



JEEViKA

Women who stood up for society!

*A collection of Field Stories documented
by TARU Leading Edge Pvt. Ltd.*

This compilation of Case Study has been done by TARU Leading Edge Pvt. Ltd.

Documented and Written By: *Joy Daniel Pradhan*

Photographs: *Joy Daniel Pradhan*

Edited By: *Amit Shahi and Chehak Ahuja*

Technical Inputs: *Rajiv Kumar Singh (State Coordinator, Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan and SBM(G)),
Ajit Ranjan (State Project Manager; JEEVIKA), Apolenarius Purty (State Project Manager; JEEVIKA) & Amit Shahi (TARU Leading Edge)*

Creative Inputs: *Chehak Ahuja*

Design: *Helvetica Advertising Pvt. Ltd.*

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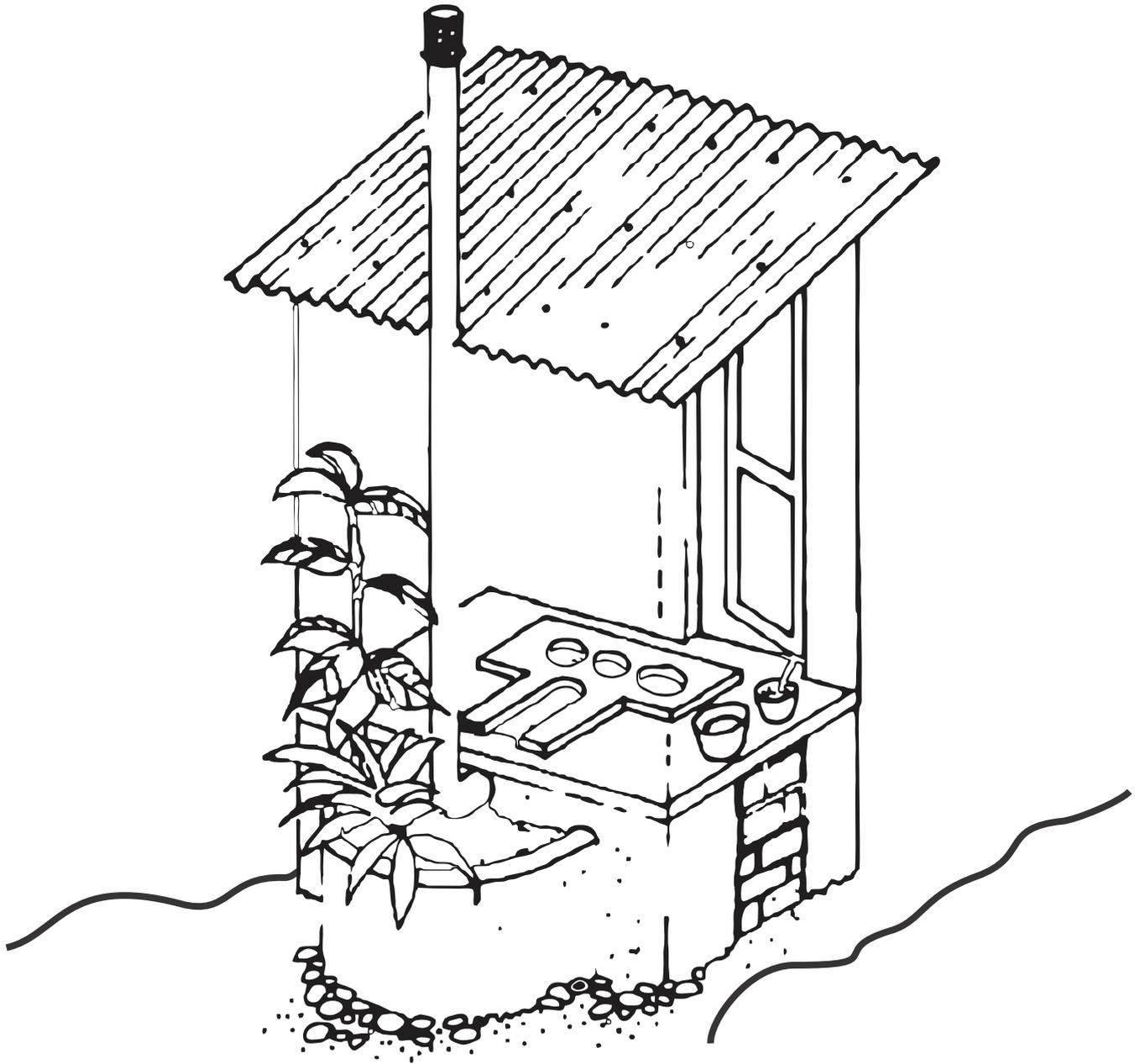
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ABOUT

'Swachhta – A peep into Reality', Is a compendium of Human Stories from the hinterland of Bihar. It presents the people's version of **Swachh Bihar** and associated processes, yojna and abhiyans. The stories aren't all about positives but is about the perception of people benefitting, implementing and ensuring the Success or challenges in Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan and Central aided Swachh Bharat Mission.



1

Perspective to ODF

“Jeevika's implementation of Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan has brought in a new dimension to ODF, which is more about people than about counting number of cemented structures built. Moreover it has brought in livelihood options for needy Jeevika Didis like me.” Said Neelam Singh of Soniya SHG of Gurmiya in Lalganj, Vaishali. She is the WASH coordinator now according to her, whose role is firstly to convince the community of the need of clean environment, secondly let the people know of the convenience that they have with a toilet at home, thirdly facilitate the available support of SHAN to poor didis, fourthly keep a watch on usage of constructed toilets and fifthly talk about the maintenance of the toilets. She smiles and tells **“Like our SHG has Panchsutra these are ODF's Panchsutra.”**

She recalls that once she approached the BPM to let him know of the distress situation and if there are any available work opportunities. Because her husband has no job and the small land holding did not have proper yield. They had to take care of two children. That is when she was asked if she could motivate people to build toilets and her remuneration will be, Rs. 50 per toilet built. Initially she tells she was skeptical, but she took it up because she had complete faith on Project Staff of Jeevika.

And yet again she tells that Jeevika did not let her expectations down. In a month's time she has been able to get 100 household to build 100 toilets and earned Rs.5000. She tells that with the coordinated efforts of CRP Didis, the SHG's and Project support funds, ODF is not an impossible task but will take a little time for the community to accept it. She continues **“Building of toilets like earlier had happened is easy but making people use it and for long is slow and gradual process. And as a Jeevika didi, am the motivator and a beneficiary, therefore like I would want to own the resource up I feel everybody should do the same.”** According to her the level of acceptability also increases in the community when one amongst them tries to cajole and explain them the need of ODF I the village.

Concluding she tells, **“As an outsider, numbers are important but being a community member the utility is paramount. Therefore I focus on the utility.”**



“

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2

Decentralizing Governance



“Jeevika! They are my Arms and Brains, It is a connect with the people and places other agency would reach out to” said Muni Devi (32) the women Mukhiya of Bidupur Panchayat. She further tells that Jeevika helps her track the most needy to prioritize schemes such as, Lohiya Swachh Bihar Abhiyan also thanks to the School monitoring committee's the monitoring of teachers have become easy and schools more efficient.



