Sanitation is more important than independence. From the decades when Gandhi trod this land, to the present decade, India has been concentrating on sanitation. In this process, most of the sanitation schemes have been motivating the public with some incentives or subsidies to achieve total sanitation.

Basic sanitation is a basic right in society and it is a need for everyone, but due to poverty and the other issues, policy makers are forced to think what to do to achieve sustainability.

Rami Reddy, his wife and children live in Gandhi Nagar Gram Panchayat (GP) of Chirala Mandal in Prakasam District. They are not very educated and depend on daily wage labour for a living. To avoid this status for their children, the couple are sending their kids to a good English medium school despite the financial crisis. “Even if we cannot give property to our children, we should be able to give them good education to leads their lives better”, said the couple.
The family constructed a small house which did not have toilets. The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) had started giving some amount for toilets construction and the GP team started explaining about SBM and its process for toilets construction. Motivated by the information, Rami Reddy borrowed loan from an acquaintance. He depended on SBM incentive to repay the hand loan. Reddy says that the construction was started based on the belief, that government will release the funds to us within the time duration. The initial stage of the construction process was finished, but fund release took up to 4-5 months, those who lent money started demanding.

Reddy and his wife had to work hard and solve the money problem, especially to save the family honour. Reddy again started hard work and collected funds for further construction process. He says that in their GP there was no agriculture land and no MNREGS work for livelihood. So they were completely dependent on the nearest city or in other villages for work. So last one year onwards I have been saving some amount and investing for further construction process. It is now almost in the final stage and I am expecting it may take another 3-4 months to finish the remaining process also. After toilet’s completion only the government will release the remaining amount. Even after completion I am not sure if I will get the balance amount from the government,” he says.

Now all GP households are facing the same situation and all toilets are under construction only. The delay in the release of funds is affecting further motivation within the GP and no new households are showing initiative. The demotivation may spill over to neighbouring villages and it may ultimately affect the implementation of the programme on the ground level. As one of the villagers remarked in a witty but thought provoking manner “it appears that the making of Bhahubali is easier when compared to my Bathroom making process”.

“I DON’T KNOW WHEN MY TOILET WILL BE READY TO USE!” he says.

This case is of an individual who borrowed money to construct a toilet with a hope that he can repay it with the incentive that govt. promises to provide. But delay in disbursement of funds forced him to stop construction and repay the load that was taken. The family is now saving to complete construction of their toilet.