Moving Towards Total Sanitation

Situated in
Visakhapatnam’s Anandapuram Mandal, Boni is an inspiration through its transformation from an unclean village to its now ‘Open Defecation Free (ODF)’ status.

For motivation, Sarpanches from Boni visited Subbavarm, another Visakhapatnam District where ODF status has been achieved for the Sarpanches to have a model to follow. This led to motivation & awareness activities in the community that led to the construction of individual toilets.

The Sarpanch then used his personal money to finish constructions in the village in order to support those who needed the financial assistance. In order to maintain cleanliness of the community toilets, the Sarpanch invited village officials to contribute towards a yearly fund for maintenance activities.

Challenges arose such as how to provide facilities for households who did not have enough space for a toilet. As a solution, one villager generously donated part of his land for the construction of community toilets. In the spirit of community, so far 50 individuals have come forward donating Rs. 1000 per year, creating a fund of around Rs. 50,000. Although the initial donations are a positive sign, as described by Panchayat secretary Smt. Latha, “once the generosity of this voluntary fund stops, then maintaining these community toilets will become difficult...this Panchayat doesn’t have lot of income and some funds from the government for maintenance of community toilets [would] be of great help”.

Photo Credit: S. Geetha Krishna, Program Officer, PRIA
Most importantly, Boni understands that sanitation extends beyond just toilets—rather it includes overall household and community cleanliness. With this understanding, each household was given a dustbin to collect garbage and in order to avoid littering of this garbage onto the roads; dustbins have been put up in all the streets.

In order to further maintain cleanliness of the streets, Boni has named each street after a freedom fighter. This is to create a sense of ownership and responsibility among the residents of each street in order to maintain cleanliness.

Future plans in the GP involve getting a dump-yard sanctioned in order to have a better system of waste disposal. The residents of Boni are clearly motivated and will not stop until they achieve complete sanitation in the village.

_Boni is a great example of how sanitation involves not only the building of toilets, but all aspects of cleanliness in a community._