She adds, the ODF program, which the Mukhiya's office has to monitor and facilitate, after Jeevika's intervention has become the most optimum, due to the collaborative efforts over 2000 toilets were constructed in the Panchyat, also all efforts are being made to declare it ODF. **“Today it is easy to communicate because earlier for delivery of services the prashashan had to reach to the janta but today it needs to reach till the Jeevika Didis and everybody is a Jeevika Didi.”**

She attributes this change to the level of awareness that gets enhanced once a person gets into Jeevika fold. She continues, **“I am a first time Mukhiya, that too a woman, I really would have faced lot of problems if Jeevika wouldn't have been here.”** She tells that Jeevika Didis take ownership of all the schemes that are brought in by the government, which makes the implementation of it easy.

She quotes Jeevika as the bridge between Panchayat and the people, at the same time it helps the representative of people like her to be better equipped with facts of her area when she puts up an issue or case at the district or state forum.



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3

CLTS – Community Triggering



“Sauch nahi goo kahiye, tab na legaga ke humare khane aur deh mein goo jaata hai jab hum bahar tatti karke mitti nahi dalte,” Sending ewww's and chills of disgust down the spine of women, men and children alike. This act was being performed by Community Resource Person Lalita Devi from Kurhani Muzaffarpur and the Community Mobilizer Pooja Devi in Shyampurpakri of Lalganj in Vaishali. The team was doing the colorful resource mapping exercise and placing yellow color to mark places of open defecation. This they call triggering of the community, also referred to as CLTS sometimes (as per Officials), here they were explaining how the particles of feces travel in air, water and flies to food and stomach of people.



The disgust in people did not discourage the mood of the act. They further had some urine and feces combined in water and food and offered to people to eat. The people now went aghast and some were even furious. Taking the cues from reaction and mood, they went on to explain how the same happens with them if they do not stop defecating outside also mentioning that if they do not have toilets constructed, people should follow some basic things of covering the feces with ash or dirt and afterwards washing hands before touching anything.

Now taking some respite from making the community understand the need of toilets, Lalita tells, **“Complaining that people are not building toilets is not the case. I am a poor Jeevika Didi. I was reluctant in building one at my place, it took systematic understanding of the need and I took support from SHG to build it.”** According to her it is easy to compare Toilets with ceremonies for the urban dwelling 'Pariyojna Adhikaris' but when it comes to the Didis it is not a part of the culture. Therefore according to her, **“Toilets unless made a part of culture will remain an additional expenditure being forced on community. But when the people themselves understand the need and feel the necessity of building it, it would lead in true sense being 100% ODF.”**

She takes excuse from this as now she was to take that feces combined food to bury in the ground. Curious villagers follow her to where she demonstrates how to put 'Tatti pe Mitti' and finally makes everyone vow to put 'tatti pe mitti' and try constructing toilets.

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4

Trigerring Society



“Hum Nigrani nahi aansaran karte hain school mein”

Explaining the difference, Sanju Devi (early thirties) of Pravbhat SHG in Belai, of Goshi in Jehanabad tells that she has two children (son and daughter), one studies in class 5 and the other in class 7 at the Prathamik Vidilaya (Belai).

“**Bachon ka Bhavishiya hai Trigger**”, she tells. According to her SMC women take it as no service but it is an opportunity to ensure quality education for a good future of their own children. Thus the future of their children acts as the motivating factor.

Now with sarcasm she tells, **‘Trigger’** is the buzz word in the village. She tells that they inspect the school common toilets for cleanliness, the functioning of hand washing station and drinking water facilities and if they find any discrepancies, the knowledge of ODF – SLTS is applied. She again tells, **“The children are much smarter as they have also under gone SLTS (School Lead Total Sanitation) training, the children form better nigrani committee.”** She suggests that children can better motivate people when it comes to building as asset.

Therefore she suggests that constructive monitoring of various activities and mandates of the school is the duty of 'School Management Committee', she adds that, **“Its not to threaten teachers and staffs of the school nor show off power or supervise and interfere in all affairs.”**

Continuing she tell it is to be of help and support to the usually under staffed schools also to learn about the functionings of school to create more enabling environment for children to avail fully the benefit of education.

“

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5

Jeevika Zindagi



“ODF drive not only benefits the community and Didis but also people like us, who do not have adequate qualification for higher jobs nor are fully illiterate to get employed as menial labor in village,” said Papu Singh at Laxminarayanpur of Lalganj in Vaishali. He informs that he is now the WASH motivator and his job involves to motivate people to make toilets at home.

He tells that the work is for social good as many diseases that drain the household's income of the poor will now be avoided. Also it has become a livelihood source for many like him who would earlier migrate to other states in search of work and recalls the horror of ill-treatment in Haryana during his last year's migration tenure. He tells **“Jeevika has generated an additional option of income, now I don't have to migrate. I get Rs. 50 per toilet built in the Panchayat.”**

According to him being wash motivator is as profitable as migrating. He continues to say that he would have come back with Rs. 25,000 to 30,000 for all expenses of the family in village, if he went out. Also he informs that he has a technique of targeting 125- 130 Households every month and earn around Rs. 6000 and staying with family. He would make around Rs. 36,000 or more once he gets more skilled. According to him Jeevika has been able to create community based ODF drivers who will act as social forces to root the idea of not defecating in open.

He tells that his whole family has become a 'Jeevika parivar' as his wife is also an active member. Recognizing her zeal, she was made the Community Mobilizer and now their primary source of income is Jeevika and Kheti. **“Aab Zindagi mein Jeevika hi Jeevika hai”**

“

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”



6

ODF Drive with Community Resource Persons – Process Story



Hymns about how unity leads to change resound in the under- construction premises of 'Madhya Vidyalaya Reekhar.' A scenic village on the banks of river Son and Gandak. The atmosphere was filled with songs and laughter of Jeevika Didis who were interacting with the four CRP Didis from Sakra in Muzaffarpur. Runa Devi of Pooja SHG, Anita Devi of Mirza SHG, Rajkumari of Biswakarma SHG and Pramila Devi of Sundarsh SHG, have been in the village for almost a month now, and were happily sharing their experiences of what takes to make an ODF village.

Runa Devi starts, who also in course of working in the village has fallen ill and is quite angry as she finds that members of the SHG's in Reekhar are not very efficient in carrying out the Panchsutra. She says institutional discipline is must...if we want to move ahead, tells, **“ODF is a term used by Officer's but it is a state of change in the lives of us, the poor Didis. It helps us not only to avoid the diseases caused but also helps women to carry out basic natural things without fear, shame or guilt.”**

She shares it is not fair to compare one expense with the other and so she avoids bringing such discussions while encouraging members for toilet construction. She shared, “officials would often say during village interaction that you people spend so much money in festivals and marriages why can't you build a toilet? They should understand that festivals and marriages are obligations and if not followed, the

household might become unacceptable, therefore but toilet is not an obligation and to make one it has to be made a part, the culture of hygiene and sanitation needs to be brought in first, which would surface the latent need of a toilet.”

Now, amazed at the concepts of BCC imparted, they are asked if they have learnt since, immediately it is said that ODF- CRP drive is a planned process and is very strategic and timed. Again, she narrates, **“It starts with training the identified CRP, a five days residential training, It has in the morning, the practical's and in the evening classroom teachings. Then we are sent to districts were we work.”** According to them, their drive gets divided into immersion with village community, gauging discontent, triggering, awareness drive on support mechanism and follow ups. Therefore, for the first 2-3 days they would go around door to door and randomly interact with people and let the villager's know about them, then an Aam Sabha with most of the village PRI members, Service delivery personnel's is called and they speak regarding the construction of toilet and stopping open defecation.

