



# The TNUSSP Quarterly

*April – June 2023*

**iihs**<sup>®</sup>  
INDIAN INSTITUTE FOR  
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS



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Since 2016, the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS)-led Tamil Nadu Urban Sanitation Support Programme (TNUSSP) has been working with the Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN) to ensure universal access to safe sanitation in the state. TNUSSP has spearheaded the scaling of Fecal Sludge Management (FSM), as a Technical Support Unit (TSU) to the GoTN, to assist in delivering the Total Sanitation Mission.

In this edition of the quarterly, we present the highlights of our work from April to June 2023. We hope you enjoy reading it.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in our work!

# PROGRAMME UPDATES

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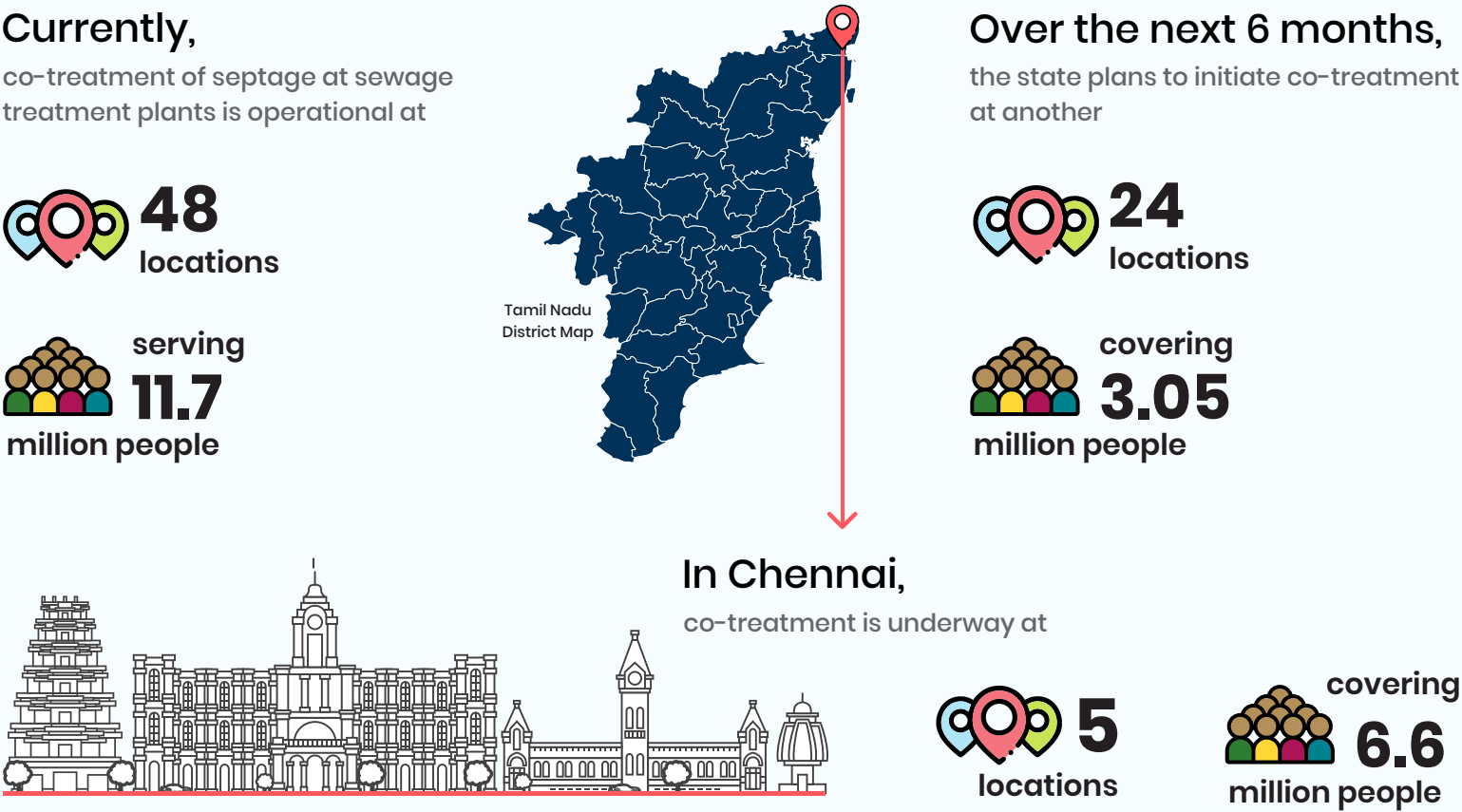


