

ODF success story (rural)

Assignment for Faecal Sludge management in rural areas

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Success story

Toilets built under Lohiya Swachhata Abhiyan are in use in perspective of sanitation situation in a village

For course

Centre for Science and Environment, AAETI (Anil Agrawal Environment Training Institute)

Online Global Training Programme on Faecal Sludge Management in Rural Areas

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Title of the assignment : Why that project was successful ?

Success : Toilets built under Lohia Swachhata Abhiyan are in use by the household members – a mixed but positive response.

Background

1. I enquired with field people including some established ngo and my own known people - about a successful project implementation on Swachhata (toilet construction, waste uses/treatment) in rural context. I got no reference. I decided to choose a random village taking help of field staff who had worked with me in past.

Gram Panchayat visited for this case study was Jaidpur GP, 5 km from block head quarter Hilsa in Nalanda District of Bihar. It is situated about 52 kilometers from Patna.

Visit was made on September 04, 2020 about half day.

Note : as I visited village with open sense of identifying a success element in waste water management, I explored varied aspects. There are many changes that villages in this area have observed in recent 10 years. These changes are for good as well as bad with the perspective of waste water and general facilities for village residents. Changes are quite noticeable and prominent, which can easily be orated by villagers in almost a similar tone.

Most important positive change I could notice is increased inclination towards uses of toilets and demand for toilet.

2. A few recent developments in the context. These are some important changes in recent times that has some noticeable impact on sanitation status in the villages in the area :

- Toilet construction under Swachhata Abhiyaan in last 3 years and large scale campaign against open defecation.

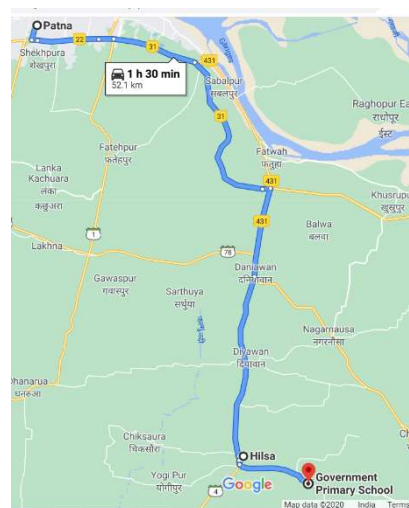
Very few households said that they still donot have toilets, many but lower proportion said that they are using their toilets. Many said that their toilets have become difunctional due to various reasons like rat damaged their pit (if they are not in use), broken pan, broken door, super structure damage, they prefer going out etc.

- There are three categories of fecal containment system in toilets in use in the village that I came across.
 - o Septic tank
 - o Pits for the two-pit latrine built under the Lohiya Swachhata Abhiyan
 - o Shankar Balram septic tank (a low cost version of septic tank)
- Increased awareness towards toilet uses in recent past and increased construction of septic tank specially by affluent families. It costs about Rs. 40-60 thousand.

Many of the septic tank toilets are built in last 8-10 years. But their effluent get discharged next to their house in open or in open working/non working drains.

- Increased availability of electricity since 10 years back.

Many of the houses has implanted submersible pump, so very high amount of water is pumped by households for daily uses. Many of them does not even has a water tank.



- Reach of nal-jal yojana in last 3 years. Piped water supply reaches all the households.

This again makes available higher amount of water for daily consumption so large amount of waste water.

- Open drain cement bricks mortal nali is built. But they are not well connected or waiting to be connected with each other or to main nali.

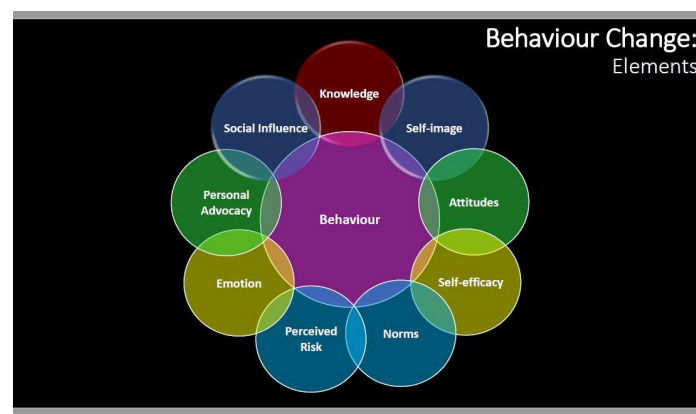
Due to nali, waste water gets released centrally at one place in a water channel (aahar) situated at the western part of the village. This running water body is blocked due to encroachment and at the verge of being filled. It used to 10 feet deep now it is 2-3 feet deep only. This has water even in summer which used to be dried up.

Declaration – the point 3 may require some more discussions but overall what impression I got in 3 hours visit.

4. Success : What is success or scale of success or how successful the Swachhata abhiyan program has been? Success could be seen in following framework options -

- Success is an incremental term relative to recent past ie increase in uses of toilet wrt recent past.
- Success gets judged by an observer from their perspective ie in an absolute term.
- Success can be judged from scheme set target
- Success can also be judged wrt to local, state, national or global averages
- Success can be judged within same environment by comparing how successful other program has been

5. I noticed success in incremental term relative to recent past within the village in uses of toilets. This is according to me **most important one and big**. Because **uses of toilet is a behaviour change**. We as a human need to adapt to a new habit replacing a habit that is acquired since birth this is not easy at all => diagram presents complexity of human behaviour change – taken from course material “Communication strategies for ODF+”. There may be more elements in behaviour change if not less.



To make this to a point, let us see example from the same environment from within village. Under *nal-jal* yojana water connection is made to all households. This is easy and everyone has habit of using water. So success rate looks high. No or very small changes in behaviour required. All of us wait water to come to us.

