

## Country Setting

- GDP growth is 5 per cent a year, but the deficit is high and many states cannot meet expenses.
- One-third of the population lives in poverty; 22 per cent of the urban population lives in slums.
- Panchayats (institutions of local self-government) are increasingly gaining responsibilities, but the transfer of financial and administrative authority is slow.
- Every year, about 1.9 million children die, 20 per cent from diarrhoeal disease.
- The number of HIV positive people was 4 million in 2001, but is expected to rise sharply.
- The status of women and other vulnerable groups is poor, but articulate and demanding community women's groups offer some hope.

## WES Sector Setting

- Water supply and sanitation are state concerns, with the central government providing policy and financial support. State Public Health Engineering, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Departments, as well as various urban governmental agencies, all implement components of water and sanitation programmes.
- In 1999, the government launched a sector reform initiative in 67 districts, based on a community-managed, demand-responsive approach. This approach is now available to all Village Panchayats, Village Water Supply and Sanitation Committees and Beneficiary Groups countrywide.
- Recent policy shifts in rural sanitation have resulted in lower subsidies for latrines for the poor.
- Inefficient use of groundwater for irrigation is lowering groundwater levels. Water quality is increasingly a problem, with arsenic, fluoride, nitrate as well as faecal contamination.

## Basic Indicators

Total population (1000s)	1,065,462
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000)	87
Total adult literacy rate (%)	57

## Water and Sanitation Coverage

	Water (%)	Sanitation (%)
Urban	96	58
Rural	82	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>30</b>

## UNICEF WES Programme

### Main Components

- Improved personal and home hygiene; improved practices for handling, storage and retrieval of drinking water, and improved hygiene practices in anganwadis (preschools).
- Improved hygiene practices among students and teachers in rural primary schools.
- Enhanced equity and sustainability in rural water supply and sanitation.

### Programme Highlights and Achievements

- Pilot projects on sanitation and hygiene education in 64 districts; on integrated water supply and sanitation in 17 districts; on alternative water supply technologies (rainwater harvesting, etc.) in 20 districts.
- A strategy to promote behaviour change for arsenic mitigation in West Bengal.