To this Pramila Devi (elder in the group) tells, **“Aam Sabha is chaotic, people have contesting opinion and it is loud and is usually not conclusive, but we understand the mood of the villagers.”**

After Aam Sabha, in about 2-3 days, a Rangoli is held also called the CLTS (we are unsure of the full form they say and smile.), initiated by all the Jeevika Didis. Working with the colors, the activity of resource mapping village is done at first. Most men, women, children and the elderly turn up. According to them Rangoli is one event that becomes kind of festival where everybody tries to flaunt their knowledge about the village. After having identified the roads, houses, school, agriculture fields, Anganwadi centers etc. the villagers are asked if they like their village, while the most are busy appreciating their creativity in resource mapping, the question of where they go to defecate is dropped and those areas are dotted with the color yellow. Because of the white, green and red colors on the map, the yellow color which is used to represent defecation stands out, therefore kind of looks disturbing. Then slowly lots of yellow marks make the beautiful village map patchy. Then the CRP Didis tell them as to how with wind the feces get into every household and spread the yellow color over the village map.

At this moment they say, that at most events people go quite with disgust also they are informed that people who defecate outside are unjust to people who have toilets in the homes and also make them sick for no fault of theirs in spreading this. There is

“ We think and say 'Jo Jeevika ko Bhule Who Zindagi mein Jhule' but it would be much easier if the staff of Jeevika visited more often to boost our zeal and also provide us the dress that was prescribed. But we are happy that we are helping our Didis of Jeevika in the process of change. ”

a little confrontation usually between people with toilets and the one's without but people in villages understand the resources a person has therefore they ask what can be done. Here the villagers are informed about Lohiya Swachh Bihar Yojna, Jeevika's role also regarding available financial helps in SHG's as SHAN funds.



Also, the people who go out to defecate are asked to carry a 'Khurpi' to scrape soil and cover it with a Slogan of 'Daldo Ji Daldo Tati pe Mitti Daldo', then the 4th and most challenging task starts; of following up early morning, afternoon and evening, where the CRP's move around with a whistle and when they see people openly defecating blow whistle and say, 'Daldo Ji Daldo Tati pe Mitti Daldo' and also ask if they are carrying a Khurpi. The CRP didis recall how at times people tell them to cover their feces and they immediately agree but out of shame they don't let them and start doing it. With this vigilante drive they also constantly organize Ratri Chaupals to discuss how toilets can be constructed, School Nigrani Committees with children are formed to vigil.

Now getting tired of the narration, they say that the indoor defecation exercise is not difficult, only people need to be made aware of the need. But concluding they say. **“We think and say 'Jo Jeevika ko Bhule Who Zindagi mein Jhule' but it would be much easier if the staff of Jeevika visited more often to boost our zeal and also provide us the dress that was prescribed. But we are happy that we are helping our Didis of Jeevika in the process of change.”**

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8

Honeycomb Simplified



“I don't mind, working in this scorching heat because it is for the well- being of my family,” said Rekha Kumari (32) of Shiv Mahadev SHG in the village of Nurlapur Ward 6 of Khudabanpur in Begusarai. She in detail explains that it was her ego that was hurt during the trigger process and she wanted to act to ensure the well- being of her family. She recalls the graphic details of feces going into food, moreover she felt responsible for many of the avoidable diseases that her husband and children had suffered in the past.

“I did not waste time, after completely understanding the process, I realized that it's a no loss proposition to construct a toilet. It will only be a contributor to good health, no more safety issues or holding back nature's call. Also the Sona Khad that will be extracted is very good for the fields, in addition, the government is going to reward us.”

She tells that she her husband and her children are all involved in building this toilet because if hard work is put in the utility of it will be realized, also secretly smirks and says she will be cutting down on labor cost. She then asks and tells the whole mechanics of the Lease Pit Toilets.





“A toilet takes 3 days to build and measures 4 ft by 4 ft area. It contains of one superstructure that houses the pot and I have decided to put two taps one on the inside and the other on the exterior. Then a control chamber with concrete gate control, that will direct the flushed feces into the pits constructed. The pits are actual magic, two pits are constructed with one meter diameter, gap in between and depth; one meter is the cardinal value here. Then bricks are to be arranged in a honey comb manner against the walls of the pit to soak and water to seep into the ground. The base will be roughly cemented (doesn't need plastering) and then the pits will be covered. One pit works at one time, when one gets full, the direction of flushed feces is made towards the other. The filled pit would compost and make 'sona khad' for application in the fields. Also for poor didis who do not have space there will be only one pit and a concrete wall diametrically to split it into half so that the mechanism repeats.” The confidence which she exhibited during the discussion says a lot of potential of honey comb technology and how it will impact her life and livelihood.

She after narrating the story gets back to work because the master mason facilitated by Jeevika would leave if she delayed as he has a lot of toilets to build.

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9

Importance of Knowledge Transfer in Technology Transfer



“We made bad toilets, which when flood waters came and receded, filled the pits with silt and soil,” said Vinita Devi of Chandika SHG in KhurrampurChakour, Matihai, Begusarai. She continues to say that there were a few people who accompanied the Block Administration, these were the middle men who took up responsibility of constructing the toilets for the people in the village. Also these people constructed toilets in 'short cut.' She says, the honey comb – Lease pit – was not followed.





Vinita Devi tells, **“For easier and quick work finishing, the contractor put rings in the pits that were dug. The water could not seep. Also at places the pit was dug too deep or too shallow and the adherence to the rule of keeping drinking water sources at distance was not followed.”** She then narrates the event where, Madam's and Sir's from Jeevika came and spoke about sona khad, ground water recharge and the utility of two pit design, and there they said none of this was followed and most of the toilets built with rings got clogged and filled due to siltation.

She then herself fixed the toilet to honeycomb elevated design. Breaking the ring and making one pit more shallow and the other too deep. Therefore leveled the structure according to the prescribed norms. She concludes by saying that if it was not for Jeevika, she would have had a defunct toilet by now and also a polluted drinking water source.

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10

Ensuring Assuring Technology



An approximately 2.5 meter deep pit with a huge diameter of over 2 meter and another, with one meter by one meter depth stood side by side in the Village of Ittawarpur – Shishola in Lalganj of Vaishali. Shashi Bhushan Ram the book keeper in the panchayat indicates the depth by putting a bamboo stick in the yard pits. He is responsible for upkeep of records and minutes in 7 VO's with almost 75 SHG's. He tells that the Panchayat there has over 3500 households and 150 Raj Mistrries that will lay the bricks and design the toilets. Out of which only 12 were trained regarding the lease pit – honey comb toilet model.

Shashi Bhushan continues, **“There has been no lapse in content, motivation or method. Jeevika puts in best of the people to train the Raj Mistrries in the Master Mason Trainings, but it's a day long affair and that means if the masons attend it they loose 400-500 of their daily wage, therefore they come mark their attendance and leave.”** He tells nobody can be or should be held responsible for this problem here because the mason has responsibilities of feeding his family with the wage earnings. And according to him the modules have contents on the technology in detail starting from the depth of pits to the amount and proportion of construction material that is to be used, but these trainings offer no remuneration for the day, and in a village like this most people are hand to mouth, sparing a day would mean sparing that day's livelihood.