In the case of toilet, there is a quite visible increase in uses of toilets but many still prefer to go out for relieving themselves specially male members of family. We could not trace fresh human excreta

on the edge of roads which used to be common features, villagers also told that human excreta can not be noticed near main roads or in the area where people routinely go. We will go into details about this successful element below to follow.

6. Success 1 : Uses of toilets. Picture speaks.



Goal is that such cases should not exist in a household. (source is study material).

All the toilets in picture below are from the village visited. These are in working condition. Below pics are taken by me in the visited village on 4th September, 2020.



6 different functional toilets in pictures, all may have some story and some observations but these are functional after it was built about 3 years back. Some of the toilets do not look so clean but they are actually clean, all toilets have its own plastic brush, all has phenyl or acid cleaning liquid, bucket or water retaining structure, a lota/mug etc. Family said that it does not smell during use time it smells bad only lightly.

Who uses toilet most – women ie female members of the family. What about elder male members of family – yes occasional only when they need not go to their agriculture land area. But when they need to go to see their farm or for some other reasons they still prefer to relieve their in open. Habit die hard. What about children – it depends.

7. Success 2 : for people going in open for relieving prefer to go to field instead of on road side. This could counted a success?? Even a small thread of positivity in sanitation should be counted. People in past used to use the road side not now.

8. Success 3 : In past about 10 years back almost all the village used to go out side now number reduced drastically. Big success.

- About 30-40 families of 150 family habitation has septic tank toilet, mostly built in recent 10 years. All family members proudly use their toilet.
- Almost all the rest of the families have built toilet under lohia Swachhata abhiyan. Lower portions of the toilets are in working condition. Exact data I donot have but my guess is about one third. Their female family members stopped going out and occasionally male members also use these toilets.

9. Success 4 : People who go out side are not so vocal in favor of going outside. This is a big shift compare to past. In past its common – facility is not there or it is a village not town, it is big people facility or going out feels good etc. According to me this is major shift and most prominent success.

10. What about fecal containment pit ?

Two pits of the toilet are functional? Only one containment is in use. When one which is in use get filled that are emptied and same containment gets used again. Second pit is never used – this is based on talk with two cases.

Who empty the containment pit ? – family themselves. While emptying did it smell ? yes it smelled for one hour or so. Where the sludge is thrown ? near by open area. Can this be used for other uses ? no response ie silence.

11. What about corruption in the toilet eco system in accessing to Rs. 12000 ? it depends. There are cases family themselves built and they said that they did not spend any money to get Rs. 12,000. Certain family said that they did not know about the money and that they some where stamped their thumb and their toilet is built, they did not have the money to built the toilet. Some said that they have given some money about 15% to get released the amount but in that case the toilet is built by some agent. There are anecdotal that some were able to release money for previously built toilets, some got twice, some got released based on half built toilets etc. These things in ideal world will not happen. But the real-world scenario should not overshadow the wide range of positivity that are experienced during trip.

12. Let us move to toilet structures. Septic tank toilets



Septic tanks are huge. 10ft deep, 6 feet wide and 6 feet in length with three compartments. Such structure many not be required from an expert perspective. People has their own perceptions about size needed for septic tanks and its maintenance.

13. Toilets not in use. There are many cases and it is in majority. One should not be worried rather we need to keep putting systematic efforts. We should not count it as complete failure as owner of those toilets were worried and were not so vocal in favor of not having a working toilet. Some persuaded hard to help them to built their toilets and to help release Rs. 12,000 support.



14. Taking this opportunity to present very acute waste water sanitation challenges villages are facing today due to very high increase in water consumption and other positive changes in village.

15. Effluent of septic tank is discharged in open next to household. This is extremely hazardous. Actually we have brought disease career next to our house. Septic tank only treats very partially and releases untreated waste water having helminth or worms or other disease carrier. It smells. It is actually only partially digested human excreta. Over this there is very heavy uses of water with the notion that septic tank should be flushed.



16. Village drainage system. All shorts of issues. One said that their drainage dispute with *gotia* (near relative uncle) is going on since their grandfather time. Drinking water nal-jal supply is next to open drain, hand pump is very next to open drain, septic tank effluent is discharged in open drain, solid waste accumulates in open drain, slope in wrong direction, branch drain could not be connected to main drain, drain is broken and water is leaked in near by field, keep on writing...



16. Waste water accumulation within village. In handpump age only a few years back say 7-8 years, such scene did not exist. This is a very recent phenomenon for a village.



17. Last but not the least. Discharge of waste water in open water bodies which in itself is on the verge of disappearance. As mentioned earlier - waste water of the village gets released centrally at one place in a water channel (aahar) situated at the western part of the village. This running water body is blocked due to encroachment and at the verge of being filled. It used to 10 feet deep now it is 2-3 feet deep only. This has water even in summer which used to be dried up.

One positivity and should be counted while planning waste water management, these waste water are used in agriculture by farmers of near by field so reuse. People claimed that these farms do not use fertilisers at all and production is not less but on higher side.



18. Mosquito : previously we use to slip in open field, now impossible due to huge surge in mosquito everyone I met said so.

19. Concluding remarks : Only success one could find is in very high rise in demand and uses of toilets. This is still not near to 100% but probability of achieving 100% toilets and 100% uses of toilet is much higher. ODF++ is in waiting – toilet maintenance, toilet technical know how, reuse of fully digested sludge, treatment of waste water, systematic reuse of waste water in scientific way, rejuvenation of water bodies including managing encroachments, rational withdrawal of ground water etc.

Most importantly village community ownership is required ie have a village plan approved collectively, not leaving everything to officials or elected representatives instead driving our key resources, institutions and strength to fit into a village plan.

...X...

Sanitation for our children and sustaining smile on their face with *khilauna*.

