Sustainable Sanitation Systems: More than just a toilet!

SECOND WORKSHOP OF FINISH PROGRAMME

Financial INclusion Improves Sanitation and Health

An Indo-Dutch Collaboration

Organized by
RDO (India), WASTE (Netherlands) UNU-MERIT (Netherlands) and FIN (India)

April 8-9, 2010.
Venue: RDO Trust’s conference room,
Gramya bhavan, Aruvankadu(P.O), Coonoor, The Nilgris. INDIA PIN:643202;
http://www.rdotrust.in

At present, about 41% of the global population or about 2.6 billion people do not have access to toilets and about 42,000 people die every week due to drinking water polluted with faecal matter. In India, two out of three people do not have access to a toilet. At the same time between 40%-60% of the existing toilets are not being used depending on the region. So there is both a lack of sanitation coverage alongside a severe problem of lack of effective usage of the available toilets. The FINISH programme aims to improve this situation in India.

Programme FINISH stands for Financial INclusion Improves Sanitation and Health. Indian NGOs: BISWA (Orissa), IIRD (Rajasthan), ESAF (Maharashtra), SAMBHAV (Madhya Pradesh), Bharathi (Tamil Nadu), RDO Trust (Tamil Nadu) and Dutch NGO WASTE are joining hands with insurance organizations like TATA-AIG (India) and financial institutions like SNS-REAAL (Netherlands), NHB (India), NABARD (India) etc., to attempt to mobilize funds from end-user households to build 1 million sanitation systems. Since toilets do not generate income directly, there is a reluctance to invest in them. Therefore, innovative micro-credit and financial schemes that combine loans with micro-insurance packages are being tried out to mobilize household investment towards toilets.

This effort is being followed and feedback is being provided by two academic teams. The first academic team is collecting data regularly during the intervention to measure its impact on health status using randomisation techniques (Britta Augsburg, IFS (UK)). The second academic team focuses on the construction of capabilities in the construction of sustainable sanitation system to improve the fit of technology to environment and consumer needs through a study of sanitation systems in India and the diffusion of results among the members of the FINISH consortium (Shyama V. Ramani, UNU-MERIT (Netherlands) and FIN (India)).

A first FINISH workshop was held in Chennai on Nov 1-2, 2009. Its primary objective was to discuss exactly what we meant by sustainable sanitation systems and the challenges that have to be overcome to ensure that the 1 million toilets being built will be used efficiently in the
years to come as 1 million sustainable sanitation systems. A sustainable sanitation system to manage human waste refers to a toilet, and the associated system for collection, transport, treatment, and use of excreta as well as complementary installations for the maintenance of hygiene (e.g. for hand washing and disposal of sanitary napkins). A sustainable sanitation system is one that minimizes environmental contamination, makes efficient use of water available and is accessible to low-income groups in need of a toilet.

Press clippings on first conference:

The Hindu – “Low cost technology needed”

The New Indian Express – “NGOs plan 1 million toilets in India”
http://www.expressbuzz.com/edition/story.aspx?Title=NGOs+plan+one+million+toilets+in+India&artid=xDoseyhoQpA=&SectionID=lifojHIWDUU=&MainSectionID=wIcBMLGbUJI=&SectionName=rSY%7C6QYp3kQ=&SEO

The second FINISH workshop aims to understand the problems in the toilets being diffused to the low-income communities in India. There are serious problems, because the rate of abandoning of toilets is very high, especially after 12-18 months. MFIs partners, experts, sanitation drive supervisors and masons will give their views on the shortcomings of the present models. All participants will work together in small groups to identify “challenges” in sanitation systems that need to be tackled so that they serve the needs of households better. These will be issued in a “Sanitation Challenge Contest” being sponsored by WASTE and organized by FIN to generate solutions. The challenges will be diffused all over India and the contest will be open to all.

Thus, the three main objectives of the second FINISH workshop at Ooty on April 8-9 are as follows:

- To understand the problems faced by the micro-finance institute (MFI) partners of this consortium in diffusing sustainable sanitation systems.
- To listen to perspectives from different types of stakeholders ranging from sanitation activists to supervisors of sanitation drives and rural masons.
- To collectively identify ‘CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME IN EXISTING SANITATION TECHNOLOGIES AND SANITATION DRIVES’ for the ‘FINISH SANITATION CHALLENGE CONTEST’.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained. So please join us in our discussions on strategies for achieving effective sanitation coverage which will be seen both through theoretical perspectives as well as field realities. Let us make this meeting a springboard for the generation of new ideas and actions.

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