Therefore, he with a few member's standing there say that they are planning to provide SHG members complete knowledge of the technology through special VO level training programs, so members can go from house to house and explain the technology. Therefore they would have drives to oversee the civil work of the construction to ensure proper technology is applied on ground. Now getting busy in helping the member to fill the mammoth pit with earth to level it says, **“If these helpless seeming women decide to take up something no force on earth with any help can stop them.”** According to him he gets motivated by the evident change that Jeevika displays in the life of the poor.



“

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11

Check – 'Tatti pe Mitti'



“Ghar Mein hai fridge, TV, lekin sauch ke liye jaye bahar Bibi,” and a sweet hymn depicting a whiney young bride complaining of being scarred of snakes and stumping thorns, was what could be made out from the street march in hue of darkness married with the rained marred paths at 04:00 hours by women who call themselves Jeevika Didis of Khusboo VO. This was in Reekhar of Lalganj (Vaishali). It seemed like a scene from any movie or advertisement which shows empowered women on a mission. Yes! When asked, these group of over 60 women had a purpose of taking this long walk together around the Panchayat. They call this “Prabhat Phera, Morning Nigrani Round etc”. According to them, this is an attempt at reinforcing the ideas of shunning open defecation and even if people do defecate in open because not having a toilet, then they should carry a 'Khurpi' (spade) to cover the feces after defecation.



The group carried a whistle and blew it every time they saw somebody defecating in the middle of the act and would loudly shout – “Tatti Pe miti daliyega”! Also when they spot anyone walking out with a 'Lota' they would ask 'bhaia khurpi kahan hai' and people would flash it at them in rage.

After having walked almost 5-7 km with these women, they asked if we were disgusted with what they did. Then they themselves added, “It is disgusting. And we do not like shaming our own fellow villagers. But to eliminate open defecation all this is needed.” According to them, their VO has been disbursing SHAN funds as an aid to construct the toilets at home to its members who cannot afford it on their own. Also interestingly, a member named Kiran Devi tells, “Construction of toilet is ODF for the administration but for Jeevika the usage, upkeep and making it a habit is what counts.”

Now having taken a tiring, abusive, brawly dawn walk, they women get back to their usual day's activities. When asked if they aren't tired, they say with a smile, “This phera is as important as cooking healthy meal or sending children to school, healthy and clean environment is a necessity too, therefore we don't get tired.”

“ Ghar Mein hai fridge, TV, lekin sauch ke liye jaye bahar Bibi ”



12

Jankari ka Haq



“For the project implementers it's easy to call the 12000 rupees a reward but for the poor it is the source to sanitation.”

“Toilet is a need. It's not a means to gain the reward of Rs. 12000/- from the government. We are members of Jeevika, and have learnt to check and verify things. As we do the same for purchases under FSF, we are doing the same before reconstructing toilets,” said Sita Devi of Durga SHG in Tara VO at Gandhigram Bindtoli in Tilgharia Dakshin Muradpur in Kurshela of Katihar.

The women continued saying that this place is a doab between the Koshi and Ganges rivers and is inundated every year for at least three months. And we would be amazed to understand the pattern of migration which people from city fail to comprehend before forcing schemes. After the floods, the lands are tilled and the nutrient rich silt soil is cultivated. Immediately after the tilling and cultivation, the men move to cities and other states in search of livelihood. Then during the Kharif harvest they come back and the same land is tilled for Rabi crops. They again migrate and are back before the floods at the time for harvest. Here the whole community gathers for harvest and resettlement of crops, livestock's and family during the floods.



Therefore two things get reflected, first, most households have built toilets earlier which now are mostly defunct because nobody used the honey-comb pit technology (Sita Devi tells she saw it in her parental home at Amdabad block as there the Honey-Comb model is even made flood proof). Also, the villagers have been misinformed that even if they have a toilet already, they would be incentivized if they constructed toilets, which she again tells has happened in the near- by panchayat and it has been over an year since the villagers have not received any money.

Then an old woman named Kundan Devi (widow) of Durga SHG tells, **“For the project implementers it's easy to call the 12000 rupees a reward but for the poor it is the source to sanitation. And it becomes important for us to be assured of this.”** Also the VO members insist that adapting to dubious means to get the money and the implementer's target is not just. Somebody from the crowd says, **“Sauchalay pe samuch jankari ka haq hai hum logon ka,”** to this the women of the VO also resound clarity is what is they ask at all functionaries levels of the scheme and because they have an adventurous ordeal round the year they wouldn't be able to make rounds at block office.



Somebody tells, for three months they live on the Railway Lines here because they don't get submerged. The Priyojna should also plan construction of public toilets and the VO members can take charge of the cleanliness. And the rendezvous finishes with warm smiles and cold thought of being stuck between realities and being the missionary of development.

“ Toilet is a need. It's not a means to gain the reward of Rs. 12000/- from the government. We are members of Jeevika, and have learnt to check and verify things. As we do the same for purchases under FSF, we are doing the same before reconstructing toilets. ”



13

Curious Case of Non - ODF



“ODF is a technical official term, but for us Jeevika's Didis it is about cultivating hygienic habits and being responsible towards each other by not openly defecating,” said Manti Devi (in early twenties) of Shiv SHG of Shankar VO in Manikpur Pakri in Itwarpur Shishola of Lalganj in Vaishali. The mother of two little children happens to be the community mobiliser in ward number 5. Her husband works as a wage laborer in other states and visit's for few months in a year when agriculture labor is available.

