

Report on WASH FIT assessment and Training at Trashigang Dzongkhag, 2024

1. Background

WASH FIT (Water and Sanitation Hygiene Facility Improvement tools) is an iterative quality improvement methodology to improve the quality of care and health outcomes through fewer infections, greater uptake of services and more productive and confident health care staff. Adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities are fundamental for infection prevention and control (IPC) practices, ensuring patient safety, and maintaining the quality of care in healthcare facilities.

When healthcare facilities lack proper WASH infrastructure, it significantly compromises their ability to prevent infections and respond effectively to disease outbreaks. Without clean water, proper sanitation facilities, and effective waste management systems, healthcare workers are at increased risk of spreading infections among patients and themselves.

Moreover, patients are also at risk of acquiring infections during their stay in healthcare facilities if basic hygiene standards are not met. This can lead to prolonged hospital stays, increased healthcare costs, and even mortality in severe cases.

It's concerning that many health facilities struggle with inadequate plans and budget allocations for WASH services. Addressing this issue requires not only financial investment but also a commitment to developing and implementing comprehensive WASH policies and infrastructure improvement plans. Dzongkhag, Gewog and health care facilities needs to prioritize WASH in healthcare facilities to ensure the safety and well-being of both patients and healthcare workers.

The transition from WASH FIT 1.0 to WASH FIT 2.0 marks an expansion in focus. WASH FIT 2.0 now encompasses seven domains, including water, sanitation, healthcare waste, hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, energy and environment, and management and personnel. Additionally, it integrates cross-cutting themes such as climate resilience and gender equity and inclusiveness. This comprehensive approach aims to address broader challenges and ensure more sustainable and inclusive WASH services in healthcare facilities.

The recent WASH FIT training and assessment initiative in all 25 health centers of Trashigang Dzongkhag was conducted between April 7th and May 19th, 2024, with the assistance of five resource persons. The assessment was successfully completed with support from various stakeholders, including Dasho Dzongdag, Gewog Gup, GAO, Tshogpas, and health workers. Based on the risk scoring of each indicator, improvement plans have been formulated for future enhancements in WASH services, ensuring ongoing progress and sustainability in healthcare facility standards.

2. Global and National status of WASH Services in health care facilities

As per the WHO and UNICEF Global report on WASH services in 2019, One in four of health care facilities lacks basic water services, one in ten have no sanitation services and only 30% of health care facilities have waste segregation in health care facilities.

In Bhutan 95% of the health care facilities have the access to basic water services. However, only 31% of the health care facilities have the toilet designed for people with disability or reduced mobility, basic hand hygiene services in point of care are available in 73% of the health care facilities, furthermore only 59% of the health care facilities provide the waste treatment or disposal of infectious waste and only 5% of the health care facilities have the basic improved and available environmental cleaning services (National census and internal Joint Sector Review, 2019)

3. Current status of WASH in Health care Facilities

3.1. Water services

Water is indispensable in healthcare facilities for daily operations. Without it, essential services like cleaning, hand hygiene, and patient care are compromised. Lack of water can lead to unsanitary conditions and hinder medical procedures, endangering patient safety.

The water service coverage in most health centers is excellent, with over 90% coverage. However, a few centers like Merak PHC and Tsangpo Hospital have slightly lower coverage at 87%. This means that the vast majority of healthcare facilities are equipped with access to clean water, which is crucial for various medical procedures, patient care, and overall hygiene standards.

Overall coverage in water services is 96% for Trashigang Dzongkhag.

3.2. Sanitation Services

Healthcare facilities must have improved and usable sanitation facilities to ensure hygiene and prevent infections. Improved sanitation facilities hygienically separate excreta from human contact such as flush/poor flush toilets connected to piped sewer systems, septic tanks or pit latrines.

In most health centers, the sanitation coverage is satisfactory, with over 80% of facilities meeting sanitation standards. However, there are exceptions in Merak, Sakteng, Joenkhar, and Phegpari, where sanitation coverage falls below 80%. This indicates a need for targeted improvements in sanitation infrastructure and services in these specific areas to ensure that healthcare facilities meet essential hygiene standards.

