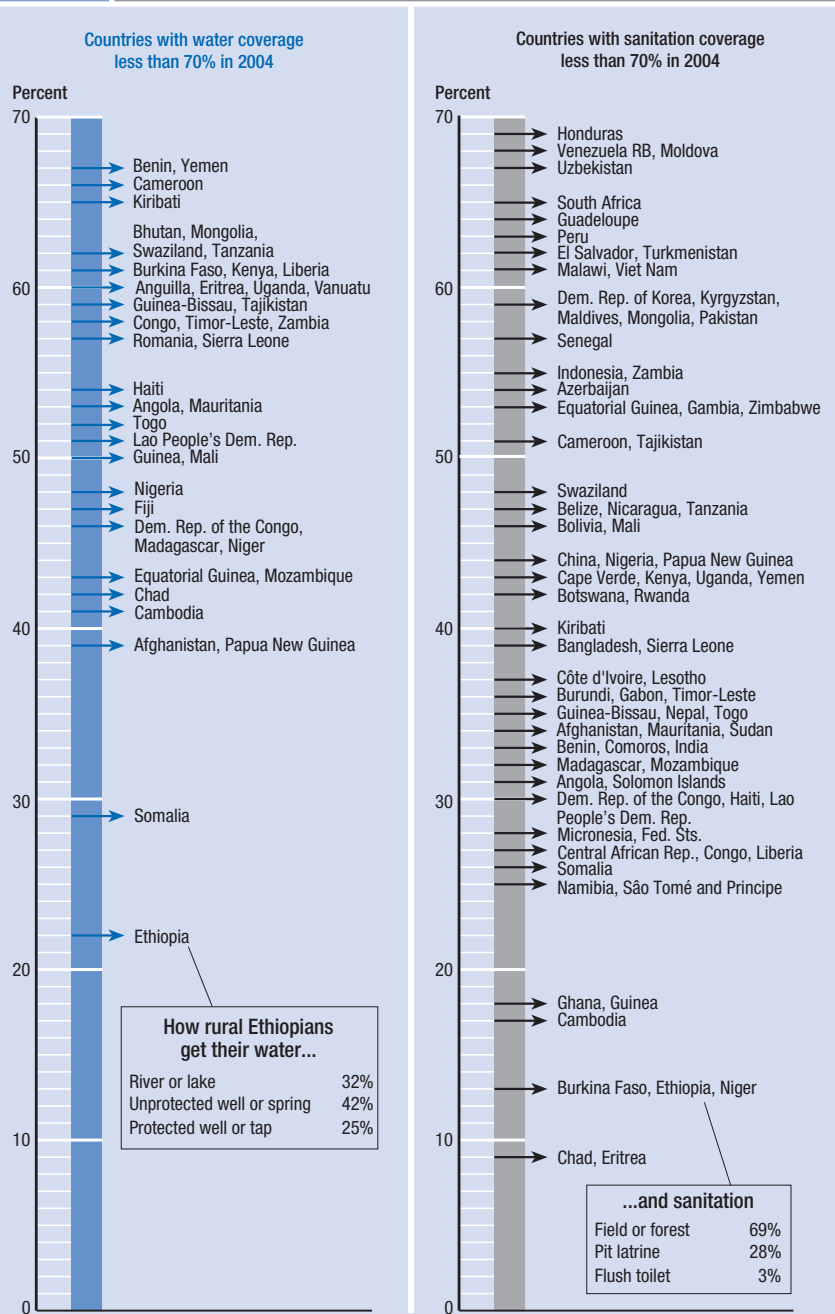


Figure 1.3 Many countries face a long climb to universal coverage


Source: Indicator table 7.

to sanitation. Similarly, India may outperform Bangladesh as a high growth globalization success story, but the tables are turned when the benchmark for success shifts to sanitation: despite an average income some 60% higher, India has a lower rate of sanitation coverage. Similar gaps between wealth and coverage are observed for water. With a lower average income, Egypt has higher levels of access to clean water than China, and Tanzania has higher coverage levels than Ethiopia. In water and sanitation, as in other areas of human development, countries differ widely in the rate at which they convert wealth into progress in human development—an outcome that draws attention to the importance of public policies (figure 1.4).

...and sanitation lags behind water

The second problem highlighted in global data is the gap between water and sanitation provision. In all regions and in almost all countries sanitation provision lags far behind access to water—and there is no evidence that the gap is narrowing. In South Asia access to improved sanitation is less than half that for water. Elsewhere, the gap in coverage ranges from 29% in East Asia to 18% in Sub-Saharan Africa. These gaps matter not just because access to sanitation is intrinsically important, but also because the benefits of improved access to water and to sanitation are mutually reinforcing—a point demonstrated by Europe and the United States in the 19th century (see boxes 1.1 and 1.2). In Egypt high levels of pollution from raw sewage in the Nile Delta region undermine the potential health benefits of near universal access to water. Incidence rates for diarrhoea disorders and hepatitis A are far higher in many peri-urban settlements than is predicted on the basis of income, with wastewater pollution a major factor.²¹ Countries that allow sanitation coverage to lag are destined to see the benefits of progress in water diminished as a result.

The data systematically underreport the scale of the deficit

Global data on water and sanitation are provided through the Joint Monitoring Programme

because services have to be financed either out of household budgets or through public spending. More surprising is the very large variation around the average.

Many countries demonstrate the imperfect relationship between wealth and the provision of water and sanitation. The Philippines has a higher average income than Sri Lanka, but a smaller proportion of its citizens have access