

700 SE 7 KADAM, DABUR

- **Background**

With no access to toilets, people in rural India are forced to defecate in the open- in fields, at roadsides or in bushes. Women and girls are forced to wake up in the wee hours of the day and walk several kilometers to the outskirts of their village to defecate. With no toilets in the households, they are forced to hold on the nature's



call during the day and wait for sundown to relieve themselves. Besides being a security concern, this was also a health hazard as these open defecation sites have been turning into harbinger of diseases spread fast. Also, the absence to sanitation facilities in schools in rural India was forcing girls to drop out once they attained puberty. This was affecting the education levels among students, particularly the girl child.

In the recent years, the government's Swachh Bharat Mission has played a key role in catalyzing the conversation around sanitation, right from the streets to the boardrooms of Corporate India. The CSR provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, provided the opportunity for industries, corporate houses, private/ public limited companies to support the government's mission.

Thus, Dabur has taken a step towards helping our less fortunate sisters and daughters, Dabur – through its toilet cleaner brand **SaniFresh** – took the initiative to help construct toilets for women and girls with the vision that will not only reduce the risk to their safety but safeguard their dignity as well. The intent was to reduce the distance they walk for relieving themselves from **700 steps to a mere 7**. Hence, the campaign was aptly titled '**700 Se 7 Kadam**'.

- **Location, Date**

2013, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (Rural); Lucknow (urban)

- **Areas**

Rural and Urban

- **Stage/Scale**

Dabur has been engaged in community development activity in villages of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh since 1994, through its CSR arm *Sundesh* (Sustainable Development Society). All activities under our community development initiatives are designed following a detailed need assessment and are based on what the community members require.

• Objective of the assignment

During regular interactions with the community members in 2014-15, household toilets emerged as a key need, particularly among the women of the household. The need is identified a holistic approach to sanitation, that goes beyond just building infrastructure and focuses on changing ingrained behaviour and social norms.

• What was done

The implementation process is carried out in steps:

- At first level meetings with Self-Help Group (SHG) and Kissan Club members were organized where the *Sundesh* representatives sought their help in spreading awareness about the need for household toilets as well as motivating villagers to take up constructing of toilets in their households. Dabur did not sponsor the entire cost of building a toilet. Instead, households would be encouraged to contribute towards the construction cost, and their contribution percentage can vary depending on the financial health of each household.
- Secondly, construction of toilets would not be released as an advance. Instead, the household would be first asked to fund the initial project cost and Dabur would release its share of the payment in two tranches – First, when the pit digging was complete; and Second, when the toilet super structure was ready. The women of the household were identified as the primary the household and also help the individual households design the toilet as per their specifications and financial health.
- After detailed discussions, two options were identified for the type of toilets to be constructed in the villages:
 - Two-Drum Toilet, with plastic drums fitted in an underground structure
 - Septic Tank Toilet, with an underground watertight chamber made of concrete
 - Cemented Ring Toilet, with twin underground cemented ring tanks
- The individual beneficiary household was given the option of picking the best solution, basis their individual needs and the area available for construction.

• Impact

- This initiative had commenced in 2014-15 covering 18 villages. The scope was soon extended to cover a total of 26 villages in 2015-16 and then to 39 villages in 2016-17. The project is being extended to a total of 42 villages in 2017-18. This covered Hapur, Gautam Budh Nagar and Ghaziabad districts of Uttar Pradesh, Rudrapur in Uttarakhand and Baddi in Himachal Pradesh.
- In the first year, Dabur and Sundesh helped construct 67 household toilets. The exercise gathered pace and in the first full year (2015-16), and constructed 1,022 household toilets in the three states. In the year 2016-17, Dabur had set itself a target of ensuring construction of toilets in 1,200 households. The foundation exceeded its target and has ended the year with 1,254 household toilets. Till date, 2,343 household toilets across these villages are constructed.
- Nagla Uday Rampur, Nagla Kashi and Siwaya (in Dhaulana block of Hapur district of Uttar Pradesh) Jatti Majra (in



Himachal Pradesh) – achieving ODF status during 2016-17 financial year. In addition, Fagauta (in Hapur district) achieved Open Defecation Free status in April 2017, taking the total number of ODF villages under our fold to five.

- Dabur representatives spread awareness about the need for maintaining hygiene and also encouraged the households to adopt sanitation and hygiene techniques. A specially designed toilet cleaning kit was also distributed free of cost to all households.

• **Challenges and Issues**

- One of the major challenge was to convince people to break away from the old age tradition of open defecation and built a structure with in their household
- Other issue was of managing the funds distributed for the construction. For curbing the corruption of money the cheques were given in the hands of women in two phases.
- Other challenge was sustainability and maintenance of these structures.
- One of the key issues is making people aware about the use of sanitation units.
- Another challenge came in the way was the identification of area for toilet construction and designing of toilet structure suiting the needs.

• **Innovation**

- The most innovative point of this project is idea to curb the corruption of money. The cost of toilet was shared between Dabur and household for bringing the need of ownership. And since toilets are constructed within the household the responsibility of maintenance is given to the family with proper training and specifically designed kits.
- The company is building simple toilets with easy and use friendly and eco- friendly approach.
- For adoption of sanitation practices drawing competitions, special functions are being organised. A special campaign was also designed for this initiative, powered by a video and a microsite featuring stories of women who face these hardships daily. The message was conveyed through the story of Lakshmi, who has to walk nearly 700 steps just to relieve herself, battling fatigue, snakes, and more. The site featured more such stories about women from the villages of India and the price they pay for not having access to a toilet at home. The campaign also asked people to do any or all of seven tasks and the brand will contribute Re. 1

• **Lessons learnt**

The project of bringing toilets near and in household is a difficult task against the mindset of open defecation in rural areas. The project, though working on the rural side, is covering and widening its reach to numerous villages. With its reach the idea of complete awareness is also needs to be spread for incorporation of toilet use in people lives.

• **Financials**

The project is placed with the collaboration of another programme SUNDESH. With this Dabur's other brand Sanifresh is also associated. It has also joined hands with Sulabh Internationals.

• **Economic sustainability/Revenue Model**

- The model of this programme is such that the structure is built by the financial support provided by Dabur and partly by the individual household.

- This will not generate any revenues as this is done as a contribution to society.

- **Implementer Contact Persons**

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- **Sources and References**

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