

# WASH report, 2021

July 14, 2021

**In news-** World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF have released WASH report, 2021.

## **Key updates-**

- India was responsible for the largest drop in open defecation since 2015, in terms of absolute numbers, according to a new **Joint Monitoring Programme Report** on water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Besides open defecation, the Joint Monitoring Report also emphasised universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.
- Within India, **open defecation had been highly variable regionally** since at least 2006.
- The third round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), 2006 found open defecation to be practiced by less than 10 percent of the population in four states and the Union Territory of Delhi, but by more than half the population in 11 states.
- In the fourth round of the NFHS conducted in 2016, open defecation had decreased in all states, with the largest drops seen in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana.
- However, the progress in curbing open defecation in sub-Saharan Africa was slow.
- Between 2016 and 2020, the **global population with access to safely managed drinking water at home** increased to 74 percent from 70 percent.
- The report has shown an **improvement in at-source water resources** including piped water, boreholes or tubewells, protected dug wells, protected springs, rainwater and packaged or delivered water.
- For the purposes of global monitoring, **drinking water is considered 'free from contamination' if the water is**

**free and safe from contamination of bacteria like E coli.**

- There was an **increase in safely managed sanitation services** to 54 per cent, from 47 per cent between 2016 and 2020.
- **Onsite sanitation systems**, a system in which excreta and wastewater are collected, stored and / or treated on the plot where they are generated, had shown a significant global increase.
- Globally, **access to safely managed sanitation services increased** over the 2000-2020 period by an average of 1.27 percentage points per year.
- In the context of the COVID-19, in June 2020, the WHO 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.
- Though handwashing facilities with soap and water increased to 71 percent from 67 percent, 3 in 10 people worldwide could not wash their hands with soap and water during pandemic due to lack of water resources.