

# SABAR SHOUCHAGAR (TOILET-FOR-ALL) NADIA

## • Background

Nadia was the first district that took Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to a new height and was declared as first ODF district in India. The District administration took major initiative to use the full potential of the convergence and took upon themselves the challenge to achieve complete coverage of the households with toilet facilities within a very short span of time.

Nadia is one of the rural backwards districts of West Bengal, state in India with 5.14 million populations, with around 2 million people (40%) practicing open defecation. Open defecation is one of the main reasons of the contamination of water sources resulting in 10,4467 cases of diarrheal diseases; 28 cases of diarrheal deaths; 1195 cases of severely malnourished children and 81664 of moderately malnourished children in Nadia in 2012-13.

Whereas in Bangladesh which is a neighboring country of Nadia district has only 4% people defecating in open as per the report of WHO and Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey as compared to 40% open defecation in West Bengal triggered the District Magistrate to make Nadia open defecation free. Nadia attained this stupendous feat under the leadership of the district administration, which pooled in the strengths of the Zilla Parishad and the power of the people to turn the Sabar Shouchagar (Toilet-for-All) campaign into a people's movement.

## • Location, Date

Nadia (West Bengal), 2013 onwards

## • Areas

Urban/rural/peri-urban

## • Stage/Scale

Pilot across District

## • Objective of the assignment

The main aim of the program was to create ODF communities. The objectives include:

- To generate mass awareness for adapting improved sanitation and hygiene practices at family and community level for collective behavior change and eliminate open defecation.
- To improve access to sanitary toilets to family without any facility and enable communities using toilets and stop open defecation.
- To bring in substantial improvement in health indices of district viz. incidents of child diarrhea (diarrheal death, child anemia and malnutrition etc.) through improved sanitation.

## • What was done

- Baseline survey (2012-13): It was done to identify families without toilets/access to toilets. The survey revealed around 3.09 lakh households without toilets.
- Community mobilization
- Training and Skill Upgrading

- Construction: The model was piloted in 17-gram panchayats selected from all 17 blocks of the district. Based on the inputs from the pilot study, the model was rolled out to the entire district on a campaign mode.
- Sustaining the behavioral change
- Monitoring and follow-ups
- External party evaluation

## • Impact

Sabar Shouchagar of Nadia stands apart as one of the best evidence based models for reaching open defecation free status in record time. Overall, noticeable accelerated sanitation coverage is seen in Nadia district with greater community involvement, including women and children. There is significant post-construction monitoring to ensure people do not abandon the toilets and go back to defecate in the open.

## • Challenges and Issues

While the programme was able to successfully achieve its goal in a set time-frame, certain challenges were pointed out by the key stakeholders who were:

- Timely flow of funds from the state to the district had been a key challenge during implementation.
- While the district promoted a single model (double leach pit technology) for toilet construction, there was a widespread perception among households that the leach pits filled faster. In some blocks there were instances of households filling up one of the two leach pits and making the other pit deeper without the knowledge of the officials concerned. Monitoring such cases was a challenge.
- The district did not have block coordinators in all blocks to oversee the implementation processes.
- Providing toilets to families outside the baseline survey
- Providing toilets to excluded population such as in brick kilns, near ponds, mango orchards
- Generating awareness among care-givers for disposing child excreta safely
- Sustaining the momentum of campaign despite elections (Parliament, by-elections, municipal elections)
- Providing toilets at public places on highway dhabas and market places
- Mobilising stakeholders in urban areas for providing toilets to families without toilets
- Sustaining the ODF status through social governance system

## • Innovation

- The project was devised, developed and built in close consultation with the local community. It is a community centre that meets real needs, catering for over 1,500 people. It is a market-based solution that is designed to be affordable and replicable.
- The Suvidha Centre considers the environmental impact of water. Through innovative design, it uses a closed-loop approach to re-use water. Water recycling is an integral part of the design of the Centre, from harvesting rainwater from the roof, through to treating and re-using 'grey' water from showers and laundry to flush the toilets.
- Suvidha (which means 'facility' in Hindi) uses circular economy principles to reduce water use. Fresh water is first used for brushing teeth, bathing, handwashing and laundry. The waste water from these activities becomes the input for flushing toilets. This will help save an estimated ten million litres of water per annum.

## • Lessons learnt

- Strong political will and leadership helps in delivering results at scale even in difficult sectors like sanitation
- Clear roles and responsibilities is key to sanitation programs which often throw lot of complexities at ground level.
- Convergence brings synergy and impact
- Social mobilisation has proven to be far better tools if scale programme is in operation
- Robust supply chain is must for sanitation programme which must be integrated with demand/behaviour change programmes
- Monitoring and follow-up systems should be developed for better sustainability.

## • Financials

Not Available

## • Implementer Contact Persons

- District Magistrate, Nadia, West Bengal

## • Sources and References

- <http://www.sabarshouchagar.in>
- Government of West Bengal
- District Magistrate, Nadia
- UNICEF
- All donors, other individuals and organisations who have supported in project planning, implementation and monitoring



The image is a collage titled "Social Media Promotion" with a yellow header. It features three main components: a Twitter screenshot on the left showing a tweet about the "Sabar Shouchagar" project receiving the United Nations Public Service Award 2015; a Facebook screenshot on the right showing a post with a photo of a trophy; and a website screenshot at the bottom center for "SABAR SHOUCHAGAR" celebrating ODF Enforcement Fortnight from April 2nd to 16th, with a photo of children. A yellow box on the right side of the website screenshot contains the text "SabarShouchagar Website".

This case study was curated by the India Sanitation Coalition