Sanitation is an integral part of everyday life of human beings and to incorporate this idea there have been various programmes by the Govt. for around six decades.

In addition to spreading awareness about sanitation, adapting new technologies with time and making sure that it reaches the citizens, there is another major task ahead for the Govt. which is reaching out to remote areas and address issues of sanitation there.

Situated in Seethampeta Mandal of Srikakulam District, the Gram Panchayat (GP) of Pedharama has 32 small habitations encompassed within it. The total population of the GP is 910 tribal households who live in deep forests without basic facilities such as houses, roads and basic livelihoods. It has also been observed that there is a scarcity of water for drinking and domestic purposes which stands as a major issue for the community.

If we look at the Sanitation aspects of the residents closely, 310 out of 900 households still need to construct toilets. Visit to one of the habitations attached to the GP revealed that no house in the habitation has a toilet or any other sanitation facility.

In fact, the residents of this habitation have no idea about sanitation and this was evident in their response. “What is a toilet?” exclaimed one of the residents when asked about the reason for not constructing toilets. Open defecation is a common and know practice for these tribal’s. It was also understood that nobody conducted awareness activities/camps for them. “However, we have been hearing about something similar happening and that Govt is working towards something called toilets and also giving money for it” continued the resident.
In today’s time when the most people are moving forward to adapt new technologies and able to understand the importance of sanitation and a few people are still distant from receiving any kind of preliminary awareness. This points out in the direction of more focus on such remote areas to motivate them, make them aware of basic sanitation so as to at least end open defecation. Another striking issue is the lack of toilet in the Mandal office itself.

As a response to the above issues, Mandal level officials informed that this Panchayat isn’t in their target list and lack of roads for transportation is also a major challenge in reaching out to these places.

The officials have promised to solve these issues and achieve sanitation in these areas in addition to taking up construction of a toilet at the Mandal Office. Further, they are looking forward for more inputs as guidance to achieve complete sanitation.

Pedharama GP is aecho’s the plight of many tribal villages in the state. ITDA is an independent body working in tribal areas. Active engagement of ITDA can play an important role in building awareness and procuring construction material in case of such remote areas. The district collector or specific departments can be coordinated with to work towards this issue.