

Facts and benefits of investing in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Improved sanitation can avert 7 per cent of diarrhoeal deaths, reduce 44 per cent cases of diarrhoea and has the potential to reduce stunting by 8 per cent.
- Cost of building a toilet is about Nu 5,000 whereas inpatient cost for treatment of diarrhoea is Nu 8,112.
- Handwashing with soap can reduce diarrhoea by 44 per cent and Acute Respiratory Infections by 23 per cent.
- WASH in schools can improve the health of schoolchildren and improve attendance rate especially for girls by upto 23 per cent.
- For every 10 per cent increase in female literacy (due to increased school attendance where proper sanitation facilities exist), a country's economy can grow by 0.3 per cent (*Brocklehurst, 2004*).



Situation of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Bhutan

- Significant progress in the water and sanitation sector - coverage of improved water source had increased to 98 per cent in 2012 compared to 54 per cent in 1990, thus achieving the Millennium Development Goal on providing access to improved water source.
- Only 58.4 per cent of the population have access to improved sanitation. The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) considers Bhutan's progress on ensuring access to improved sanitation to be insufficient.
- About 42.6 per cent of the children are growing up in homes vulnerable to disease outbreaks.



According to data from the BMIS 2010:

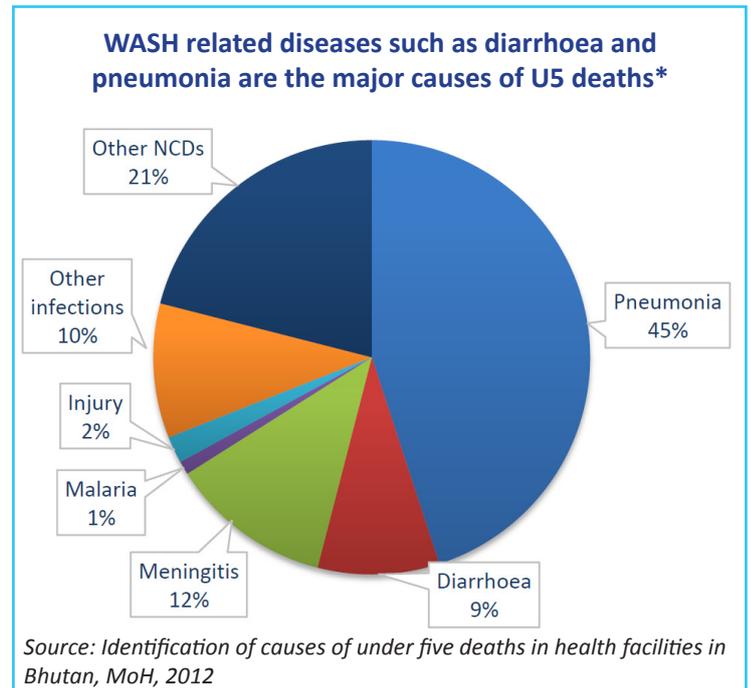
- Unsafe disposal of child faeces is associated with a 30 per cent higher risk of children under the age of 3 having diarrhoea.
- 95 per cent of schools in Bhutan have a functional water source (WASH in Schools Evaluation 2013). However, according to Annual Education Statistics 2013, only 65 per cent of the schools have a water source that is functional five to seven days a week.
- In schools, 72 per cent of boys' toilets and 76 per cent of girls' toilets are fully functional. Girls' toilets are in-adequate in lower and middle secondary schools.
- WASH situation in monastic schools and nunneries is worse with coverage and functionality below 60 per cent.

Universal access to improved water and sanitation at homes and in schools should be targeted for a child to survive, thrive, grow and develop to their full potential



What has been done?

- The Royal Government together with development partners like UNICEF and SNV have promoted access and use of sanitation facilities through demand creation under the Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Programme.
- UNICEF has supported WASH in Schools, including monastic schools and nunneries through installation of facilities and hygiene promotion.
- 98% have access to improved water source and 71% have access to improved sanitation facilities (BLSS 2012).
- Global Hand-Washing Day is now observed in ALL schools across the country. Handwashing with soap has become a popular daily activity in schools.



What needs been done?

- Access to improved water source has increased from 54 per cent to 98 per cent. But functionality, quality and safety of water is still a major concern and needs to be improved.
- About 42 per cent of children in Bhutan are growing up in vulnerable homes. Access to improved sanitation and safe disposal of child faeces needs to be promoted at homes.
- About 30 per cent of schools still do not have a functional sanitation facility.

Key Partners:

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Works and Human Settlement
- Parliamentarians
- Religion and Health Project
- CSOs such as Bhutan Nuns Foundation
- Community leaders
- Media
- Development partners such as SNV

KEY MESSAGES:

- Access to improved sanitation is part of the “unfinished agenda” of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for women’s and children’s health. This is critical to ensure that the country achieves its MDGs with Equity and Inclusion.
- Investing in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene can easily avert half of all under-five deaths in the country.
- Universal access to improved water and sanitation at homes, schools, monastic schools and nunneries and other institutions should be targeted for a child to survive, thrive, grow and develop to their full potential.

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