# Scaling FSM in Tamil Nadu

The GoTN is set to provide FSM services to 25.24 million people in the state. There are 32 operational Fecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs), covering a population of 2.10 million. The construction of an additional 19 FSTPs—with the capacity to cover 1.22 million people—is nearing completion. The GoTN has also initiated the installation of STP-cum-FSTPs in 12 locations, intended to cover 0.47 million people.

Co-treatment of septage at sewage treatment plants is operational at 48 locations. Over the next six months, the state plans to initiate co-treatment at another 24 locations. In Chennai, co-treatment is underway at five locations.

TNUSSP is providing technical support, quality assurance and implementation support to make these initiatives possible. It has supported the Directorate of Town Panchayats (DTPs) with infrastructural designs and drawings, and in drafting the



Bills of Quantity. The programme has also trained over 100 staff members of the Directorate of Town Panchayats (DTP) in 50 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) on operating and maintaining these facilities.

Measures are also being initiated to improve existing facilities and maximise their

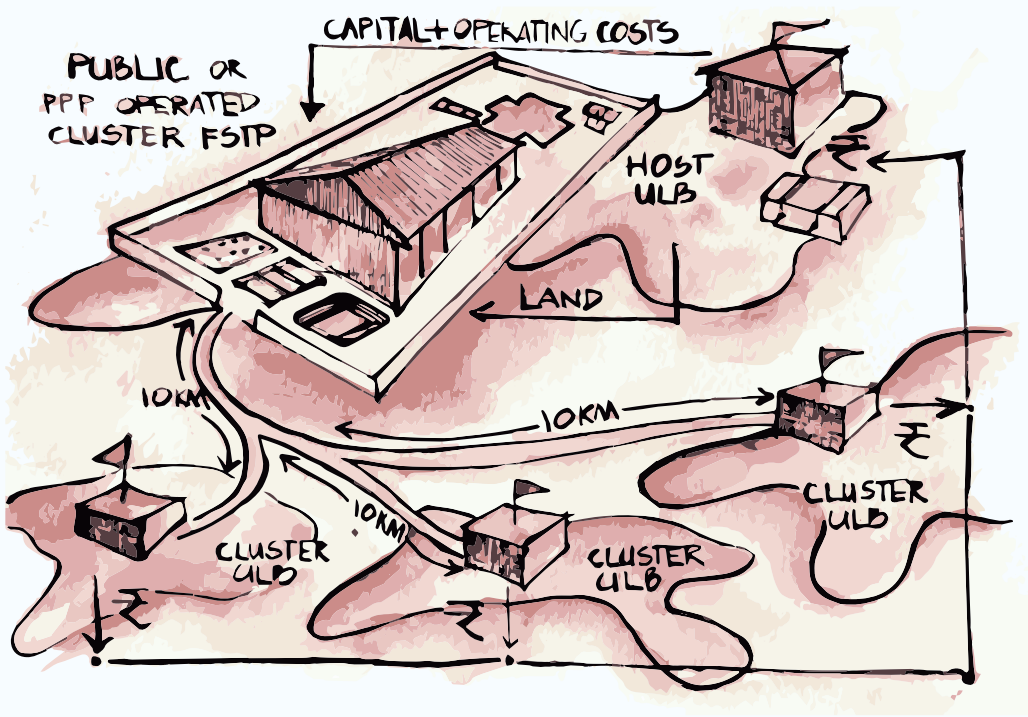
utilisation. TNUSSP supported the Tambaram Municipal Corporation in revamping its co-treatment facility, allowing four decanting vehicles at a time. A recommendation has been made for higher-capacity submersible sewerage pumps to handle the increased load.

# Going Beyond the Urban

TNUSSP introduced the clustering approach to increase the utilisation of treatment facilities while expanding the reach of safe sanitation services. The approach allows ULBs to ink MoUs with other ULBs or village panchayats to share the services and costs of treatment facilities.

