

Redefining Norms of Inclusive Development in Maharashtra

And then there was one—who showed the way!

The dice was always loaded against Aashish Charnu Chavan. He hails from the Scheduled Caste Pardhi community in Yavatmal district, which is known for its deviant ways. While he is among the select young males to have completed his education till class 12 but that didn't excite him at first. Education is clearly not an aspiration for Pardhi children nor is health, hygiene and sanitation, for that matter. Most families eke out a living from daily wages, and the bread-winners are mostly women. They can be seen preparing illicit liquor in their houses, playing cards, laughing, loitering around or even fighting. While this kind of lifestyle may seem normal for the Pardhis, for others it is 'taboo' territory. Government schemes either do not reach them or when they do, the beneficiaries don't have the foggiest idea as to how they can benefit from them. Aashish grew up in this trying background but his father possessing a progressive bent of mind, made him study.

For over five decades, the Pardhis are dispersedly staying in Kalamb city which in local parlance is known as Pardhibeda. This area has been undertaken for a sanitation and hygiene program by Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) and implemented by RDO FINISH. As a part of the program, the team of community workers spread awareness about constructing toilets, using them regularly and adopting good hygiene practices. The experience in Pardhibeda posed a major challenge, to begin with. As Snehal, one of the community workers recalls: "During my initial visits I was scared by their knee-jerk reactions and even made up my mind to quit. After a few visits with team lead Shrikant Rathod, it was decided to induct one of the Pardhis in the program so that he or she could work for their own community."

This was easier said than done. Few came forward and the ones who did were not fit for the challenge. During one such interview session, Shrikant came across Aashish. He could hardly communicate, was very shy and the job profile needed him to be otherwise. On the positive side, he showed an inclination to learn and more importantly, wanted to do something to better his life. Shrikant decided to take a risk and give him a chance. That was ten months back! Aashish is very much a part of the team now, conducts awareness sessions, follows up with individuals, shares his progress as well concerns in the meetings, much like other team members. As a result of rigorous follow-up and awareness drives, out of 65 households from Pardhibeda, 45 households constructed toilets in their homes. He confidently shares that he can now change people's behaviour and bring about a positive change in their lives.

Being the youngest in the team, he is also pampered by others. He wants to continue working in the development sector and wants his community to progress, especially the young ones. His family is now worried that he might be over qualified to find himself a wife in his community. But that is least of his concerns, for the present!☺.



Aashish convincing a family to build and use toilets and (right) leading a children's rally

Change is the only constant in life for RDO motivators

It is not change but the resistance to change that comes in the way of behavior change. In this regard, overcoming challenges and bringing about change to make ODF a sustainable activity, has been Finish Society's constant endeavor. In one such project in Kalamb Nagar Panchyat in Yavatmal district there is the community live in ward no.11. Here RDO motivators find that some of the people who take money from nagar panchyat for toilet construction are not able to build their toilet for various reasons. The reasons look unsurmountable at first. In one such household, motivators found that Valat Ali Karamat Ali, (both 43), laborers and residents of Tapeshwari Kalamb Division-5 was trying to avoid them or treat them lightly. But not ones to give up lightly, they set about to win his trust and then motivate him to build a toilet since the benefits that would accrue to him were plenty. They listed the disadvantages of Open Defecation and how the diseases stealthily enter our homes. They then give a live demonstration of sludge through the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS). Due to constant follow-up and guidance of motivators, the duo built a toilet and have started using them regularly.



After Completion of toilet.

Taking a different route

In the second case, Ramesh Gulab Neware (38), a laborer from Indira ward Ghatanji was not willing to understand the reason behind not constructing a toilet. The motivators had to take a different route to make him see reason. They told him that if he did not avail the benefits of constructing a toilet then he would be deprived of the benefits of cheap grains facility which would be stopped. This made him realize that he would stand to lose on many counts. Hence, within two weeks, he got a toilet constructed and the RDO motivators then ensured that his family began to use it regularly, thanks to regular follow-ups.

In the case of rickshaw driver Pandurang Ramrao Telang, (32) Netaji Nagar, the motivators used to a similar route to make him construct a toilet and ensure regular usage.



