

Case Study

Of

Meerapur, Muzaffarnagar

Under

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Muzaffarnagar is one of the most populous districts of UP and is rightly called the "Sugar Bowl of India" for its sugar industry. Though the district is economically prosperous, the social indicators indicate that the status of the district is not up to the mark. As per the Census 2001 statistics, the population of the district is 35,40,000. Total literacy rate is 62% and the sex ratio is 872 females per 1000 males. The social indicators point towards the low awareness and prevalence level among the people regarding the issues like sanitation and hygiene.



The Indian government is expanding use of low cost pour-flush latrines in urban areas with less than 100,000 people. Pour-flush latrines eliminate the need for scavengers to empty buckets. States vary in their institutional models for expanding use of pour-flush latrines. Kerala has beneficiaries who pay for latrine construction. Local authorities pay for pans and water seals and provide loans to beneficiaries. In Tamil Nadu, costs are covered by property taxes. In Gujarat, beneficiaries pay for costs, which are subsidized. Bihar state has partnerships between local governments and non-profit voluntary groups. Septic tanks are affordable when supplied at the communal level for 2-3 houses. Septic tanks and soak ways are useful for isolated buildings. A comprehensive design method that allows for tropical conditions and communal usage is being encouraged by the Government under ILCS. In high density and squatter settlements, shallow on-site sewer systems are workable. There is a need to find low-cost technologies that can be marketed without subsidy and meet demand.

This case-study at Meerapur and Muzaffarnager focuses on the ILCS programme and gender prospective. Fieldwork was conducted among the settlements. The communities do not have provision for the hygienic disposal of household and human wastes. The residents have very low income and inadequate food intake. Living conditions include overcrowding, use of open fires for cooking, inadequate provision of infant and child health care, and lack of emergency life-saving services. In-depth interviews with 18 families were conducted, mostly from the backward and scheduled castes, dominated by the low income groups. The 18 sample households in Meerapur were found to be aware of the programme. The women folk were specially very grateful of the agency for running the programme aimed at their convenience, safety and hygiene.

Background of Case Study

The word environment has assumed a variety of meanings in today's development scenario. It would perhaps be apt that one modestly clarifies what one is trying to assess in this study on integrated low cost sanitation and capacity building for the urban environment. On the whole, the main components that would make a satisfactory sanitary environment, would include sewage, latrines, waste disposal, drinking water systems and hygiene at household level. These essentials will have to be evaluated in terms of the reality that the dominant group that is served by the low - cost sanitation in respect of safety tank type latrines lives in slums or almost in slum - like conditions. The present study poses an important issue, namely, whether a low cost sanitation programme would receive adequate attention under the present economic reform initiated by the Government of India for the social cost involved is rather high. Unless this aspect is resolved in the interests of the depressed sections of the population of India, the capacity building measures for upgrading the environment will be seriously hampered.



The positive role of urbanization is often overshadowed by the evident degradation in the physical environment and quality of life in urban areas caused by the widening gap between demand and supply of essential services and infrastructure. It has been officially agreed that this gap has certainly been increasing. The worst sufferers are the poor, whose access to the basic services like drinking water, sanitation, education and health services is shrinking.



The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Low Cost Sanitation for Liberation of Scavengers started from 1980-81 initially through the Ministry of Home Affairs and later on through the Ministry of Welfare. From 1989-90, it came to be operated through the Ministry of Urban Development and later on through Ministry of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation now titled Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation. In the State of Uttar Pradesh SUDA (State Urban Development Agency) and DUDA are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the scheme.

Objectives of Study

The main objectives of the scheme are to convert the existing dry latrines into low cost pour-flush latrines and to construct new ones where none exist.

Construct low cost sanitation units through sanitary flush latrines with superstructures and appropriate variations to suit local conditions (area specific latrines) and construct new latrines where EWS household have no latrines and follow the in-human practice of defecating in the open in urban areas.

Our objective for study was to see that the various components under ILCS have been adequately addressed.

Study Area - Nagar Panchayat - Meerapur

Study of Process adopted by Abhinav

During our visit to the city of Muzaffarnagar, we observed that Abhinav had adopted certain strategies for the proper implementation of the Scheme such as identifying beneficiaries for the conversion of dry latrines in the State by the local bodies. Abhinav also publicized the program of construction of low cost construction of wet toilets and also conducted consultation workshops with stakeholders. It conducted a survey to assess the exact number of existing dry toilets, with the aim of preparing project implementation plan. The results of this survey were discussed with E.O. & Chairman of Local Urban Body and the community. Abhinav also conducted a ward – wise household biometric survey and the detailed project report of this survey was submitted to DUDA . Last but not the least, it also organized workshops and seminars for active community participation.

