

Regional workshop on Sharing and Expanding Sanitation Strategies to achieve ODF Status 24th June, 2014, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

“Let us introspect not how many toilets are constructed but how many are used and continued to be used” spoke Ms.Santha Sheela Nair, IAS., Vice Chairperson, Planning Commission, GoTN during the Regional workshop on ‘Sharing and Expanding Sanitation Strategies to achieve ODF Status’ at Chennai, on 24th July, 2014. The workshop was organized by WASH Institute, Kodaikanal in association with State Planning Commission Tamil Nadu, Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Government of Tamil Nadu, Suchitwa Mission, Government of Kerala and Plan India. Delivering her keynote address, she also stressed the need for effective IEC messages to use water efficiently, in appropriately constructed toilets to ensure sustained use. She also recommended engaging the SHGs in the process of construction; ensuring proper usage and maintenance of toilets. She also called for convergence of various stakeholders and following ecological sanitation model to ensure recycling of human waste.



Mr.L.Peter, Trustee Treasurer, WASH Institute delivered his welcome and inaugural speech quoting the words of Gandhi ‘Sanitation is more important than Independence’ and shared the objective of the workshop which is to

1. Bring all the key sector players together to share and expand the experiences, approaches, strategies, success stories to achieve ODF status.
2. Share the experiences gained in Vattavada project, Kerala by converging the Government of India flagship program NBA and MGNREGS with active participation of the community and PRI's for promoting sustainable sanitation.
3. Bring out with the issues and recommendations for change both in policy and practice to expedite the process.



Mr. Peter also emphasized that the “learning occurs not only from success but also from failures”, and the workshop should therefore lead towards evolving technically sound strategies and activities, based on which the Government can come out with a comprehensive policy.

The highlight of the workshop was the presentations made by various representatives on their efforts to bring ODF status. Mr. L.P. Chithir, Program Officer, Suchitwa Mission, Government of Kerala presented on **‘Marching towards Nirmal Rajya – The Progress and Challenges.’** He spoke about the efforts made by the Government since 1970 and how the recent efforts of 360⁰ IEC programs, Solid and liquid waste management initiatives and making sanitation a priority program of Panchayats yielded dramatic results and made the state move towards achieving the status of Nirmal Rajya .

Mr. G. Lakshmi pathy, Additional Director of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Govt. of Tamil Nadu presented on **‘Initiatives for achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) Tamil Nadu’** and the success in installing sanitary complexes in each and every panchayat and renovation of the same again in 2011-12. He also shared the effort of the Government to converge the NBA and MGNREGA schemes, with specific guidelines for implementation and sustainability of the operation.

Initiatives of Municipal Administration for promoting **“Namma Toilet”** in Tamil Nadu were presented by Mr. Chandrakant B. Kamble IAS, Commissioner of Municipal Administration, Government of Tamil Nadu. The “Namma toilets” tried to address the issues in using public toilets and hence designed with due channel of ventilation, wash basin with soap oil facility to wash, lighting during night through solar power, water tank with 2000 liters capacity, flush out tank, space for women to keep their napkins, etc., anti skit flooring, handle bars for the convenience of children, women, physically challenged and elderly persons. Presently “Namma Toilets” are placed and in operation in Chennai, Coimbatore, Trichy and Pollachi and has an overwhelming response from the public.



Mr. Chandrakant B. Kamble, IAS., presenting on Namma Toilet Initiative

There were two technical sessions organized during the workshop. The first session dealt with the following experiences from Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

- 1) Vattavada Success Story – Initiatives by WASH Institute-Converging NBA, MGNREGS, PRI and Suchitwa Mission (Kerala)
- 2) IVDP model, Krishnagiri for promoting sanitation and hygiene practices among SHG families (Tamil Nadu).
- 3) Children as the best change agents for promoting Safe Sanitation Practices (Tamil Nadu).
- 4) Microfinance as a tool to support and supplement in promoting Household Sanitation (Tamil Nadu)

This session was chaired by Dr. S. Ponnuraj, Member National Sanctioning Committee for NBA and Research Advisory Committee, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Gol and Mr. M. Subburaman, Director-SCOPE as co-chair

Second session was chaired by Mr. P. Selvarajan, Additional Director and Head of Division, State Planning Commission, GoTN and co-chaired by Dr. S. Ponnuraj. Presentations were made 1) Use of Human Waste in Agriculture as Alternate manure 2) Toilet Technology for high water table, coastal and rocky areas and 3) Promoting sustainability in the WASH Infrastructures of Schools and Anganwadies and Impact of poor sanitation on drinking water quality.

Concluding the workshop Dr. T.K. Das, Consultant in the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, GOI, stressed on scaling up of sanitation process for achieving ODF especially in Tamil Nadu by 2015, for which he stressed that the most essential activity is IEC.

The workshop all together brought 155 experts having knowledge and experience in the subject including Senior Officials from Government Departments from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karnataka and AP States, NGOs, SWSM, NBA Coordinators, Representatives from MDWS, Gol, PRI leaders and front line functionaries.