**Questions for the report on gender equality**

1. What are the particular issues to be addressed to achieve gender equality with respect to water, sanitation and hygiene, and what measures are being taken to address these?

While the government intends to promote gender equality, the traditions and culture in the rural areas, with respect to water, sanitation and hygiene are such that it would take quite sometime before gender equality is achieved, unless public awareness and advocacy is geared up.

2. What measures can be taken to accommodate and embrace biological differences (such as menstruation)? What measures can be taken to accommodate (assumed) different priorities in the use of water, sanitation and hygiene services?

International agencies need to create awareness through local community contacts, to eliminate the imbalances.

3. What measures can be taken to combat stereotypes, change harmful practices and challenge socio-cultural norms and prescriptions that disadvantage women and girls with respect to access to sanitation and water?

Education is the main intervention that can be used, followed by public awareness and, spreading the message through community groups meetings.

4. What role can men and boys play in ensuring gender equality in the context of sanitation and water?

They need to support the initiatives that are helpful for achieving gender equality.

5. What measures can be taken to combat gender-based violence in the context of sanitation and water?

Provide latrines at homes, and prevent open defecation.

6. What measures can be taken to redress existing disadvantage based on entrenched discrimination in the context of sanitation and water?

Persistent efforts at all levels – government, local community groups, and NGOs – along with well-designed and effective public awareness programs.

7. What role does legislation play in ensuring gender equality in access to water, sanitation and hygiene? What can water, sanitation and hygiene policies and strategies achieve? What is the role of institutions in promoting better representation of women? How can financing and budgeting in the WASH sector be gender-responsive?

Legislation will give recognition to gender equality. WASH strategies can achieve a lot, provided they benefit women. Institutions can also play effective role, provided they themselves are sensitized. Financing in WASH that promotes easily availability of toilet-related hardware and software, promote sanitation marketing, and bringing community water points to houses, will all be gender-responsive.

8. What measures can be taken to ensure meaningful and inclusive participatory processes at all levels of decision-making? How can an increased role for women and girls translate into actual influence in decision-making?

Education, public awareness, advocacy and community-based social programs are important measures.

Government needs to respect women and girls, of the highest degree, in order to achieve influence in decision-making.

9. How can monitoring in the sanitation and water sectors be improved to capture gender inequalities in intra-household and extra-household settings?

Currently monitoring in W&S is done by the government departments. The scope should be widened so that NGOs, community elders (especially the women folks) and international agencies undertake the monitoring work, as well.

10. How can measures to ensure gender equality adequately reflect an intersectional analysis that acknowledges the heterogeneous backgrounds, living conditions and challenges women and girls face?

Multi-tiers checks and balances, and strong government initiatives are required; and need to be in place.

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