

Gender and Social Inclusion Issues across Sanitation Chain in Tamil Nadu: Assessment and Strategy Development

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Urban sanitation : Not just a physical chain

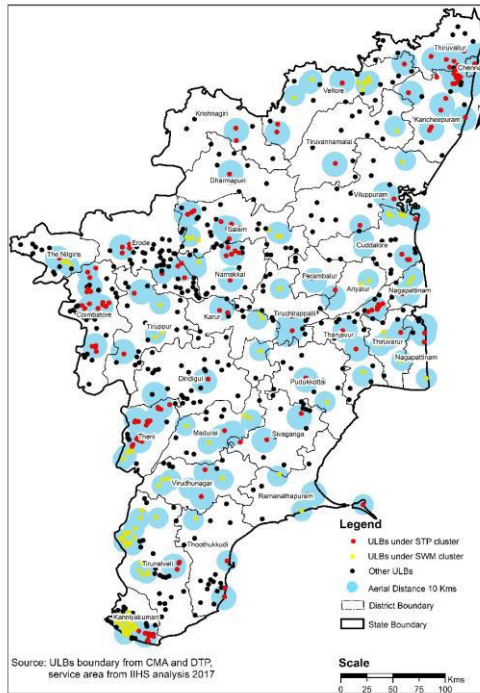


Tamil Nadu Urban Sanitation Support Programme

1 Scaling FSM across **663 towns** covering a total urban population of **25 Million**

State Investment Plan laid down a phase wise approach →

\$2 billion sanctioned for 75% of urban population



2 Scaling through:

- Co-treatment (and existing sewer networks)
- FSTPs



50 STPs | 79 ULBs | 10 M pop.

59 FSTPs | 113 ULBs | 4 M pop.

3 While ensuring:

- Creating an enabling environment and institutional framework for FSM
- Engaging the Pvt. Sector
- Kakkaman – A BCC campaign for FSM
- Capacity Building: Sanitation workers, Masons, & ULB officers trained
- Health camps for sanitation workers

Context : Gender & Sanitation

❑ Most literature/research so far focusses on:

- Water : Accessibility concerns, unequal distribution of responsibility
- Rural sanitation
- Menstrual Health Management (MHM)

❑ While sanitation programmes specifically focus on :

- Design of Individual Household Latrines (IHHL) & community/public toilets:
 - getting women involved in construction of toilets,
 - facilities for safe disposal of MH products and for pregnant women,
 - Operations & maintenance
- Addressing the deficit of sanitation facilities in public spaces – e.g.: Right to Pee movement, Mumbai
- Women's safety while accessing facilities

❑ Gaps:

- *Focus has been primarily around access & containment*
- *The sustainability of current gender sensitive programmes is a concern.*



Understanding GSI in the FCS

- Gender and social inclusion (GSI) concerns along the FCS is an **identified research gap**
- Study conducted in **two locations** in Tamil Nadu
- **Methods:** Field visits, interviews, and focused group discussions
- **Sample:** 118 stakeholders - 73 women, 4 transgender people and 41 men



Could build on stereotypes

e.g.: Targeting women as primary custodians of sanitation



Harm caused by inconsideration of GSI

e.g.: Unsafe location of CTs



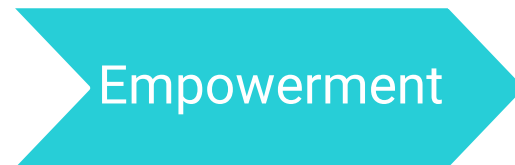
Focus on health & well-being

e.g.: Universal access to toilets



Building on equal rights to safe WASH

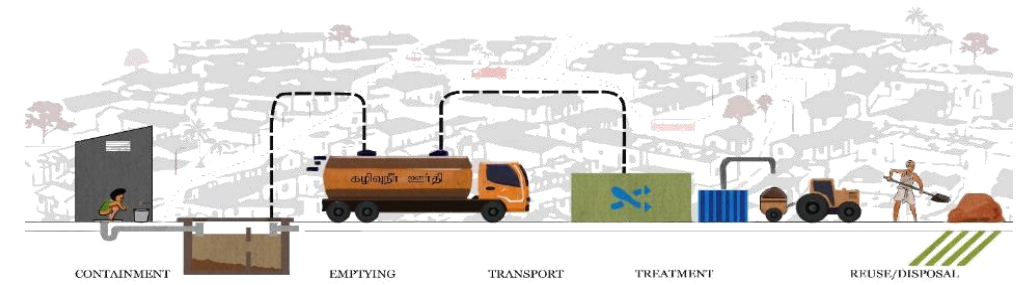
e.g.: Caste-based division of labour in toilet construction & maintenance