GoTN aims to cluster 9,344 of 12,525 village panchayats in the state with nearby treatment facilities, providing FSM services to 74 per cent of the rural population. The clustering also increases the utilisation of treatment facilities by 10-15 per cent. So far, 381 village panchayats have signed MoUs with nearby ULBs.

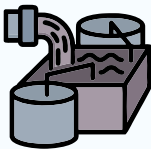
This approach encourages de-sludging operators to empty loads at designated decanting facilities, helping the government in its significant initiative to reduce contamination of public water bodies.



GoTN has plans to cluster  
**9,344 of 12,525**  
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# Experiments with Innovative Tech

TNUSSP is studying the sustainability of various models of service provision at Community and Public Toilets (CT/PTs) through a pilot study at nine facilities in Zone 13 and 14 of the Greater Chennai Corporation. Parallely, the programme is also conducting trial runs of innovative technologies in containment and treatment at three CT/PTs.

Two facilities in the city - at Annanedunsalai and Kottivakkam - have been equipped with Newgen Community Reinvented Toilets (CRT) developed by the University of South Florida, while a facility in Kovalan Nagar has been fitted with Aquonic CRT designed by SCG, Thailand. These facilities are currently on trial runs and showcase novel and available approaches for containment and treatment that are environmentally sustainable.



# 'Rights at Workplace' Training for Sanitation Workers

Advancing gender equity is an integral component of the IIHS-led City Wide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) programme in Trichy. To empower women sanitation workers to understand their workplace rights, CWIS is conducting a series of training sessions. Close to 600 women sanitation workers have participated in these sessions, held at their residential settlements.

The sessions focus on breaking gender stereotypes at work, highlighting their right to equal pay, grievance redressal mechanisms and gender-friendly infrastructure, and addressing Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) policies and entitlements for women. Participants have been given toll-free helpline numbers of one-point centres and women's police cells.

The first training session was conducted at Ambedkar Nagar in Trichy on 5 May 2023.



# Sanitation Workers Welfare Board Card Distribution

The TNUSSP and CWIS programmes have been supporting sanitation workers in the state in getting enrolled with the Sanitation Workers Welfare Board. The membership makes them eligible for cash assistance in case of sudden death, health emergencies, and marriages.

On 17 June 2023, the TNUSSP team facilitated the distribution of the Sanitation Workers Welfare Board cards to 25 sanitation workers at the Kottivakkam Kuppam Community Toilet Complex in Tamil Nadu. The event was presided over by Ms Dhanalakshmi, District Manager - Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited (TAHDCO).

During the event, the team engaged in discussions with the workers about the challenges and opportunities of their profession, and the importance of using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and gloves for their safety and health. The workers also shared personal stories of how their profession has empowered them and improved their living conditions.



# OUR CAMPAIGNS



# WOMEN IN SANITATION 2023: Amplifying the Voices of Women Sanitation Professionals

The Women in Sanitation (WIS) campaign is now in its fourth edition. Since 2020, WIS has documented and shared inspiring stories of 50+ women sanitation professionals and their allies. By creating a platform where these individuals have a voice, TNUSSP strives to foster year-round conversations on gender issues and promote equity within the sanitation sector. The campaign aligns with the International Women's Day theme each year.

## Empowering Women Professionals

The WIS campaign recognises that women's issues deserve attention throughout the year, beyond just Women's Day celebrations. It serves as a platform to amplify the often-muted voices of women working in various roles within the sanitation value chain in India. The

campaign's primary objective is to highlight the challenges faced by women sanitation professionals and celebrate their resilience and achievements.

## Expanding Horizons

In line with the evolving theme of International Women's Day, the WIS campaign has grown to encompass WASH professionals from around the world. Under the theme of International Women's Day 2023, "#EmbraceEquity," TNUSSP aims to capture the diverse and intersectional nature of women's work in the sanitation sector through the #WIS2023 initiative. The campaign urges us all to reflect on the vital elements necessary for women professionals to attain equity in terms of participation, visibility, representation, and leadership.



#EmbraceEquity | 2023

Eva Muhia

# WOMEN IN SANITATION 2023: Amplifying the Voices of Women Sanitation Professionals

## Collaboration for Change

TNUSSP recognises the importance of collaboration in addressing gender equity gaps within its sphere of influence. To achieve this, the programme collaborates with organisations worldwide, sharing powerful stories of women sanitation professionals to inspire positive change within the sector. Through these stories, the campaign seeks to inform and enlighten others on how we can collectively embrace equity and create an enabling environment for women professionals.

