

CASE STUDY

2016/No. 6



Peddireddipalem Gram Panchayat
Narsaroapet Mandal
Guntur District

Girl children lead change in SBM



INTRODUCTION



Peddireddipalem Gram Panchayat (GP), located in Narsaroapet Mandal of Guntur district, has been declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF) village in the year 2015 after achieving 100% coverage of Individual household Latrines (IHHLs). The GP has a total population of 2025 members residing in 560 households. With the construction a total number of 112 toilets for the left over households under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), the village secured the ODF status.

As a first step, the GP team took up the responsibility of evaluating the number of households who needed toilets i.e., households without toilets and number of households with insanitary toilets. After establishing this number, the Panchayat conducted a meeting in which the issue of sanitation was addressed and SBM's financial provisions were also explained. Subsequently, a door to door campaign was then taken up by the Panchayat to further motivate the households. Anganwadi workers along with the village Field Assistant, Sarpanch, ANM and other Ward members visited every house.

In spite of best efforts, when some of those households resisted the proposal, the Panchayat Members started cautioning the households that certain benefits from Govt. (such as pensions, food rations etc...) would be stopped. This has created a certain amount of fear amongst the families, after which all the remaining households have come forward to construct toilets.

Lack of space and reconstruction of the house were other issues successfully resolved by the GP. The GP also created a demand and willingness for immediate construction of toilets by explaining to the people that the scheme might not last until the community chooses to construct new house; in which case individuals would be at a loss. As most of the villagers are daily wage workers, money for construction was also an issue and the Sarpanch of the village, after discussing this issue with Mandal level officials, decided to provide initial investment for households who were financially incapable; and those households could carry on construction from that stage onwards.

In Peddireddipalem, as there are many people who are migrant workers, and went off to other districts in search of work, when the construction took place, a few families were away from the GP and the construction of their toilets began at a later date.

One person worth meeting in Peddireddipalem is Tirupatamma. She lives in one of the backward colonies of the Peddireddipalem GP with her husband and two daughters. Recently, her family experienced a change, of attitude and of their living conditions. The family got a toilet constructed and the reason for this change was one of her daughters, who is completing her secondary education in the town close to the village.

Tirupatamma says that not having a toilet does not mean that one is comfortable defecating in the open. It was her daughter who educated them on the ill effects of open defecation on the health from the time she went to high

school. She stressed on constructing a toilet but financial constraints did not allow the family to go ahead with the daughter's idea.

AND HOW DID THE DAUGHTER ACHIEVE THIS BREAKTHROUGH?

By simply refusing to come home to stay or even visit as she was ashamed to defecate in the open. "This forced us to construct a toilet though there was no money," Tirupatamma says. At that point, Gram Panchayat members organised a meeting with all the village members to discuss about the Swatch Bharat Mission. So, the family decided to construct a toilet with financial assistance from SBM. Finally, the family constructed a toilet with the subsidy under the scheme.

"We would have constructed a toilet even if there was no financial assistance from the government; our daughter was very particular that we do it. But this scheme came at the right time and was very helpful for us," says Tirupatamma, Peddireddipalem GP.

In Peddireddipalem, the Sarpanch and ward members took a keen notice of the fact that construction of toilets does not translate into utilization and maintenance of the toilets. The Sarpanch has decided to employ a few people to watch over the areas where open defecation was frequent. By this, they want to ensure that people who are defecating in the open can be identified and further course of action can be determined to stop them from defecating in the open. There is also a fine of Rs. 1000 that the Panchayat is levying on members who defecate in the open.



Community member engaged in her daily routine, in the background is her IHHL



Community members interacting amongst themselves