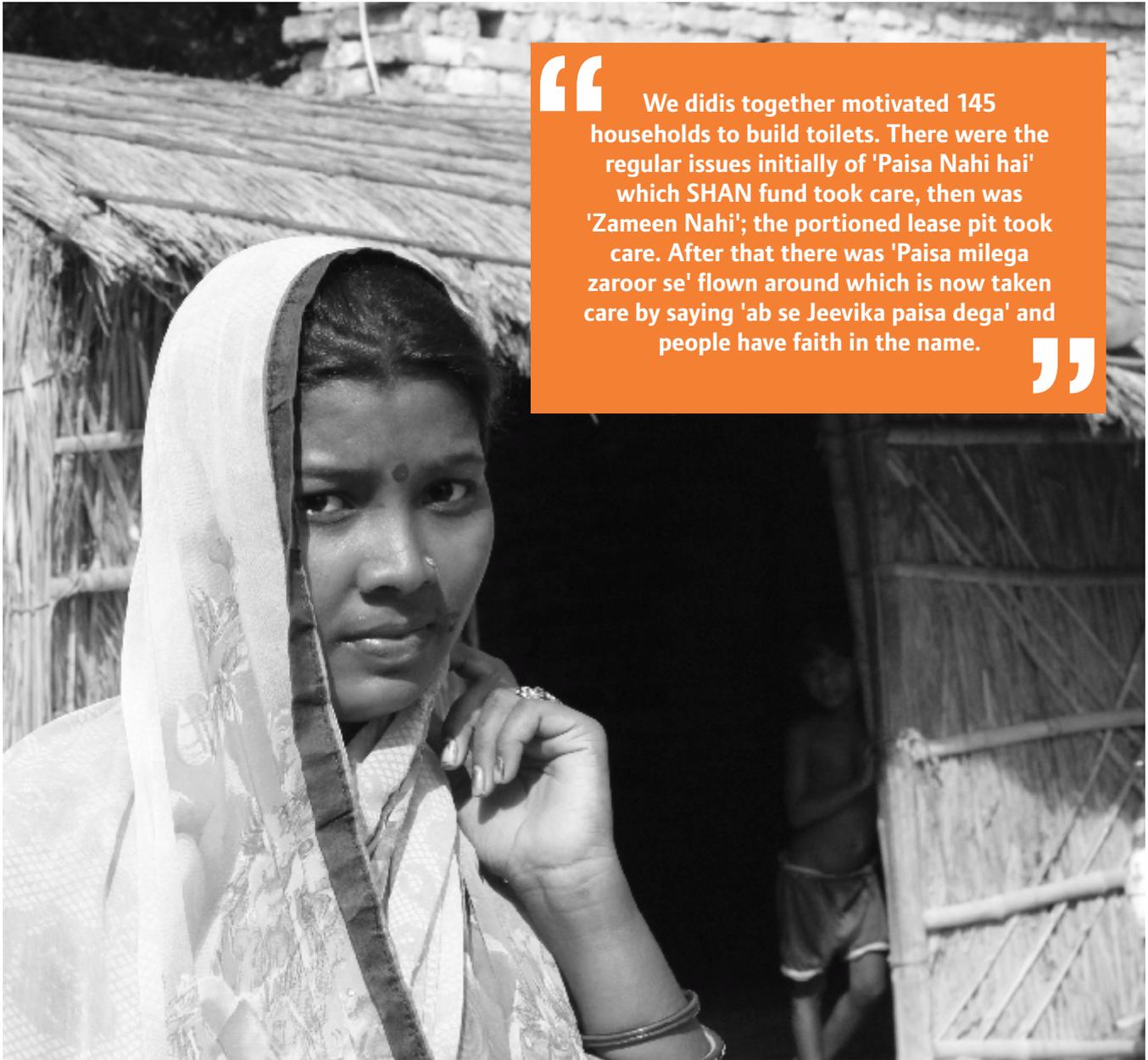
She, in her village facilitates the functioning of 10 SHG's and is responsible for their efficient functioning. She also happens to be the key node of information transference into the community. She tells **“We didis together motivated 145 households to build toilets. There were the regular issues initially of 'Paisa Nahi hai' which SHAN fund took care, then was 'Zameen Nahi'; the portioned lease pit took care. After that there was 'Paisa milega zaroor se' flown around which is now taken care by saying 'ab se Jeevika paisa dega' and people have faith in the name,”** she continues to tell that it was challenging but to influence 145 households she feels like having achieved a feat in life.

Now Manti Devi arrives to the interesting part and tells that her ward is not ODF declared yet, due to one family. The family is composed of five brothers who have been having dispute over the partition of property.

The brother with smaller holding wants partition but the one with larger holdings don't. The feud is so intense that whenever she would go to explain it would start as a talk but the brothers would start fighting gain. Numerous attempts were made to counsel them but in vain. Therefore as her fellow Jeevika Didis asked her not to lose heart as there are somethings which can only be dealt with time and that she should be proud that they, once being helpless women, after morphing into Jeevika Didis have been able to support the construction of 145 toilets.

Concluding, she smiles and tells, **“It is more important that the brothers have their feud resolved and live in harmony first. Toilets can be built eventually. Jeevika Didis are here to stay for long”**





“

We didis together motivated 145 households to build toilets. There were the regular issues initially of 'Paisa Nahi hai' which SHAN fund took care, then was 'Zameen Nahi'; the portioned lease pit took care. After that there was 'Paisa milega zaroor se' flown around which is now taken care by saying 'ab se Jeevika paisa dega' and people have faith in the name.

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14

The Unique Toilet



A toilet pan on a tank with no walls nor outlets, stood amidst the meadow in the village of Manipur Pakri in Lalganj of Vaishali. This toilet belongs to a widow named Rajo Devi (40) of Shiv SHG of Sankar VO in the same Village. She is a mother of five children (3 sons and 2 married daughters). She lost her husband a few years back. The expenses of the households are taken care by two elder sons who are in early twenties and one in late teens who work in other state (she did not know which state) on daily wages as laborers. She also does agriculture labor to support the family.

She tells that around 7 - 8 years back, some people visited and wanted to build her a toilet, something she had no idea about. Then they dug a pit and put a ring and a pan on top of it. Afterwards they took her thumb impression which stated that they had done their job.

She continues, **“I will be honest, I paid nothing for this, neither the people who built this asked for any money. They seemed to be more interested in my thumb impression. And they did this with many people in the village”** She tells, that when she became a member of her SHG, she learnt about sanitation, hygiene and toilets. But she smiles and continues that she would wonder why her toilet at home was none like the usable ones that were depicted in the awareness drives and trainings.

She confesses that open defecation has become such an integral part of their lives, that when asked if having toilets will be better, she actually finds it difficult to answer because she hasn't used it yet in her home. She tells, **“I have taken a loan of Rs. 4000 from the SHAN fund from my VO. I have already purchased bricks worth three thousand and cement worth a thousand rupees. The Raj Mistry has made the measurements, also I will be using the Pan from my old unusable toilet and the bricks. Once made I will use it and then will be in a better position to answer the always being probed question of if using toilet is better than open defecation.”** She laughs out loud and jokingly says that she is tired of being asked the question, and says it is like asking her if flying is better than walking, unless she flies how would she differentiate and know which is better.

She adds that its Jeevika, that has in a way instigated many women to build toilets, but she tells that whoever has built it has had a positive feed- back, and finally tells that she always wanted it but knew she wouldn't be able to afford it but now she is able to and thanks to her group member's for having almost dragged her to become a SHG member.

“

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15

Leading by Example



Loud laughter, cheer and magnitude of gathered people is noticed at Sheetal Bakhur Village in Lalganj. All of this is around the common holy Pipal Tree of the village. People have flocked around the wall which is projecting motion pictures with (faint sound and hazy resolution) and are enjoying its sight. It is audible that people are quite avidly appreciative and receptive of the visual medium of communication.



On display is the concept of two lease pit toilet construction which is a part of the ODF triggering process that Jeevika Project Team undertakes and calls it Ratri Chaupal. Overheard from the crowd by an old man who is a now retired mason, chiding the crowd to keep silent as this is something new.

Then he shouts out **“You useless generation is addicted to button walla or now screen walla stupid gadget; mobile phones, at least learn something important.”** The crowd boo's him and he walks away before his name is found out. So now we learn that Minta Kumari, 29 year old Community Coordinator (CC) from Jeevika is conducting this program that is called the Ratri Chaupal. She times her entry after each played video and speaks about 'Why- When- Where - How' of ODF. Its an interesting sight as she walks in with her six months old baby and speaks. She after the show makes each member vow to build toilets and use it and raising catchy slogans such as “Billi humse achi hai, tati karke dhakti hai.” While people disperse, she tells, **“The best part of being with Jeevika is connecting with the community. Here we aren't just building a room with four walls and a pan but inculcating the habit of hygiene.”** Having heard this complex thought and understanding of community, it was necessary to probe into her educational background. She tells that she is a Graduate and thus got the job of a CC with Jeevika.

“

The best part of being with Jeevika is connecting with the community. Here we aren't just building a room with four walls and a pan but inculcating the habit of hygiene.

