous state with a population of 72 million according to the Census, 2011. It is one of the most urbanized states with 35 million living in urban areas. There are 32 districts in Tamil Nadu and around 16,317 villages. Traditionally Tamil Nadu has done well in the areas of health and education. However as far as sanitation (often called the “orphan MDG”) is concerned Tamil Nadu does not fare well with 57% of households in the State not having access to a toilet facility.

SELECTED INDICATORS

U5 Mortality: 27
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR): 22
Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR): 97
Total Fertility Rate (TFR): 1.7
Crude Birth rate: 15.9
Literacy Rate: 80.33



Snapshot

Tamil Nadu is only one of three states, along with Kerala and Maharashtra, to cross the 11 Plan target for maternal mortality rate reduction. While all States reported continuous increases in institutional deliveries, the highest levels were in Tamil Nadu, with a large number of primary health centres providing caesarean section facilities. An important factor is the State’s fully functional blood storage centres which have strong linkages with various health units. Antenatal services are strong with proper identification and follow-up for cases of severe anaemia, with adequate remedial measures put in place.

However the Census 2011 figures on the state of sanitation in Tamil Nadu present a grim picture with little improvement from the previous decade. Even today, 45.7% of the state's population resorts to open defecation due to the absence of proper sanitation facilities. The situation is worse in rural areas where only 2% of the population is covered by the pipeline sewerage system. As a result, over 73% of rural population defecate in the open.

Even the state's Total Sanitation Scheme, introduced in 2006, failed to change the practice of open defecation by becoming a target-oriented programme, and hence losing its momentum. Though toilets were constructed, they became dysfunctional due to various reasons. Inappropriate selection of toilet models, lack of superstructure, water scarcity, lack of technical support in case of failures are the main reasons for poor performance. Lack of sustained Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programmes has left thousands of toilets being unused.

Concerns

- Need to educate and create awareness around sanitation practices and to highlight the linkages with public health.
- Lack of coordination across departments and therefore the paucity of an integrated approach.
- Immense need for cost-effective and environmentally sustainable options
- Need for capacity building and training which currently relies on stand-alone isolated and sometimes redundant training and skill development programs under separate schemes.
- Lack of data which is required for good urban planning and management, for understanding local needs. Information on the sanitation facilities that exist including demographic, institutional, technical, social information is missing.

Action Points

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create awareness of proper usage, regular upkeep and maintenance of the household, community and public sanitation facilities; and its linkages with public and environmental health• Promote public-private partnerships to provide technical assistance and support for awareness generation and capacity building.• Increase the knowledge and promoting the adoption of healthy sanitation and hygiene practices among the individuals and the households,• Develop capacity of program implementers to consider relevant approaches to promote hygiene and sanitation• Support national, district, VDCs/Municipality and other partners in BCC Strategy planning, implementation and evaluation and assist in developing cultural and local issues oriented BCC materials on sanitation and hygiene and• Provide technical assistance for capacity building, IEC/BCC and social mobilization and support initiatives in developing target specific BCC programs• Strengthen media - utilization to increase the coverage on sanitation and hygiene and organize and conduct training/workshops as need arise as well as assist in need identification or need assessment• Target interested NGOs, CBOs, SHGs and resource institutions to play important roles in providing field training, monitoring, mobilization and problem solving. |
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