Increasing the power of stakeholders, individually & collectively

e.g.: Enabling women entrepreneurs across the FCS

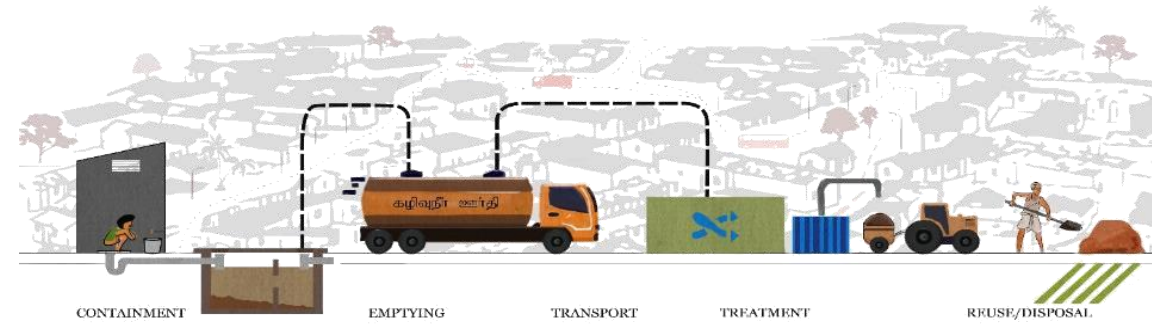
GSI : Efficiency



While the efficiency rationale continues with existing approaches, the other four effectively challenge and make cases for adopting a new approach.

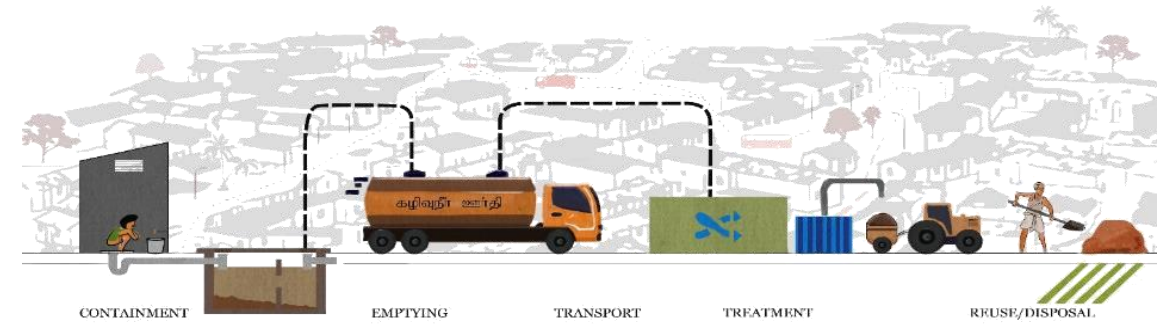
Issues	Access & containment	Emptying & transport	Treatment & Reuse
Primary findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on women as 'users' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on traditional roles - Few women in desludging companies are in customer service and finance, but none in ownership Assigning roles such as breaking the dried sludge, cleaning of tanks to men, while cleaning toilets and fetching water for the same to women 	??
Literature findings/ Existing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy on individual household toilets should target women as they are the primary custodians of family hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited documentation

GSI : Do No Harm Lens



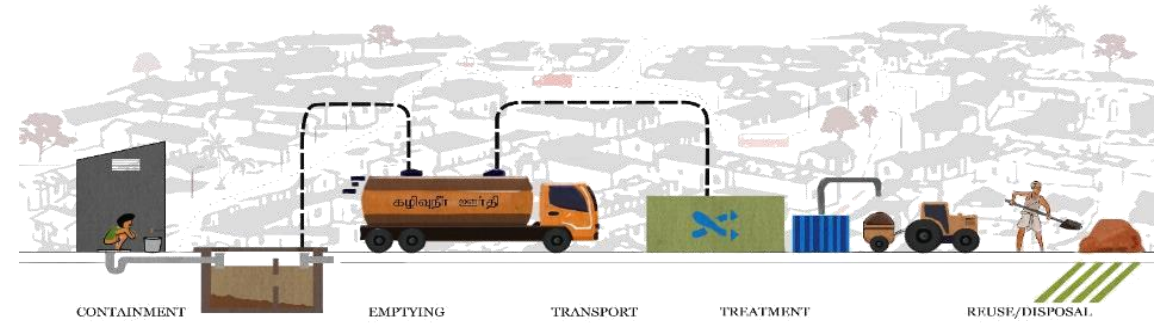
Issues	Access & containment	Emptying & transport	Treatment & Reuse
Primary findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety concerns for women are unaddressed – poor lighting, missing doors & latches, unsafe locations • Informal sector workers (e.g., Construction/ sanitation workers) lack toilets at workplaces • Men and women cleaners (mostly Dalits) complain of improper toilet use and clogging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of desludging helpers inadequately considered 	??
Literature findings/ Existing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative that men should uphold women’s prestige by providing them toilets • Toilets could increase work burden of women when accompanied by lack of access to water and strategies to reinvent gender-based roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited documentation