## Powerful Narratives

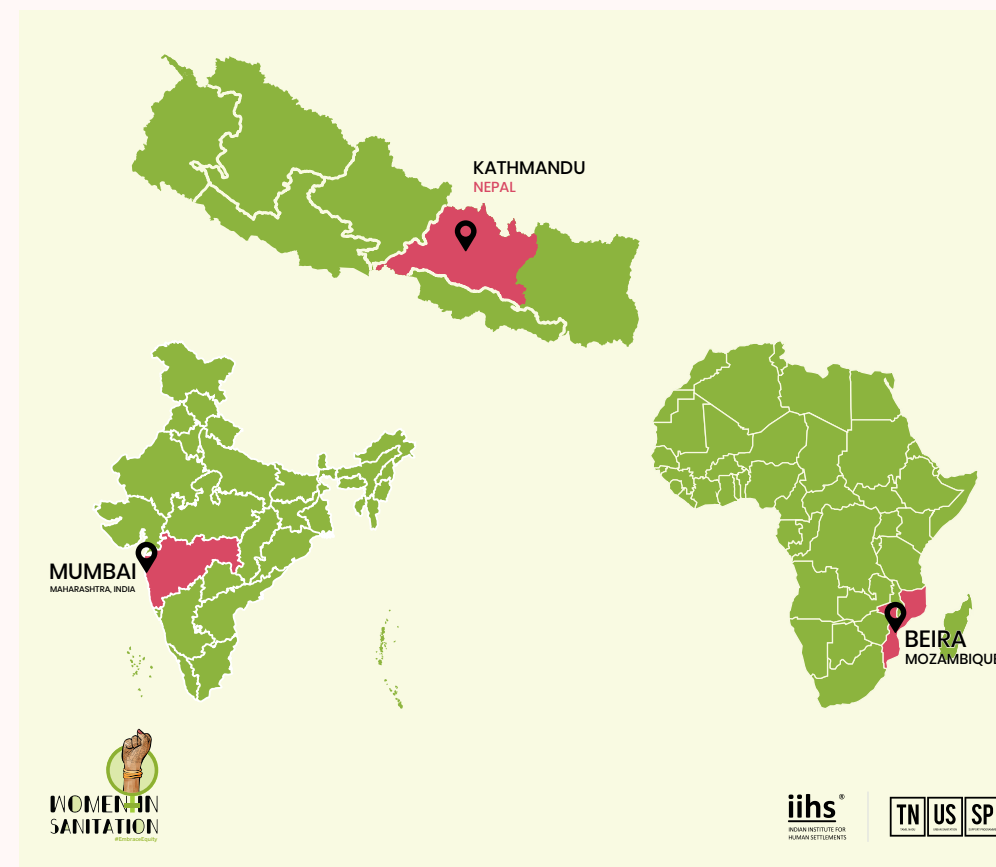
The heart of the WIS campaign lies in compelling short films that showcase the selected nominees. These films, released monthly on TNUSSP's social and digital platforms, feature women sanitation professionals and their allies from diverse contexts. By sharing their journeys, the films shed light on the

challenges these individuals have faced and the bold ways in which they have overcome them. From toilet caretakers and waste collection operators to researchers and directors, the films celebrate the resilience and accomplishments of these exceptional professionals.

## Join the Movement

Since its launch on International Women's Day 2023 (March 8), TNUSSP has released 10 #WIS films, with many more to come. To stay updated with the latest releases and be part of this empowering movement, do visit [the Women in Sanitation 2023 YouTube playlist](#).

If you know someone deserving of recognition for their contributions to the sanitation sector, TNUSSP invites you to nominate [them through the provided link](#).



# We Speak Too, by Sanitation Workers



The fifth edition of TNUSSP's seminar series, We Speak Too, was conducted in Patna, Bihar, on 29 April 2023. The event, attended by over 100 participants from the city, provided a platform for eight sanitation workers to express their concerns and viewpoints on the theme of 'The City and Us: Social Protection'.

