The primary aim of any sanitation policy is to ensure safe defecation practices and not just constructing toilets. Despite completing 100% construction many GPs have not been able to achieve 100% utilization. While few say that they are habituated to open defecation, few others offer cultural reasons for delaying utilisation. One such example is from Viziarampuram Gram Panchayat (GP).

In a village that has around 800 people from 181 households, there were only 4 toilets until the advent of Swatch Bharat Mission (SBM).

With SBM in place, this GP was selected as a target GP to end open defecation. The Mandal official along with local leaders conducted a survey and established the number of toilets to be constructed to reach the 100% mark.

Post motivation activities, households with enough space constructed toilets in their house. Many others have faced challenges like lack of Space to construct toilets and lack of sufficient funds.

Sarpanch & the GP team assisted families without adequate funds by procuring construction material in bulk. Family members were also involved in construction process which reduced costs further. For families with spatial constraint community toilets with individual ownership was taken up as a solution.
One major barrier for sanitation in Vizianagaram is the cultural belief system. From the stage of construction, Vaastu (direction) and a good date to begin construction was given importance. Few families refused to even construct toilets if Vaastu was not good.

The GP team designed appropriate solutions for each of the problem; however, there is not much utilization.

The reason!

Most toilets were completed at a time, which is believed to be inauspicious by many. The next auspicious dates would arrive two months later and till then the newly constructed toilets would be locked away. Despite ensuring the necessary amount of water through pipes and taps from every street, there is a lag in utilization.

**A gap so long might reduce the impact created by motivation activities, thereby leading to no usage at all. What about utilizing the toilets then?**