GSI : Welfare Lens



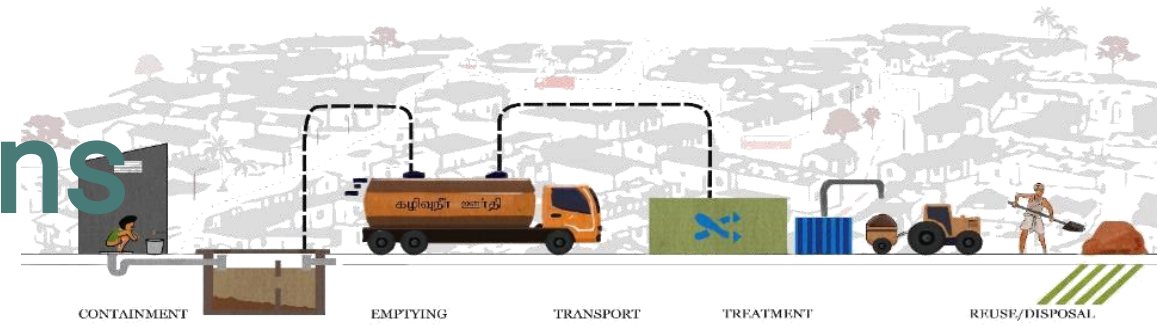
Issues	Access & containment	Emptying & transport	Treatment & Reuse
Primary research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design needs of elderly, disabled persons and children not fully addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private / contract sanitation workers lack access to social welfare schemes Lack of appropriately designed safety gear for desludging has bearing on worker safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At decanting stations, STPs and construction sites there is no provision for toilets or menstrual hygiene products Remote location is a concern
Literature findings/ Existing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to IHHTs and CTs are weak in informal urban settlements 	Limited documentation	Limited documentation

GSI : Rights Lens



Issues	Access & containment	Emptying & transport	Treatment & Reuse
Primary research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenancy and space factors impede building toilets for urban poor Prevailing social stigma and mixed reactions from fellow users on transgenders people using the CTs Lack of water and poor maintenance of CTs affect usage, having differential impact on women and girls Women and men in construction have unequal access to training for masonry. Women play secondary role to men in construction & earn less 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanitation workers (mostly Dalits) face stigma and discrimination based on both caste and occupation despite rendering critical services Majority of informal sanitation workers are women, making them vulnerable due to lack of job security/access to related benefits 	??
Literature findings/ Existing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of access to toilets for urban poor affects women & girls in particular Requirements for toilets for transgender people could differ by location, and require context specific solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited documentation

GSI : Empowerment Lens



Issues	Access & containment	Emptying & transport	Treatment & Reuse
Primary research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varying involvement in maintenance/oversight through community/women’s groups in operation & maintenance from location to location Decision making largely rests with men e.g.: Construction of toilet structures are made by men and are not based on knowledge on building norms and/or preferences of women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male DSOs (mostly Dalits) are trained for mechanised cleaning with very few women involved Individual women/women’s groups rarely have the capital and capacities to buy a truck and desludging equipment, hire helpers and engage in desludging operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no women’s groups yet running/formed to run shops to sell fecal sludge manure or briquettes in sites visited There are no examples of women engineers coming together to bid for contracts for constructing, maintaining and managing FSTP units
Literature findings/ Existing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 25% of women in construction trained as masons continued in the field Women SHGs are not necessarily empowered to play a role in other parts of sanitation chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of systems to ensure women are holding technical positions & leadership roles (E.g.: Plant operators, contractors)

Gender & Governance

Primary findings:

- Imbalance in official positions, especially in senior roles across cadres.
- Lack of gender responsive budgeting and assessment of gender-specific effects of expenditure & revenue
- Absence of sex-disaggregated data to inform programmes/policies/projects
- Lack of enabling environment for taking up WASH related livelihoods (access to credit, lack of reservations in tender openings, etc)
- Institutional as well as cultural, economic and societal factors limit women's opportunities and abilities to participate in decision-making

