CASE STUDY

February 2016/No. 17

 Reactivation of a Nirmal Gram Purushkar Village towards ODF

INTRODUCTION

Balrampur district has very few villages which are ODF and the process has been very slow. There are a few factors which play a very important role in this. This district was carved out of Sarguja District in the year 2013. There were a lot of villages which were declared ODF in 2007-2008 through Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan. However, these villages slipped back into the habit of Open Defecation. Balrampur also has issues related to human resources. The district does not have enough SBM staff members. There is no District Coordinator and the position is still vacant. But this story of Krishna Nagar is an inspiration of a Gram Panchayat which had done extremely well in reactivating, which has resulted in Open Defecation Free.

BACKGROUND

Krishna Nagar Gram Panchayat is in Ramchandrapur Block of Balrampur District. This village consists of about 221 households. Another interesting fact about this village is that the people living here are mostly migrants who have migrated from West Bengal. After the building of about 203 toilets this village was declared ODF through the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA). This village also received the Nirmal Gram Purushkar (NGP) award. As many other villages which has received NGP,
this village had also slipped back into the habit of open defecation.

Krishna Nagar Gram Panchayat was one of those villages which were selected for ODF by the administration through the Swachh Bharat Mission. This was a huge challenge, here is a village which has already received NGP through NBA and which has slipped back to Open Defecation.

**Method**

To meet this challenge, the Sarpanch called for a Gram Sabha meeting; during the meeting they discussed the various issues. As is the case of the many villages in other places, many toilets were in a dilapidated state or unusable. The communities were motivated and the gram panchayat decided that this should be done at all costs.

During the meeting one of the villagers Khitish Bishwas a natural leader who was motivated and at the same time wanted to see a cleaner village, decided to take this up as a challenge. It was decided that the Gram Panchayat will fist motivate and encourage the people to repair the toilets. For those toilets which are to be repaired and for people who are BPL, the gram panchayat offered some costs. They also decided to levy a fine of Rs250/- for who defecate in open.

The natural leader Mr. Khitish Bishwas along with some motivated volunteers went to every household and encouraged and motivated them. They conducted cluster level meetings where they talked about the ill effects and the diseases which are caused due to ODF. This started paying results; people started using the toilets and stopped defecating public. It was not a easy task however, with the effort of this leader and volunteers a village once was declared ODF and which had received NGP is back to being a proud ODF village. Most importantly this was a reactivation without almost no cash incentives but sheer motivation and encouragement.