Introduction

Gaitariya Gram Panchayat is consists of two villages, Gaitariya & Khapri, which is part of Tilda block of Raipur district. The Gram Panchayat is situated 15 km from block and 35 km away from the district Headquarters. It has a beautiful temple; Banjari temple, where people from different places come to worship. total population of the Gram Panchayat is 1511. The major source of livelihood is agriculture and its related activities. Almost all the community members go for open defecation. Lack of proper sanitation facilities and defecation in the open was a major concern and serious health risk for the villagers. The villager says “it was the women section who suffers the most due to poor sanitation which affected every aspect of life-health, Education, Livelihood, privacy and dignity.”

In the year 2009-10, a power plant was established; which is located in the heart of the Gram Panchayat. It changed the face of the entire Gram Panchayat. Most of the families lost their ancestral landholdings. Due to this, the availability of open space became scarce which was used for defecation.

After few months, it was seen that the number of people from outside gradually increased day by day, who were employed in the power plant. At the same time all
These things brought a lot of change in the traditional lifestyle of community members.

Due to the enormous employment opportunities people from different area came to work. And all were defecating in open, which caused problem for the women of the village, then the community felt the need for toilet and approached power plant, and they agreed to this proposal, and constructed a community toilet for male, female and people with disability, installed six seats for male and female, and one each for person with disability; facilities are also available for bathing & hand washing. They have engaged two workers who are taking care of the cleanliness of the toilet. Apart from this, the foundation undertook an integrated approach for socio-economic growth. Few of the initiatives i.e. provide support in education sector, organized health camps, imparting training to youth & women to develop their entrepreneur skill & income level, facilitate pipe water supply etc.

One of the villagers says, “Especially after the promotion of community latrines, all the public has become sensitized & motivated to use toilet”. In the mean while Gram Panchayat, under the leadership of Sarpanch and all other PRI members, and active guidance, sincere support of Janpad CEO,Ms. Aditi Pandey took the responsibility to declare the Gram Panchayat as ODF. It was done through proper planning; trainings on CLTS imparted to the AWWs, and ASHA who in turn motivated the community & made people understand the ill effect of open defecation & triggered them not to defecate openly. When the community felt the need for constructing toilet, Block Panchayat strategically, deputed 10 Gram Panchayat secretaries to have close monitoring & supervision, around 30 masons and 160 labour were engaged to complete 229 toilets (118 for Gaitariya & 111 for Khapri Village) within a period of one month, youth members of the community also participated wholeheartedly. Sarpanch of the Panchayat says, through triggering & regular follow up by grass root level functionaries around 20 households construct the toilet utilizing their own funds.

During this intervention process, Gram Panchayat approached the power plant for additional support in the toilet construction work, due to the proper negotiation and earlier rapport, the management committed to provide Rs. 3000/- for each toilet, Gram Panchayat decided to use it for beautification thus fixed tiles in the toilet.

As per the planning, Gram Panchayat celebrated ODF declaration on 27th November 2015 which was attended by members of the district & block.

Bijay Burma, engineer of the block says:- “Construction of toilets is still seen as a government responsibility rather than a priority of a family, they spend thousands of rupees in buying mobile phone, TV, rather than investing on constructing a toilet, it was really a challenge for us to change behaviour of the community members, but we successfully did it in this Gram Panchayat.”

Jhurangi Burma, an old person aged around 75 years says, “The wish which was not fulfilled by my son, it has become possible due to SBM & the good work of Gram Panchayat.”

Indeed, it is an example of convergence initiative, where Government, Corporate & the Community worked together to fulfil the prevailing need of the community. It has not only enhanced the improvement in the field of sanitation but also improved the overall socio-economic growth of the individual & the community as a whole.