Gender & Sanitation: Policy Landscape

Policy/Programme/Guidelines	Gaps
National Urban Sanitation Policy, 2008	Focus limited to access, does not cover the FCS, sanitation issues of transgender people are not discussed
Operative Guidelines for Septage Management, GoTN, 2014	Considers all stakeholders, but not specific to women
Menstrual Hygiene Management, 2015	Recognises complexity of MHM, but is limited to adolescent girls, does not include women in reproductive age group
Fecal Sludge and Septage Management Policy, 2017	Recognises need to involve both genders in planning sanitation infrastructure
Swachh Bharat Mission – Rural, Gender and sanitation, 2017	Great attention given to access, but does not cover the FCS

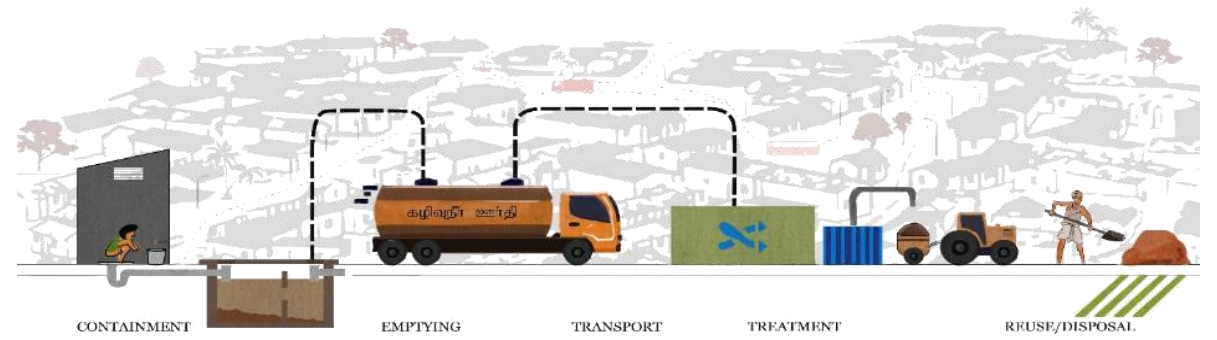
SBM-U Guidelines, 2020 – A step ahead

- Recognises the intersection of gender with FCS, WASH, MHM, SWM, social & cultural aspects etc.
- Positions employment opportunities for women as key, along with convergence, access to credit and capacity building
- Looks at GSI in design and execution
- Proposes a city level framework for GSI
- Implementation remains to be seen

Findings and Way Forward

- Many of the existing policies/ programmes focus on GSI from efficiency or welfare perspective
 - Some actions might violate principle of 'Do No Harm' e.g., reinforcing gender roles, ensuring toilets for women safety normalises violence etc.
 - Limited evidence of GSI across the FCS
 - Sanitation programming focused on 'women as users'
-
- Advocate for policies and guidelines on sanitation from the perspective of GSI
 - Ensure gender sensitivity in programming of WASH projects
 - Address research gaps on GSI issues across the FCS
e.g., access for transgender people, decision making at household level, gendered differences for re-use
- Strengthen women's agency along the full cycle:
- Create opportunities for women professionals
 - Recognise challenges along the career trajectory and move towards leadership
 - Build capacities and support women entrepreneurs

Way forward



City Level

Access & containment	Emptying & transport	Treatment & Reuse	Cross-cutting
<p>Women as Users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring access to gender-friendly toilets Regulating user fees of private desludging operators to ensure concessions for the poor, poor women-headed households, and other excluded groups 	<p>Facilitate ergonomically designed equipment/tools/vehicles</p>	<p>Ensuring sex-disaggregated rest rooms and bathing areas & safety for sanitation workers in all FSTPs/decanting facilities</p>	<p>Women as Professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and training to take up jobs/tenders along the FCS & linking them to relevant institutions Piloting GSI standards E.g.: 20% of drivers of de-sludging trucks are women

State Level

Budgeting and Programming

- Allocate budgets for promoting GSI related to sanitation
- Allocate budgets for GSI training of all ULB and State-level staff

Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building

- Build GSI capacities of different institutions at the State and ULB level
- Integrate GSI into sanitation-linked recruitment processes
- Conduct capacity building workshops to sensitise officers on GSI and mainstream it in programme planning and implementation
- Establish committees to deal with harassment



Link to Relevant resources:

1. TNUSSP, 2019. [Gender and Social Inclusion across the Sanitation Chain in Tamil Nadu: Assessment and Strategy](#)

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