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Minta Kumari tells that she has an anecdote to share and continues, **“I hail from Gaya. My husband is a wage labor and we do not have land. I joined Jeevika and learnt a lot from the SHG Didis looking at their desire for change and I thought to myself what if I am 29 or a mother of a 6 month old infant baby I can still learn. These can't be excuses for not learning and registered for MA in Social Work with IGNOU. The entrance was easy as there were questions all about what we do here. Also the semester papers are my work related. Therefore for any Jeevika personnel it is like writing their experience.”** She tells that the yearning for education was a product of SHG Didis.

Now concluding says, **“I tell each Didi and Bhaiya in gaon that each one of us has to play multiple roles of being a worker, a mother/fathers, a wives/husbands and daughters/sons which is difficult but we have done it, so how difficult is making it a habit to build toilet and use it.”** She tells that ODF of all household constructing toilet is not at all difficult. The challenge is to make ODF really happen through usage, maintenance and inclusion of the habit of hygiene.



16

Organic Leadership



“It was amazing, Koshi, Mahnanda and Ganga mata converging, the greenery, the people and everything here in Chakiapohadpur” (Village in Amdabad Block of Katihar) Said a cheerful 24 years old Rita Mandal of Jai Mata Di SHG.

She perhaps is one of the youngest Mukhiya not only in Bihar but in the country. Also interestingly, she is not one of the Patriarch-Piggy backed women leader who just is the titular functionary. But here is the real voice and the driver.

She informs, her parents are wage laborers in Delhi who migrated from Bihar in search of livelihood options, and that she is born and brought up in Rithala area of Delhi. She, after marriage had to move this village (in-laws) **'Off-grid village was a different experience'**.

She continues, **“The clean breeze, the simple people and noiselessness of this place captivated me. Initially I loved it all but post the rains the regular floods struck and I was amazed to see how people have had accepted the natural calamity, considered flood to be a part of the regular annual season cycle.”** She then draws a keen observation, **“People here tell flood is important and it is the blessing of Mother Ganges because it deposits the nutrient rich silt on the land for good harvest but I realized one thing that women somehow suffered the most, be it for the taken for granted activity of urinating or defecating.”**



According to her, all the pastures used for open defecation get submerged and with limited dry land for human and animal living, an act such as defecation become a larger problem. The whole dry land became unlivable as the cattle, other animals and human's lived there and excreted there. Also the privacy issue which made women only go for defecation either at dawn or post sunset only, which made the place unsafe because of snakes that had moved to these lands to escape their flooded habitats.

She recalls the daily reporting of snake bites and how because of the flood reaching the nearest PHC, to administer anti-venom drug was impossible. She then tells that after marriage when she moved to this village she became member of Jeevika SHG, because it was interesting to see the savings. Eventually she also became the pro bono community appointed translator for all the project staff as the member's spoke a dialect mixed of Hindi-Santhal and Bangla and the project staff speak Hindi and its dialects.



Later during the PRI elections, the Mukhiya's position was reserved for a Tribal Woman. Therefore, she tells, being a Delhi walli that crave for position was intrinsic, therefore she convinced her husband and with the support from her SHG and VO members, won the election. And to our surprise has already made two priorities for her immediate work; first being Toilet construction at individual household level and also the back- up community toilets in case of massive floods . The Jeevika Didis in the village also seem elated for having their own representative, An old lady sitting during the conversation exclaims, "Pehli baar ladki jeeti hai, isse pehele bas mahila seat pe patni ko khada kardete the" Now the young sarpanch concludes with saying, "Bijli ka expect karna muskil hai abhi, current block mein charge hua hai char mahine pehele, yihan bas khambe aur taar lage hue hain."



“ People here tell flood is important and it is the blessing of Mother Ganges because it deposits the nutrient rich silt on the land for good harvest but I realized one thing that women somehow suffered the most, be it for the taken for granted activity of urinating or defecating. ”





17

People Centric Pariyojna

“The life of a young bride in a village household filled with in laws becomes easiest with a toilet.” Said Seema Devi (late teens – early 20) member of Ravi SHG in Belai of Goshi in Jehanabad. She was happy to have constructed a toilet in her house and comically described that how traditionally she had to veil herself when she faced the elders which is to show respect, but to defecate or urinate the same tradition went for toss when they had to go in the open and most of the time in the fields that belonged to other people where slurry remarks were common

She tells that until the CRP drive of Jeevika happened, and her group members spoke about it openly she had not seen nor realized the problem and had silently accepted it as a way of life. Even when other government officials came on ODF rounds most of the people did not pay heed because the administration came with a coercive dictate, which she tells nobody likes also the earlier toilet building rounds were short lived and structure counting. People sought short cuts to siphon off whatever reward was provided by the government without even constructing toilets.

According to Seema Devi Jeevika was different, **“We learnt about the necessity and made toilets willfully and now use it.”** She highlights how important it is to have complete knowledge of any scheme that is being promoted by any government or non-government agency.



And Jeevika is the harbinger of transmitting the complete information to they people. According to her, Jeevika doesn't just dictate, it learns, asses, understands then decides on the specific intervention or pariyojna.

Concludes saying, **“Despite the intervention of Jeevika having begun just two years ago, has set precedence of how people need to be made informed to have a scheme (Priyojana) successful that would actually make a difference in the lives of the people.”** And gracefully poses by her newly made toilets not forgetting to mention that she herself dug the sokta pit as her husband is a labor in Punjab and she couldn't afford too many laborers. Therefore SHAN fund help and own labor made her a sauchalaya.



“ Despite the intervention of Jeevika having begun just two years ago, has set precedence of how people need to be made informed to have a scheme (Priyojana) successful that would actually make a difference in the lives of the people. ”

18

Sauchalaya Habbits



“Sauchalaya banwana assan hai, lekin istamal aur rakhrakhav bhi zaroori hai”

Savita Kumari tells, **“In Gaya, Jeevika is huge. I saw it as it grew as a member. I had a first- hand account of how money grows exchanging hands, how community action can fight social evil. I have witnessed women from being second humans rising to be leaders.”**

“I am a Jeevika Didi of Gaya and now a CC didi in Vaishali. It (Jeevika) has today become a part of my identity and livelihood,” tells Savita Kumari (28) of Jai Hanuman SHG of Mohanpur, Kasia Chak of Gaya. Presently she is the person in charge of mobilizing and coordinating activities on ground in the Bidupur Cluster.

All these were her motivating factors therefore having finished graduation, she decided to apply for the position of Community Coordinator in Jeevika. She smiles and says as that because she was a member the written was a cake walk and in interview she was found clarifying certain nuances of the panelist on practices and things that can be done to improve the practices.



After selection, training and immersion she was given Vaishali district. It has been a year and half and she was instrumental in successful ODF drives that were done. She tells **“I am a SHG member myself. I connect to the women mentally and emotionally. I understand what is feasible and what is being too ambitious. I feel the onus of each intervention taken up and duties assigned to me.”** She narrates how she herself became a member of the ODF 'Nigrani committee' – **“I have the same ego as the women in the village. It was much easy for me to convey the need of sanitation and hygiene and promote toilet construction. But as the drive began, I knew that motivation would be high if I was in the act. Therefore, I would accompany all the Nigrani committee's formed, sloganeering not to openly defecate and explain people who did so.”** She also informs that now they have a group not only to stop open defecation and construct toilets but also to check for cleanliness and its usage.

