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**The Incorporation of Life-Cycle Approach and Segmentation (LCS) in WASH policies and programmes: A systematic review**

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**Objectives/aims**

The paradigm for identifying the beneficiaries and understanding their needs and requirements for delivery of WASH services has evolved over time. Initially, governments started with the overarching objective of providing universal access to WASH services. During the MDG period, there was increased thrust to understand the specific needs and requirements of different population segments, in order to ensure equitable access. By addressing the access needs of different population segments, the objective of universal coverage to WASH services can be achieved. This study presents the approaches adopted for segmenting the population as well as the extent of incorporation of these approaches in the WASH sector.

**Methods**

This review synthesized the evidence on the extent of adoption of LCS during the MDG period in WASH policies, programmes and projects across 11 countries in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Policy documents and Programme and Project documents pertaining to WASH sector were included in the review. Documents for the review were obtained from a systematic search of websites of government agencies and departments and websites of multilateral and bi-lateral agencies and INGOs. The results are based on analysis of 190 policy, programme and project documents. The evidence was synthesized using numerical summary techniques and qualitative comparative analysis.

**Main findings**

The evidence shows that the practice of Geographic and Social Segmentation (GSS) of the population was more prevalent as compared to that of Life Cycle Segmentation (LCS). However, adoption of LCS has considerably in recent years. The robustness index formulated as a part of the synthesis also indicate that policies as well as programmes and projects are more comprehensive for GSS as compared to that of LCS. The identification of barriers, strategies to improve WASH services, and type of WASH benefits also vary between GSS and LCS. This suggests that adoption of LCS would complement the existing dominant paradigm of GSS in improving access to WASH.