The seminar offered the audience firsthand insights into the manifold challenges faced by sanitation workers in their professional and personal lives, with boundaries between work and family responsibilities often becoming increasingly blurred.

The session focussed on social protection and accessibility of diverse social welfare schemes aimed at providing financial support, facilitating social mobility, and safeguarding against economic setbacks.

Moderated by Madhurima Raj, the panellists raised concerns regarding the availability of information and access to various welfare schemes offered by both the central and state governments. Several key challenges were identified, including inadequate documentation, scarcity of information, and administrative reluctance to link sanitation workers to the relevant schemes. Moreover, the complexities arising from migration and gender exacerbated the existing difficulties.

We Speak Too has adopted a distinctive

model within the country, where academicians and activists assume a listening role, allowing the sanitation workers to lead the discourse and contribute to research, practice, and policy initiatives. With a showcase of over 40 sanitation workers thus far, this initiative stands as a unique platform that foregrounds the voices of sanitation workers, enabling them to share their concerns, opinions, and aspirations. By bringing together diverse types of sanitation workers, the campaign will create a comprehensive chronicle of their challenges and opportunities.

The We Speak Too campaign intends to empower sanitation workers by amplifying their voices and shedding light on the urgent need for social protection measures within the sector. With each session, this initiative aims to advocate for the rights and well-being of those at the forefront of maintaining safe sanitation in our communities.

[Click here](#) to watch the sessions!

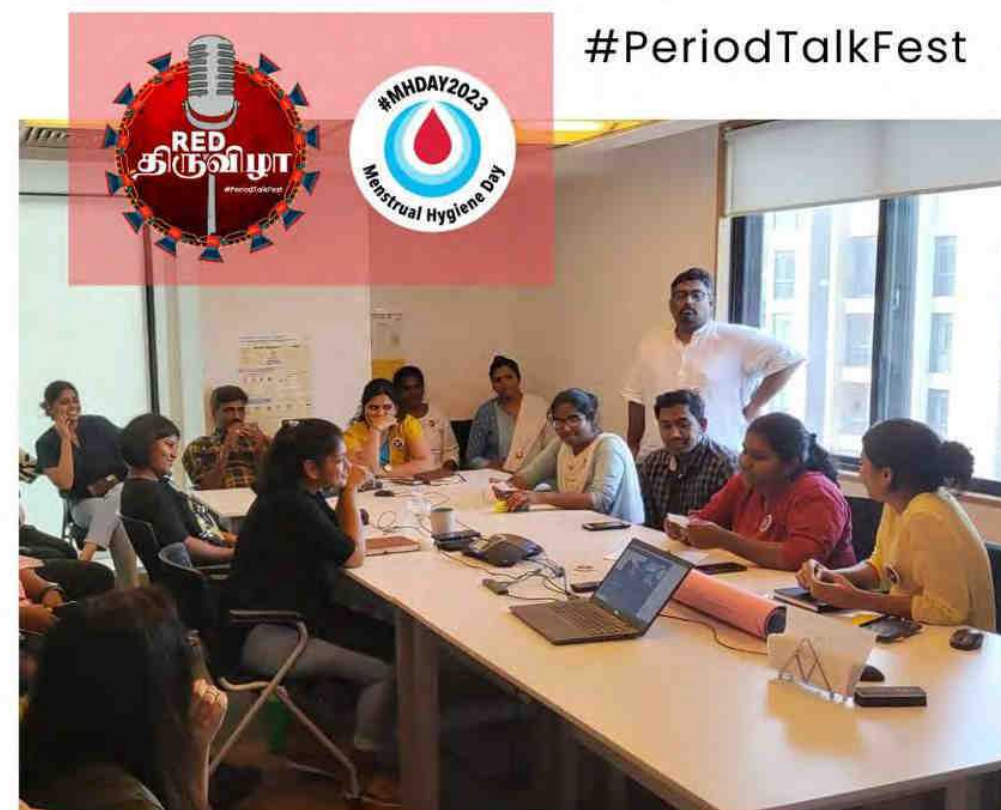
# Red Thiruvizha 2023



#EmbraceEquity | 2023

**Catarina  
Mavila Magaia**

Recognising that menstrual health management poses distinctive challenges within the WASH context, TNUSSP launched a special edition of 'Women in Sanitation' films in May to commemorate #MenstrualHygieneDay (May 28). These films showcased professionals actively engaged in menstrual health management, shedding light on a range of issues, including the pervasive lack of awareness and the dangerous normalisation of period pain.