After completion of toilet

The will to succeed

In Netaji Nagar ward, most people used to go for open defecation since there was only one mobile toilet available in the area. However, in the mobile toilet there was no ventilator or window, so they did not use it. In this instance, the RDO team met the district administration to plead their case for building community toilets. The department, in turn, took the permission of the Railways to allow them to use their land for constructing the community toilet. Today, the community toilet is being regularly used because of the RDO motivators were in regular touch with the community and also the concerned government department through regular follow-ups.



After Competition of Community Toilet Netaji Nagar Yavatmal.

RDO Trust, HSBC go beyond hygiene mandate in Yavatmal

When two well-meaning organizations join hands, the results can be uplifting. To contextualize the present story, RDO Trust is implementing a comprehensive program to help a realize the sanitation goals of Yavatmal district of Maharashtra. The commitment is to make the district open defecation free (ODF) and to make it a Swachh city supported by the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC). The aim of the program is to facilitate local administration in ensuring sustainable positive change in sanitation and hygiene status of five Nagar Panchayats and two Nagar Parishads in Yavatmal.

Team RDO Trust is going beyond its mandate to conduct a number of activities in the project area to achieve the goals within the stipulated timelines. Some of the major activities include regular door-to-door visits to confirm the availability and status of toilets in individual household and also ensure its usage. Activities like Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and School-Led Total Sanitation (SLTS) activities are used to trigger the community and let them know about the importance of sanitation and hygiene. The idea is also to motivate them by creating intensive awareness campaigns regarding safe hygiene practice and ensure sustained behavior change. This entails rigorous and regular follow-ups. RDO Trust is also

creating awareness by organizing innovative events like drawing competition on sanitation and hygiene related themes, doing street plays, conducting rallies, interacting with SHGs, RWAs and other ward level committees. These are being done to make them realize their responsibilities to achieve the goals within the given timeline. The RDO team is also conducting Mason Training programs to enhance the skill of the masons working in the project area. This is being done specially to make them skilled about the different technologies available for toilets construction to make it sustainable and affordable to the end-user. The local government is providing all the support needed to conduct different activities smoothly within the project area and RDO Trust is also keeping in regular touch with the local administration and reporting to them all the activities we conduct on a regular basis.

The Trust is taking initiative beyond their immediate scope of work. For instance, the RDO team is conscious of the fact that healthy sanitation practices should lead to better health practices. The team in tandem with the health department staff conducts periodic health check-ups in the project area. This directly benefits the local residents and on May 2018, health check-up camp was organized in Netaji Nagar in Yavatmal. More than 80 people benefited from this camp. The success of this activity can be gauged from the fact that local newspapers gave adequate coverage in the city pages. This is one more feather in the RDO Trust team's cap!



Mason Dyaneshwar is now a local celebrity!

RDO Trust and HSBC are going where no one has ventured before! The initiative is to implement a comprehensive program to help and realize the sanitation goals of Yavatmal district of Maharashtra to make it open defecation free and ensure the making of a Swachh city.

In the project area of Ghatanji Nagar Parishad, what stands out is the Mason Training program carried out by RDO Trust. During the course of this training, a mason named Dyaneshwar Vitthal Choudhary little realized that he would become a local celebrity, of sorts. The well-meaning mason managed to construct a scientifically mapped toilet for a mere Rs 8,000. And mind you, this feat was carried out with without any government subsidy. The RDO team has reasons to feel proud since the mason has become the talk of the town. His services are much sought after, in neighbouring area. Other villagers and ward community members call him to construct his innovative t low-budget toilets in their homes too.

Name of Mason- Dyaneshwar Vitthal Choudhary

Age-29

Contact no-9552985469

Address-At Po.Anji ,Taluka-Ghatanji, Dist-Yavatmal

Toilet Construction Expenditure quotation

- 1.Bricks 500 – 2500 Rs.
- 2.Cement Tank 2 – 1500 Rs.
- 3.Cement Bag 3- 900 Rs.
- 4.Door 1 – 700 Rs.
- 5.Toilet Seat- 150Rs.
- 6.PVC Pipe 4 feet – 100Rs.
- 7.Sand-800Rs.
- 8.Mason labour charge-1500Rs.

Total Amount for Toilet construction is Rs.8150.

So far, Dyaneshwar has constructed 150 toilets on Rs.8150.He doing great job for the poor community and people.

