

Achievements to date:

- WaterAid now helps around 75,000 people to gain access to safe water and 45,000 people gain access to sanitation in India each year.
- We have organised national workshops on key issues facing the water and sanitation sector including urban challenges, climate change and water quality.
- Our disaster preparedness work in Bihar has been recognised by the state government, who has officially recommended it be scaled up.



WaterAid/Marco Betti

Pinki goes to school in Uttar Pradesh.



WaterAid/Marco Betti

“We learn that you need to wash your hands before eating food, after going to the toilet and before serving meals,” says Pinki. Her teacher, Sushmadwivebi, adds, “WaterAid’s partner Gramonti Sansthan teaches the children about hygiene. They hold competitions about hygiene and give the children prizes like pens. They also built the latrine. If there is sanitation and hygiene in schools then the families can save lots of money and save themselves from diseases.”

Durga Rao is the handpump mechanic in Seetanagaram, Andhra Pradesh.



Martin Argles

Durga Rao, 23, a lower caste dalit, was trained by WaterAid’s partner as a handpump mechanic. “Before we had the pump we used to get frequent diarrhoea. Sometimes we threw up.” Durga says, “I used to feel very inferior. I was afraid. After learning mechanical skills I started talking to the upper-caste villagers. When they installed a borewell I offered to help them. Some of them didn’t want me to touch the well. But in the end they agreed.”

India



WaterAid/Marco Betti

India is a huge country with a population of more than one billion people and an incredible diversity of religion, language, customs and landscape. Although the economy is growing fast, there are enormous divides between rich and poor, with over 26% of people living in poverty. Population growth is rapid, particularly in urban areas.

Despite being home to 17% of the global population, India has just 3.5% of the world’s freshwater resources and water scarcity is rapidly becoming more acute. Less than a third of people have access to sanitation and diarrhoeal diseases are common, claiming the lives of over 300,000 children under five each year.

£3 could buy a bag of cement to produce a latrine slab

£26 could pay to train a hygiene education volunteer

£65 could pay for a composting latrine

£195 could pay for a toolkit to maintain a village water point

£390 could buy a rainwater harvesting tank for a school of 100 students

£650 could pay to build a hand-dug well



WaterAid transforms lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world’s poorest communities.



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WaterAid in India



WaterAid has worked in India since 1986. We work with around 50 local organisations in ten states to improve poor communities' access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation. We work in both rural and urban areas, developing ways of working that can act as models of good practice for the government and other organisations.

WaterAid believes local government and service providers should be accountable to the communities they serve. We support civil society organisations in mobilising people to actively demand their rights to improved water and sanitation services from local government agencies.

We prioritise meeting the needs of marginalised groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS, disabled people, members of the lower dalit

caste, tribal communities, women, children, and those living in urban slum and squatter settlements without any legal rights to water and sanitation services.

Rural work

The Indian Government has invested huge sums in increasing access to water in rural areas. However, it has concentrated on creating new infrastructure rather than maintaining existing systems. As a result, many water

points have fallen into disrepair.

WaterAid and partners empower rural communities to ask local governments to rehabilitate defunct water sources or develop new ones in remote areas. We help set up village water and sanitation committees who are trained in maintaining the new or restored water sources and are responsible for promoting good hygiene. We test water quality and help develop alternative sources where naturally occurring arsenic or fluoride are detected.

Rural sanitation coverage is very low and continues to be a big challenge. We focus on helping people understand why using latrines is important. As villagers learn that poor hygiene means disease, loss of productivity and costly medicines, they are inspired to develop their own solutions. We support them to access government latrine subsidies or to design and build their own simple latrines using local materials.

We promote good hygiene to school children, who can be powerful ambassadors for change as they will pass on messages to their parents and friends.

Responding to disasters

Droughts and floods are a serious threat to the sustainability of water and sanitation facilities. In drought-prone states such as Madhya Pradesh we help communities to channel rainwater and wastewater into the ground to replenish water tables. In flood-prone states like Bihar we help implement technologies that are more resilient to floods and have helped provide access to safe water and sanitation in camps for people displaced by floods.

Urban work

In urban areas WaterAid's partners often act as intermediaries between communities and city water authorities to negotiate connections to the city's water supplies. We help to establish communal, self-managed water points and sanitation blocks, which offer separate latrines and washing facilities for men, women and children. Women's latrines are fitted with menstrual hygiene facilities such as incinerators for sanitary pads.

The blocks are run on a cost recovery basis: money collected from users' fees covers the initial cost, water bills, attendants' wages and maintenance. We help communities to organise rubbish collection and build drains to tackle the unhygienic build-up of waste.

Advocacy

By demonstrating cost-effective, practical examples using appropriate technologies, we are able to influence the Indian Government's water and sanitation policies. We have persuaded the Government to change its sanitation subsidies to incorporate low-cost latrines and to emphasise the role of community organisations in ensuring water security in rural areas.

We undertake research and campaign on issues such as the need to protect access to drinking water within water resource management policies, and to put an end to the demeaning and unhygienic practice of manual scavenging, the job of physically removing human excrement from latrines.

Sheela Singh is a handpump mechanic in the Mahoba region, Uttar Pradesh.



"Women face big problems with no property rights, no housing and lower literacy rates. If a woman gets to 20 and isn't married she is sometimes asked to leave the village. There is also dowry debt and harassment. By becoming a mechanic and working in a group we have more control and this helps change people's attitudes."

India

Area:	3,287,590 km ²
Capital:	New Delhi
Other main cities:	Bhopal, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Mumbai, Tiruchirapalli, Patna
Population	1,140m
Infant mortality	68/1,000
Life expectancy	64 yrs
Water supply coverage	88%
Sanitation coverage	31%
Below poverty line	29%
Human development index	134
Adult literacy	63%
Annual child deaths from diarrhoeal diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation	320,000

Official statistics tend to understate the extent of water and sanitation problems, sometimes by a large factor. There are not sufficient resources available for accurate monitoring of either population or coverage. Varying definitions of water and sanitation coverage are used and national figures mask large regional differences in coverage.