## #PeriodTalkFest

The IIHS team in Chennai observed #MenstrualHygieneDay by organising an in-house event called #PeriodTalkFest. The team members engaged in an open discussion, sharing personal narratives about their initial encounters with menstruation. They tackled critical topics related to period stigma, premenstrual syndrome, and period-related mental health concerns. The team members took pledges to actively break period stereotypes and foster a more progressive and inclusive attitude toward menstruation.

# EVENT SPOTLIGHTS



# TNUSSP at 54th Creative Pills, iDE Innovation Lab

Kavita Wankhade participated as the session speaker at the 54th edition of iDE Creative Pills on Scaling Inclusive Sanitation: A Focus on Gender. Drawing on lessons from TNUSSP, she spoke about perspectives on integrating gender and related aspects of equity and inclusion into urban sanitation planning and programming. Kavita highlighted points from the organisation's gender and social inclusion study and summarised emerging issues across the full chain of sanitation along with relevant recommendations. She provided an overview of initiatives for integrating gender in sanitation with a focus on initiatives for women professionals, as well as TNUSSP's livelihood initiatives and campaigns.

Creative Pills is a one-hour talk series to build a creative and innovative community at iDE Cambodia. It features a 30-minute talk, followed by a Q+A session, and is organised by iDE Innovation Lab.



# Presentation on Climate Change and Urban Sanitation (UTS-ISF)

IHS was invited by the University of Technology, Sydney's Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS-ISF) on 8 June 2023 to present a practice-based case study on urban sanitation and climate change. The presentation was part of a module on the Climate Change and Water Short Course (6-weeks online) offered by the Australian Water Partnership (AWP). The course is for practitioners, policymakers, decision-makers, students, utility directors and employees of water associations. The presentation drew on TNUSSP's experience, covering learnings from the effects of extreme events on sanitation systems in Tamil Nadu, as well as the programme's responses across the sanitation chain to changing climate conditions.

Thirty five participants from several countries in the Pacific region attended the session.

The AWP includes Griffith University (International Water Centre); Alluvium Consulting; the University of Newcastle; and the UTS-ISF.