Curtain Raiser Activities



Abhinav built a cadre of volunteers that work as peer educators and counselors. It also formed a Town Task Force Team which comprised members of Government, User Group, Elected Members, Community Influencers, NGO Staff, etc. This cadre of volunteers was surprisingly found to be working effectively within the community. The capacity building of the Task Force has led to a high level of motivation towards the programme.

Since the existence of dry latrines are the cause of manual scavengers who carry night soil as their head load, this is an abominable practice which needs to be eradicated from the society. Hence, the provision of water seal latrines was made so as to allow convenience and privacy for all, specially women and others like children, sick and old, with of course low risk of suffering from diseases like diarrhea and other related diseases. All attempts have been made to frame these low cost portions within the context of necessary considerations, primarily the need to ensure community acceptability, cost effectiveness, and sustainability. The **Street Sanitation Committees** were actively d in motivating the community for construction of toilets in their households.



Sharing of Best Practices

Despite the complexity of developing sanitation in large informal settlements, Abhinav formulated an innovative and low-cost solution, persuading small groups of homeowners to construct and maintain their own household latrines and lane sewers, on the understanding that the lane sewers would later be connected to municipal sewers and treatment plants.

Abhinav has simplified designs and standardized the parts, resulting in household costs about fifty per cent lower than those in similar government-financed schemes.



One of the key elements in the ILCS model, propagated by Abhinav in Meerapur, is component sharing; the idea that the user community is responsible for financing, implementing and managing the 'internal components' of the low-cost sanitation system (household latrines, lane sewers, and secondary sewer systems) while the local government is responsible for financing, implementing and managing the 'external components' (trunk sewers, treatment and disposal works). The 'component sharing' approach clearly has advantages over conventional 'cost sharing' due to the following:-

- User communities develop a sense of ownership and empowerment by taking full responsibility for internal infrastructure;
- User communities implement internal components without the bureaucratic interference and delays associated with government projects;
- Community contracting and supervision reduce infrastructure costs.

Scaling up Social Mobilization through Behavior Change Consultants:

The process has also facilitated creation of more than 500 natural activists who possess a great potential for becoming an entrepreneur. The number will further increase in years to come. The natural leaders emerge voluntarily right from the triggering phase of ILCS. They are the ones who decide to stop open defecation first and initiate actions to transform communities through motivation, sensitizing and mobilizing communities. The Barefoot Consultants are the natural leaders emerging from ILCS implementation process but go beyond and initiate many other



collective local actions and reforms on public goods aspects on a free for service basis. If they get formal training on the development of business skills, they may become self employed or become hired consultants to scale-up social mobilization on a fee for service basis.

Scenario

- It was observed that efforts have been made towards recognizing household couple as the unit of complementary male and female responsibilities and decision-making for a safe environment. It also overlooks the community-level dimensions of safe sanitation and hygiene which is currently dominated by men. When more women participate in setting and implementing public agendas, sanitation and hygiene will gain much more prominence than they have now.
- The pro-poor strategy had a similar absence of men from promoting domestic hygiene and women from public decision-making.



Some of the recommendations are:

- Suggestions are to have the couple as decision-makers on sanitation, included on the community dimensions, to tailor activities and materials also to the conditions and needs of the poor, and to link information and promotion to community pilots such as CLTS, participatory learning and action planning and community-managed monitoring.
- Gender images in the media should go beyond stereotypes of women doing the sanitation work in the households and men making the decisions at domestic and community level. Instead, they should include men in domestic roles for sanitation and hygiene, such as financial support, adopting good practices themselves and co-educating their children, and include women in joint decision making with men at domestic and community levels.
- Informed choices on upgradeable technologies and designs with costs and other implications (e.g. O&M, management, financing options) should be given to men and women heads of households.



No doubt women were consulted in deciding the locations of the PF latrines. They were also informed about their usefulness before constructing them. They were made fully aware of the harmful effects of open defecation and for that matter, about the use of dry latrines on health and environment. Though they know about the use and maintenance of PF latrines, some of them had not started using it in daily practice.

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