



Drop in Open Defecation: Wash Report

Why in News

According to a **new report by the Wash Institute** (a global non-profit organisation), **India** was **responsible for the largest drop in open defecation since 2015**, in terms of absolute numbers.

- Universal access to **water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)** to achieve the [United Nations -mandated Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 6](#) was also emphasised.

WASH

- WASH is an acronym that stands for the interrelated areas of **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**.
- The [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) WASH Strategy 2018-25](#) has been developed in response to Member State Resolution (WHA 64.4) and the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being, SDG 6: Clean Water And Sanitation)**.
- It is a component of **WHO's 13th General Programme of Work 2019-2023** which aims to contribute to the health of three billion through multisectoral actions like better emergency preparedness and response; and one billion with [Universal Health Coverage \(UHC\)](#).
- It also takes on board the need for progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking-water and sanitation, adopted by the [UN General Assembly](#) in July 2010.

Key Points

- **Findings of the Report:**
 - **On Open Defecation:**
 - Within India, open defecation had been highly variable regionally since at least 2006 but **by 2016** open defecation had **decreased in all states**, with the largest drops seen in **Himachal Pradesh and Haryana**.
 - Progress in curbing open defecation in **sub-Saharan Africa was slow**.
 - **On SDG 6:**
 - **Between 2016 and 2020**, the **global population** with access to safely managed drinking water at home increased to **74%, from 70%**.
 - There is an improvement in **at-source water resources** and **onsite sanitation systems**.
 - **At-source water resources** include piped water, boreholes or tubewells, protected dug wells, protected springs, rainwater and packaged or delivered water.
 - **Onsite sanitation system** is a system in which excreta and wastewater are collected, stored and/or treated on the plot where they are generated.
 - There was an **increase in safely managed sanitation services to 54%, from**

47% between 2016 and 2020.

▪ **Challenges:**

- In order to ensure **long-term sustainability of both centralised and decentralised sanitation, proper funding and investment** was required.
- The Report also talked about **hygiene**, especially in the context of the **novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19)**.
 - In June 2020, the **World Health Organization** and **Unicef** jointly launched the **'Hand Hygiene for All' initiative**, which aims to improve access to handwashing infrastructure as well as stimulating changes in handwashing practices where facilities are available.
 - **Handwashing facilities with soap and water** increased to **71%, from 67%**.
- However, **3 in 10 people worldwide could not wash their hands with soap and water at home during the Covid-19 pandemic** due to lack of water resources.

▪ **Open Defecation:**

- It refers to the practise whereby people go out in fields, bushes, forests, open bodies of water, or other open spaces rather than using the toilet to defecate.
- It poses a serious threat to the health of children in India.
- It exposes women to the danger of physical attacks and encounters such as snake bites.
- Poor sanitation also cripples national development, by diverting people's hard-earned money towards out of pocket expenditure on health (leading cause of dragging people into poverty), rather than productive investment like education.

Some Government Initiatives

▪ [National rural sanitation strategy:](#)

- The **Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS)** under the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** has launched the **10-year Rural Sanitation Strategy** starting from **2019 up to 2029**.
- It lays down a **framework to guide local governments, policy-makers, implementers and other relevant stakeholders** in their planning for **Open Defecation Free (ODF) Plus status**, where everyone uses a toilet, and every village has access to solid and liquid waste management.

▪ [Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen Phase-II:](#)

- It emphasizes the **sustainability of achievements under phase I** and to provide adequate facilities for **Solid/Liquid & plastic Waste Management (SLWM)** in rural India.
- Under the **Swachh Bharat Mission (G) Phase-I**, more than 10 crore individual toilets have been constructed since the launch of the mission; as a result, rural areas in all the States have declared themselves ODF as on 2nd October, 2019.

Open Defecation Free (ODF), ODF+, ODF++ Status (for Town and Cities)

- **ODF:** An area can be notified or declared as ODF if at any point of the day, not even a single person is found defecating in the open.
- **ODF+:** This status is given if at any point of the day, **not a single person is found defecating and/or urinating in the open, and all community and public toilets are functional and well maintained**.
- **ODF++:** This status is given if the **area is already ODF+ and the faecal sludge/septage and sewage are safely managed and treated**, with no discharging or dumping of untreated faecal sludge and sewage into the open drains, water bodies or areas.

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/drop-in-open-defecation-wash-report>