Trashigang dzongkhag health centres have 89% with proper sanitation facilities, ensuring a hygienic environment for patients and staff.

3.3. Health care waste

Healthcare waste management is vital in every facility. It involves segregating waste at its source, using color-coded bins, treating and recycling waste on-site, and having functional disposal pits. These steps ensure safe handling and disposal, minimizing health and environmental risks.

In the majority of healthcare facilities, healthcare waste segregation has been carried out effectively, with a rate exceeding 90%. However, in facilities located in Merak, Thongrong, and Phegpari, the rate of waste segregation or waste management is slightly lower, standing at 88%, 89% and 88% respectively. This indicates a need for targeted efforts to improve waste segregation practices in these specific areas, ensuring that all facilities meet the standards for safe and effective healthcare waste management.

In average 96% of Trashigang's health centers segregate and manage healthcare waste according to standards, ensuring safe disposal and maintaining hygiene.

3.4. Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene facilities should be available at all points where patients receive care in healthcare facilities. This ensures that healthcare workers can maintain proper hand hygiene practices to prevent the spread of infections and safeguard patient safety.

The assessment revealed that all healthcare facilities, except for Sakteng, have hand hygiene facilities available at all points of care with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand rub, each scoring above 90%. Sakteng, however, lags behind, with only 80% coverage.

Overall, 97% of health centers in Trashigang provide basic hand hygiene services.

3.5. Environmental Cleaning

Environmental contamination plays a role in the transmission of health care associated infections (HCAI). Effective environmental cleaning can significantly reduce the transmission of HCAI as part of infection prevention and control (IPC) interventions.

In the majority of health centers, basic environmental cleaning services are robust, with coverage rates surpassing 85%. These services are essential for maintaining cleanliness and hygiene within healthcare facilities, contributing to infection control and patient safety. However, in Merak, the coverage rate is slightly lower, standing at 82%. This indicates a need for targeted efforts to improve environmental cleaning services in Merak to ensure that cleanliness standards are consistently met across all healthcare facilities.

In Trashigang 93% health centres have the basic environment cleaning services.

3.6. Energy and environmental

Reliable energy sources and backup systems guarantee uninterrupted operations, while energy-efficient practices help reduce costs and environmental impact. Adequate ventilation and airflow play a key role in maintaining air quality, crucial for infection control and patient well-being. They ensure not only the quality of services provided but also contribute significantly to preventing avoidable deaths

Most health centers have energy and environment services above 85%, except Trashigang Hospital, which stands at 82%.

3.7. Management and workforce

Ensuring adequate staffing, oversight, coordination among staff, and annual performance appraisals are essential to motivate and encourage staff in healthcare facilities. Additionally, having a dedicated WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) focal person to oversee and monitor WASH activities is crucial for maintaining high standards of cleanliness and hygiene within the facility. There should be a system for operation and maintenance of infrastructure and procurement of necessary supplies. A facility wide patient safety policy is necessary for improving quality of care.

In the context provided, it appears that management and workforce services in health centers are generally satisfactory, with a majority of them meeting or exceeding the threshold of 75%. However, Passaphu lags behind with a score of 54%, indicating potential shortcomings in management practices and workforce performance at that particular health center.

Trashigang have adequate management and work force service for 87%.

4. Over all Finding

The overall findings for Trashigang Dzongkhag have shown improvement over the assessments conducted in 2021 and 2022. The increase in coverage from 80% in the first assessment to 93% in the third assessment reflects positive progress in various areas.

How ever, health centers such as Merak, Sakteng, Kangpar, Passaphu, and Joenkhar were assessed for the first time. This indicates an expansion of the assessment scope and a commitment to ensuring comprehensive evaluation across all relevant facilities.

This upward trend in coverage and the inclusion of previously unassessed areas demonstrate a proactive approach to monitoring and improving services within the Dzongkhag. Such assessments are crucial for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for further development, ultimately contributing to enhanced healthcare delivery and community well-being.