She tells, **“Sauchalaya banwana assan hai lekin istamal aur rakhrakhav bhi zaroori hai.”** According to her the administration would get the toilets built in a mission mood but it's the communities, Jeevika Didis duty to ensure that they are used and used for long.

“ **Sauchalaya banwana assan hai, lekin istamal aur rakhrakhav bhi zaroori hai.** ”



19

Shaming to Cleanliness



“It was shameful for not having built a toilet even if I am unable to do it.” Said Jagganath Tiwari, whose no family members are part of Jeevika SHG in Ward No. 12 of Reekhar Village of Lalganj Block in Vaishali. According to him he was returning from the market, when he with his wife and children stood by the road to see what the Jeevika Didis were doing with colors and drawing figures on the ground. He tells that by the time the program was done they were shamed and held responsible as the people without toilets and openly defecating and making others ill.

He tells **“I started to think, I even asked my wife to become a member of Jeevika SHG next time they come and ask her to be one. Because it was right what they were saying. Firstly we are doing injustice to people who have built toilets by making them vulnerable to diseases spread due to our practice of openly defecating and secondly I myself am putting my loved ones at risk.”** He mentions that he called the Community Coordinator and Ward Member and consulted them on how to construct toilet and now has made a Single Soak Pit – partitioned into half as suggested by the community coordinator. He tells a little effort on his end and an expenditure of Rs 13,800, makes him feel lighter as, he no more feels that he is harming others.

He concludes that if he had not stopped that day and seen the Jeevika Didis do the Rangoli program he would have still openly defecated. He thanks the efforts of the women for having his conscience jerked to do something personal for greater good of the society.





“

It was shameful for not having built a toilet even if I am unable to do it.

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20

Soch mein Sauchalaya



A chaotic dialogue on Sokta and Septi (colloquial for septic) sauchalaya on a hot summer afternoon of May in Belai of Goshi in Jehanabad, is in process between the members of Ekta VO. The members state that they are clear on the need for having a honey comb soak pit and at the same time, like Tulla Devi (Khusboo SHG) states, that after being a part of the Nigrani Committee and other ODF processes they feel that they could build better toilets. Therefore many members from the VO opted to build fancier toilets, with deeper septic tanks at the same time make overflow channels into honey comb soak pits to make compost for farming. This they call an innovation, as earlier the the Water Tight septic tanks would have a drain overflow or manually had to be cleaned.

They say that they are trying to marry traditional understanding of bigger pit being better to the innovative honey comb being viable. This praxis has made the ODF drive more acceptable to the community members.

The whole discussion which was there was that the people who build fancier toilets should not be availing SHAN fund (lower interest) but access the normal SHG loan to build and once the reward by the Government is accorded they pay back. Interestingly the noise subsided as the whole group came to this understanding.

And they decided that SHAN would for the poorest of poor and if needed further SHG loans can be given and members who could partially afford should try building with their own funds.



Another member Neelam Kumari (Suhani SHG) tells that this is how they rationalize and optimize the limited resource. Also adding and speaking for the group she tells that **“All of us insist on the two pit – Honey comb (lease pit) model but now we have been too much into ODF-ODF-ODF all the time, and learnt and heard a lot about sanitation and hygiene therefore realizing the need of it, we consider it as a priority and look at it as an investment priority in standards of education , social ceremonies and health, therefore we try customizing them to our own preferences because it's a lasting asset.”**



“

All of us insist on the two pit – Honey comb (lease pit) model but now we have been too much into ODF-ODF-ODF all the time, and learnt and heard a lot about sanitation and hygiene therefore realizing the need of it, we consider it as a priority and look at it as an investment priority in standards of education , social ceremonies and health, therefore we try customizing them to our own preferences because it's a lasting asset.

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The member's say it would have been difficult to convince people of the needs if it wasn't for Jeevika's tendency of paying attention to micro details and intervene at each level and now like they smile and tell **'Soch mein Sauchalaya bhargaya hai'**



21

Never Give Up- Story of CRP Didis



“Aren't we your family, don't feel bad.” Said Kiran Devi from Sakra in Muzaffarpur to her fellow CRP (Community Resource Person) Shomari Devi. The women have been in Reekhar panchyat of Vaishali for almost a month to facilitate the process of making the village free from open defecation.



She tells that during a Morning Follow up aka Prabhat Phera, a person got abusive and told, **'My Village, My Shit if you are so troubled about me defecating in open come cover it yourself with dirt.'** Also got abusive. This broke the ceiling of emotions and Shanti had an outburst.

Now Shomari Devi, wiping tears, tells the abuses and asking to put dirt on feces is a common thing. People do it all the time. It was just that she was missing her children back at home. She continues, that as the time drew nearer for their return, the anxiety to meet the family increases and little things at work lead to emotional break downs. She now tells **“Jahan Deh, Wahan Mann”** and all their efforts are for greater good of the poor Didis. As she said that diarrhea is one of the most common ailments which drains the resources of poor household, and the very obvious reason being lack of not adapting hygienic ways.

According to her, may be it is difficult for her to force the poor to spend upfront money for toilet's. She says 'Tatti Pe Mitti' and systematic awareness, group support would lead a person to build and use toilets. She cites an example of a ODF block (asks not to reveal the name), which is deemed ODF on paper by the authority but hardly anyone uses the Toilets. According to her **“Ghar pe sauchalaya se kuch nahi hota agar badlav lana hai toh soch mein Sauchalaye aana padega.”** Now flabbergasted with some serious Behavioral Change Communication jargons from the field, we let the women sing and laugh their ways out of remorse.



“

Ghar pe sauchalaya se
kuch nahi hota agar badlav
lana hai toh soch mein
Sauchalaye aana padega.

”

22

Secrets to ODF

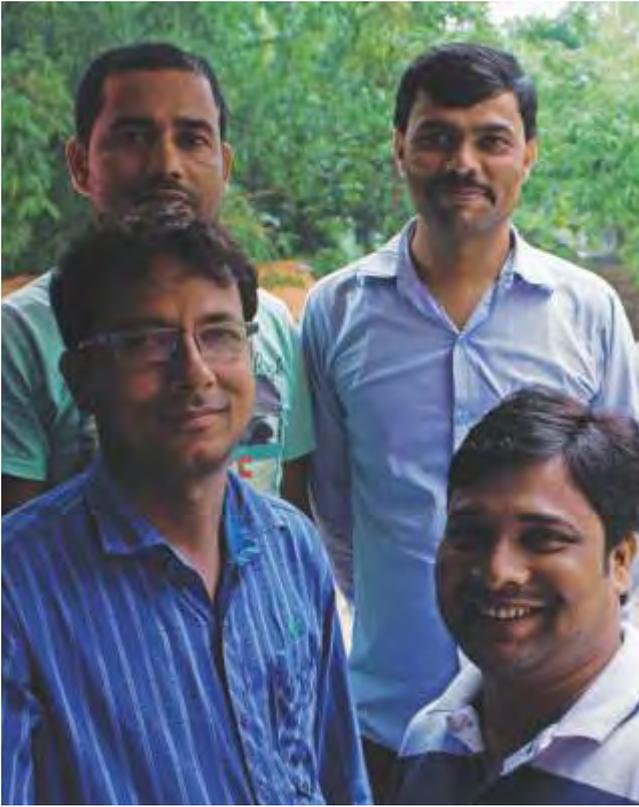


“Scenic, tranquil and unforgiving, is the terrain of doab called Amdabad.”

