

Safe Sanitation drive for Clean Milk

- The Amul Way

Amul is one of the pioneering milk co-operatives which have made it possible for millions of marginal and small farmers to transform their economic and social condition. However the success of the brand products such as milk, milk powder, butter, cheese, ghee, cocoa products, ice-cream, condensed milk etc. requires the safest standards in manufacturing. For this, it is imperative for the highest levels of hygiene and sanitation to be maintained. Through the FINISH partnership, many farmers and workers are involved. Creating safe sanitary conditions for them and their families is of prime importance.



Background

The story of Amul (Anand Milk Union Limited) inspired 'Operation Flood' and heralded the 'White Revolution' in India. In the 1940s, a group of farmers (who were milk producers as well) in Kaira District of Gujarat in India staged a protest against the practice of the marketing and distribution of milk being controlled by private traders and middlemen. As milk is perishable, the milk producers were compelled to sell the milk for whatever price was offered to them. The farmers realized that this exploitation could be checked only if they marketed the milk themselves through an organization. This led to the establishment of the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union, popularly known as Amul in Anand, Gujarat. The Union was formally registered on 14th December 1946. The Kaira Union also began pasteurizing the milk for the Bombay Milk Scheme in 1948 and this assured market proved a great incentive for the milk producers of the district.

The then Prime Minister of India, Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri realized the impact of the co-operative on the common farmers and proposed a national organization to replicate the Kaira Model. In 1965, the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) was established. In 1970, the NDDB replicated the village co-operative system all over India through the 'Operation Flood' programme. In 1973, the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) was established which sells the Amul brand products not only in India but overseas as well. The GCMMF covers 17 District Co-operative Milk Producers' Unions including Amul.

Socio economic background of operational area- Anand

Anand is located in the southern part of Gujarat and is an important industrial center. The district has 8 taluks of which the main ones are Anand (District Headquarters), Umreth, Ankav, Borsad and Khambat. Kheda, also known as Kaira has 13 taluks with Nadiad (District Headquarters), Mahemdabad, Kapadwanj, Matar and Kaira being the developed taluks.

Amul's milk production is backed by 1250 village level milk societies or dairy co-operatives. Amul encourages women to participate in the governance of the societies. To ensure quality for consumers, the GCMMF has supported member unions to strengthen infrastructure. The village milk societies and chilling centers have to be maintained hygienically. It is also important for dairy members to stay in clean surroundings because it has a direct relation to the quality of milk they supply. They have to be aware of proper sanitation and its impact on health and hygiene because it is a prerequisite for high quality milk. Milk invites bacteria and pathogens and gets spoiled easily. Household sanitation is of prime importance and for this, the producers need competent support services.

Under the Clean Milk Programme, Amul started an initiative to generate awareness on safe sanitation. In addition, financial assistance and technical support were also needed. In 2010 Amul, with the help of the National Housing Bank, piloted the safe sanitation programme by constructing 5000 safe sanitation systems in selected villages. Later, the demand for household sanitation systems increased so Amul had to extend its operation.

FINISH stepped in to assist the sanitation programme in two districts- Anand and Kaira. FINISH and Amul entered into a partnership in 2011 setting a target of constructing 10,000 household sanitation systems in Anand and Kaira.

Implementing the Sanitation Programme- FINISH support

Amul conducted a base line survey with support from FINISH to identify appropriate villages for implementing the programme. In the first year 41 villages covering 11,522 households and in the 2nd year 61 villages covering 17,763 households were identified. The findings were:

- Sanitation density had to be increased
- Usage of sanitation facilities had to be raised

To do this, awareness had to be created through IEC material. With support from FINISH, Amul produced pamphlets and posters on the importance of household sanitation. The costs involved and the availability and sources of funds were also specified. FINISH conducted training programmes for animators and a film ' Let's make it Right ' was shown to the community members. The actual construction of toilets was done by masons trained by FINISH.

Synopsis of Film

To promote the FINISH programme, the project partners invested in a video 'Let's make it Right' explaining the reasons to build a toilet.

The film is set in a village in South India where conventional ideas of pollution and purity are deeply entrenched. Absence of good practices in hygiene and sanitation results in the spread of waterborne diseases. Lack of a toilet at home is particularly difficult for women, who experience loss of dignity and privacy. The film introduces the concept of 'a toilet for every home' through the story of a family.