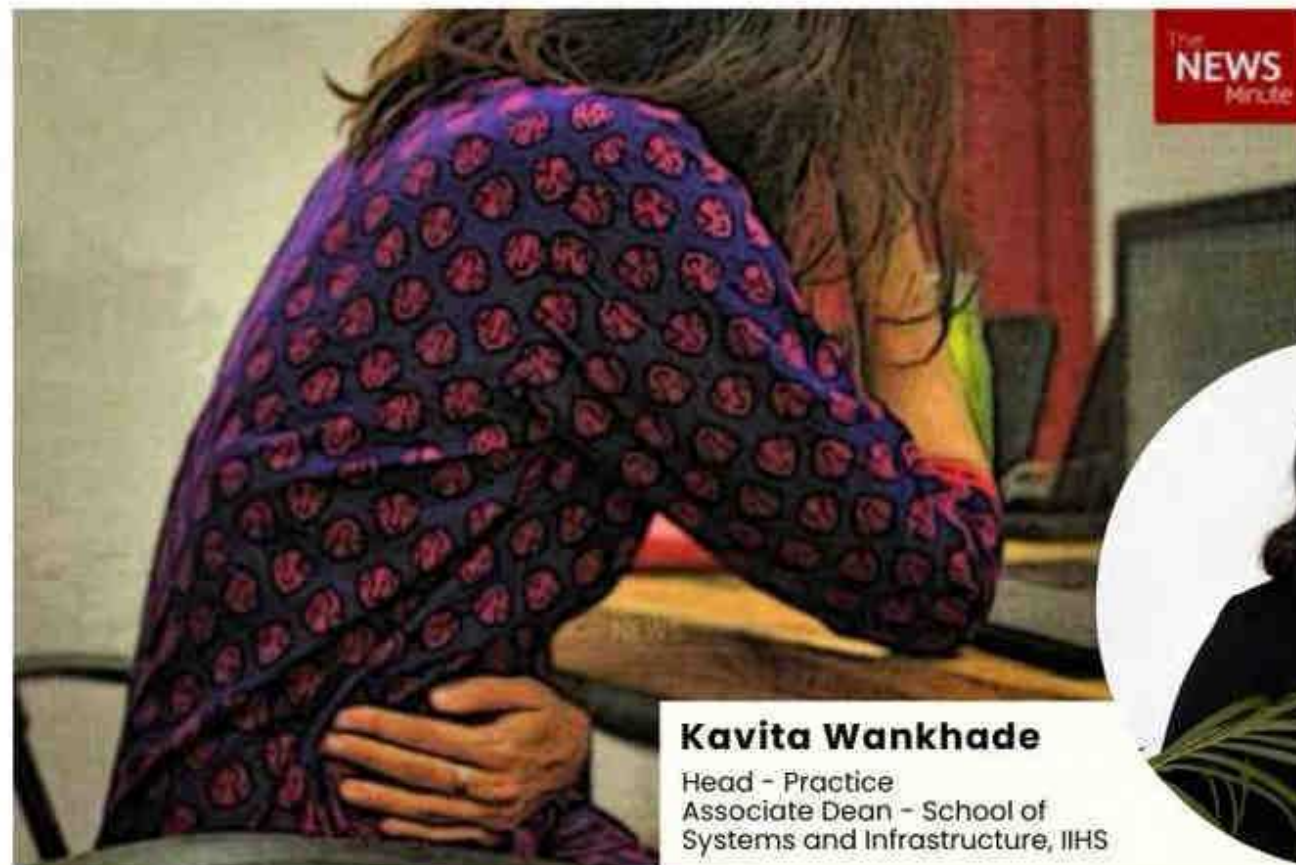
# The Hush Around Menstruation

"For most of us, shame is an all-too-familiar companion, and all that differs are our coping mechanisms. But perhaps nothing shames us as much, as persistently, and for as long as the fact that we menstruate", says Kavita Wankhade, Head — IIHS Practice, in an article in The News Minute about the systemic shame surrounding menstruation in India and the price menstruators pay right from their first period up to menopause.

Read her article here: <https://lnkd.in/guk-M-nN>

## Systemic shame surrounding menstruation is alive and thriving, everywhere

The secrecy and lack of information about menstruation come at a huge cost. Not only do we not want to talk about this biological function, we also do not wish to see any evidence of it.



**Kavita Wankhade**

Head - Practice  
Associate Dean - School of  
Systems and Infrastructure, IIHS



# THE WAY FORWARD



# TNUSSP Moves to Phase III of Operations

Having successfully demonstrated the viability of FSM as a sustainable solution to scaling up urban sanitation and institutionalising it in Tamil Nadu, IIHS-led TNUSSP is now moving into its third phase of operations. In this phase, TNUSSP will strive to integrate inclusive sanitation in government systems and strengthen the ecosystem. The focus will be on scaling inclusive and equity-based initiatives, building on the experience of implementing the CWIS programme in Trichy. This phase will also focus on instituting knowledge repositories based on TNUSSP's work within government systems to create a self-learning environment for the ULBs and other sanitation stakeholders.

**More details about Phase III will be covered in the next edition of the Quarterly. Stay tuned!**



# About Us

The Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) is a national education, research, practice and capacity development institution committed to the equitable, sustainable and efficient transformation of Indian cities and settlements.

A proposed Institution of Eminence (IOE), IIHS aims to transform the current nature of urban education as one of the most important drivers for India's national development and sustainable global futures. Its interdisciplinary approach to research and practice helps build new global knowledge and train urban professionals.



Since 2016, the Tamil Nadu Urban Sanitation Support Programme, a consortium led by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, has been proactively supporting the Government of Tamil Nadu in making improvements along the entire urban sanitation chain in cities. We work towards strengthening septage management as an economical and sustainable complement to network-based sewerage systems and aim to scale Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) across 649 towns in the state, covering a total urban population of 30 million.

Visit our [website](#) to know more about our work

Reach us at: Floor 7A, Chaitanya Exotica, 24/51 Venkatnarayana Road,  
T Nagar, Chennai 600 017. Phone: +91 44 6630 5500 / 6555 6590



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