It is interesting to note the discrepancy in coverage among the different health centers within Trashigang Dzongkhag. Yangneer, Bikhar, and Rangjung are commendable for achieving the highest coverage rates of 97%, reflecting their effectiveness in reaching and serving the community.

On the other hand, Passaphu, Merak, and Sakteng have the lowest coverage rates at 86%. While this indicates a gap in service provision in these areas, it also presents an opportunity for targeted efforts to improve access to healthcare services and increase coverage for residents in these regions.

Understanding the factors contributing to the variance in coverage rates among different health centres can help stakeholders identify challenges and implement tailored strategies to address them. Whether it's enhancing infrastructure, increasing healthcare personnel, improving transportation networks, or implementing community outreach programs, there are various avenues to explore in order to bridge the coverage gap and ensure equitable access to healthcare services across all areas of Trashigang Dzongkhag.

5. Good practice of WASH in Health Care facilities

It's indeed heartening to hear about gewogs taking proactive steps to support their health facilities and improve WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) services. These initiatives not only enhance the infrastructure but also contribute significantly to the overall well-being of the communities they serve. Allocating separate budgets for WASH activities demonstrates a commitment to prioritizing public health and underscores the importance of collaboration between local government bodies and health institutions. Such efforts not only address immediate needs but also lay the foundation for sustainable development and improved quality of life for all residents.

6. Issues and challenges

- Most health centers have old structure with less or no space for extension
- No committed funds from Gewog and Dzongkhag for WASH services.
- Limited support from the local government & communities in Some Health centers
- Shortages of budget to buy consumables for WASH in Dzongkhag & Drungkhag
- No disable friendly toilet in most of the health centers.
- No path way for the differently abled people
- Some health centers need major maintenance which needs major planning (Reserboo and Bartsham Hospital)

7. Way Forward

Incorporating WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) initiatives like WASH FIT (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Facility Improvement Tool) into the Five-Year Plan with a separate budget allocation is crucial for ensuring sustained progress in public health infrastructure. Appraising higher authorities

about WASH FIT information helps garner support and resources for these initiatives at the policymaking level.

Continuous capacity building for health workers ensures they have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement and maintain WASH services. Monitoring and supervision mechanisms are vital for assessing progress, identifying challenges, and ensuring the continuity and improvement of WASH initiatives over time. These actions collectively contribute to the long-term success and impact of WASH programs, ultimately leading to healthier and sustainable Programs.

8. Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, ensuring access to adequate Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services in healthcare facilities is paramount for promoting public health, preventing infections, and providing quality patient care.

Specific area of improvement Proper WASH infrastructure, including clean water sources, sanitation facilities, and hygiene practices, is essential for the safety of patients, healthcare workers, and visitors. Regular monitoring, oversight, and staff training are necessary to maintain high standards of cleanliness and hygiene within healthcare facilities. Additionally, strong coordination and dedicated personnel, such as a WASH focal person, play a vital role in ensuring the effective implementation and monitoring of WASH activities. By prioritizing and investing in WASH services, healthcare facilities can contribute significantly to improving health outcomes, reducing the burden of disease, and fostering a safe and hygienic environment for all.

Addressing WASH in healthcare facilities requires collective action from governments, organizations, donors, private sector, civil society, and communities. Each stakeholder plays a crucial role in allocating resources, providing expertise, and advocating for improved WASH services to ensure better health outcomes.

9. Images of WASH FIT Assessment in the health centers



10. References

Ministry Of Health, WASH in Health Care Facilities, Results of a National Census and Internal Joint Sector Review, Butan, 2019

<https://www.unicef.org/bhutan/media/2911/file/National%20Census%20and%20JSR%20for%20WinHCF.pdf.pdf>

WHO, Water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities Status in low- and middle-income countries and way forward, 2015

https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/154588/9789241508476_eng.pdf?sequence=1

Report prepared and submitted by: - Shacha Dema/ADHO

Trashigang Dzongkhag