The father cannot understand why his family should not continue their traditional practice of open defecation, until he is confronted by a series of events that changes his way of thinking. People of the village become aware of the connection between illness and open defecation at a meeting held in a village temple. They discuss their problems with a representative from an NGO and are assured of assistance in the form of loans and other schemes.

The villagers pledge to become '100% open defecation free' and MAKE IT RIGHT.

Amul secured a loan of Rs. 7 crores from the National Housing Bank(NHB) for the construction of toilets. It extends zero interest loans to community members and repays the interest to NHB through its own funds. In Phase 1 Rs. 2.4 crores were used for the construction of 5000 toilets and in Phase 2 Rs. 4.6 crores were used for the construction of 10,000 toilets with support from FINISH.

Constructing toilets

Amul facilitates the construction of toilets through its partner NGOs. There are 15 NGOs who support Amul in executing the sanitation programme. The list of families needing toilets is provided to the partners. The materials needed for the construction are purchased in bulk. The actual construction is carried out by masons trained by FINISH. The cost effective toilets are constructed using leach pits. The cost per unit is Rs. 7200. Although the construction is undertaken by partner agencies and carried out by trained masons, the co-operative societies play an active role in monitoring the construction work and managing the programme. Village level meetings are held regularly and the secretaries of the societies monitor the construction.

The Challenge

The depth for the leach pit needs to be only 1 meter but the community prefers a depth of 4-5 meters. Despite repeated instructions, the community continues to dig deeper. This not only increases the construction cost of the pits but it also increases the chances of groundwater pollution. FINISH faced the challenge of convincing the community to follow their regulations.

Impact

Under the FINISH-Amul partnership, the target of constructing 10,000 safe sanitation systems has been achieved. 276 villages have been reached and sanitation density has been created. For eg.

| <i>Name of the Village</i> | <i>Sanitation density during base line survey (%)</i> | <i>Sanitation density achieved (%)</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Pirozpur | 13.19 (total no. of existing | 72.80 (newly constructed-217) |

| | | |
|-----------|--|------------------------------|
| | toilets- 48) | |
| Apruji | 26.7 (total no. of existing toilets- 100 | 81.60(newly constructed-306) |
| Galkipura | 41.24(total no. of existing toilets- 80) | 80.93(newly constructed-157) |

Village milk cooperative collection recovery responsibility

Loan amounts are recovered from beneficiaries through the District Cooperative Sangh by deducting an installment amount of Rs. 100/- per month from their milk bill till the loan amount is completely repaid.

Implementation strategy

The Dairy Co-operative Society (DSC) prepares a list of APL/BPL milk pouring members who wish to build toilets. The list is submitted to Amul by DSC, and then Amul arranges for the construction of the toilet by engaging local NGOs. After completion of all the toilets in a village, the bill is submitted by the NGO with signatures from all the beneficiaries for payment to AMUL. After post verification from their end, Amul claims the eligible subsidy amount from DRDA .

Each stumbling block, each obstacle can be turned into a success story. The Amul success has shown that 48% of the income of the rural households in Kaira District is derived from dairy farming. This has helped them to liberate themselves from poverty and elevate their standard of living. FINISH has played a major role in improving sanitary conditions which adds value to the products.



Working with Bharwad Community

Bharwad is a pastoral community generally herding sheep or goats. Traditionally, Bharwad community leads a nomadic life style and they keep on moving from one place to another with their cattle. Though they have started settling, it is not always possible for them to arrange all basic facilities like, permanent house, drinking water, sanitation facilities etc. as many of them do not have land entitlements.

Amul started to work with them intensively in 8-10 villages. Though, the community has started to settle down, their settlements are very sporadic and are typically in the shape of a hamlet. Village meetings were organized and the community was made aware of various aspects related to their cattle's health and their own health. Slowly, the issue of sanitation was also brought into the picture and the Bharwad community joined the sanitation programme. Amul and FINISH supported construction of around 1,500 sanitation systems in their communities.



AMUL was awarded by Aaj Tak for health and sanitation work in Gujarat on 27th Aug 2013.