Said a project professional of Jeevika from Supaul who is posted as the Community Coordinator at Amdabad BPIU. According to him it was scenic because it was confluent land of three rivers Koshi, Mahanada and Ganga which is topped up by the tarai rain shadow. Tranquil because of the presence of indigenous people who are hardworking and friendly, but the catch comes in at unforgiving juncture as the Block Headquarter has been electrified a few months back only and at an average, availability of electricity in a month is 1 hour a day. 4 months in the year, the roads to most panchayat is submerged and the only means of transport is boat. Therefore the timelines are sacrosanct and you never get a next chance.

According to the CC's in the BPIU despite all the odds, surprisingly the odds have acted in favor, they have been able to ODF 60% of their intervening area. They say, the secret strategy was triggering and forging close coordination with line departments and also the level of commitment of the block officials.





Another project personnel recalls, **“Namami Ganga Project was also a big boast as the funds got smoothly disbursed at priority. Also the people have started feeling the need of all- weather toilets as the land is limited for open defecation too, and the Two Soak pit is an answer to the flooding problem.”** He cites as to how the flood waters don't clog the tanks as the waters from the pit get soaked into the soil because of the honey comb lining in the pit. Therefore requiring no retro-fixing post floods and this according to him was secret of success.

Also, they tell in the last block of Bihar bordering Jharkhand and West Bengal, 5 Kilometer by Vehicle would take an hour but by boat a few minutes. Also they have become accustomed to falling from bikes due to the slippery mud. The only downside is that the team has no means of entertainment post field engagements and going home is a tedious job as it would take them three hours to just reach the district head quarter. But the hard work paying dividend is one of the motivating factors.

The BPIU of Amdabad has five community coordinators, one area coordinator and one BPM, and they laugh and say when they are on a drive mode the dress code is T-Shirt and Half Pant , Soon I realize the need as we get into knee deep murk to reach a panchayat office.



“ Scenic, tranquil and unforgiving, is the terrain of doab called Amdabad. ”

23

Saving Hopes



“Jeevika saved my life and my husband’s too, else at this old age we would have been really troubled trying to pay back the high cost debt taken to construct the toilet.” Said the feeble looking woman in her seventies Sunena Devi of Mausam SHG in KhurrampurChakour, Matihai, Begusarai. Her husband is disabled and old and most of the time bed ridden. The couple had three daughters who have been married.

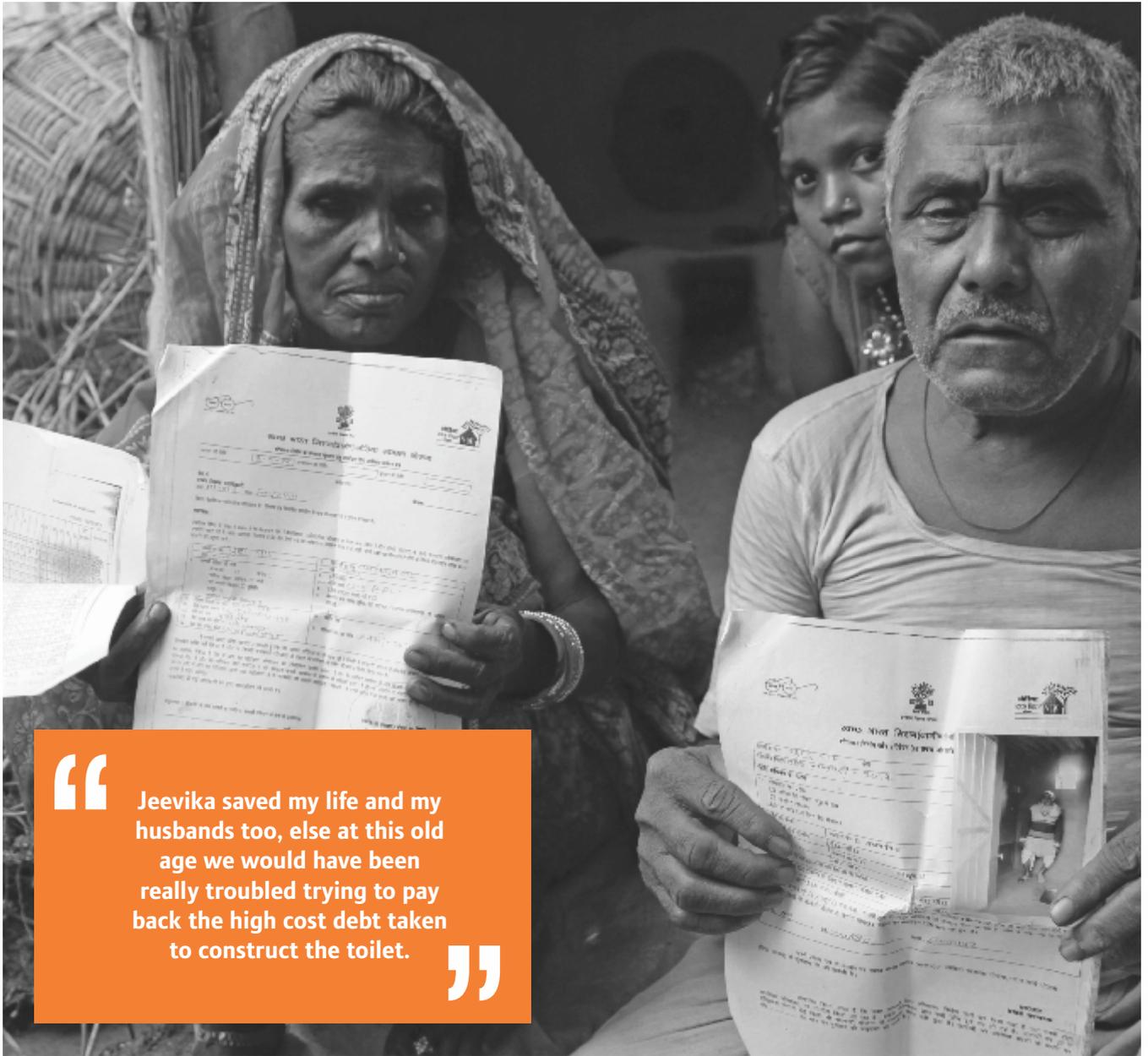
Earlier last year (2016) when the ODF drive was in swing, the officials explained to them that money spent would be reimbursed immediately once the construction is over. Sunena says, **“Prashashan mallik hai, and we believed in it. We had a small patch of land which we mortgaged for Rs. 20,000 and took another Rs. 20,000 from the Mahajan.”** With the borrowed money they constructed a toilet, installed a borewell and some fixed the leaking thatched roof and walls of their house. But when they approached the block office, she tells, **“Paisa Uth gaya tha 2009 mein”** someone else had claimed the money in 2009.

A few people now had gathered and all of them said that they faced this issue of their funds already having disbursed in proxy. The officials said nothing could be done. But a few middlemen have been assuring that funds can be given on payment of commissions.

But the old couple says that now they tend cattle and pay the loan. Also Sunena took some money from the SHG and VO and paid back the 4% interest monthly loan of the money lender.

The old lady says, **“We don’t think that we would get the money from block anymore. Rather we focus on working and Jeevika will always be there to motivate us.”**





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Jeevika saved my life and my husbands too, else at this old age we would have been really troubled trying to pay back the high cost debt taken to construct the toilet.

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