

Constraints and benefits of using toilet facilities for rural women in Kanpur district

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Abstract

Toilets are one important element of a sustainable sanitation system. Diseases, including cholera, which still affects some 3 million people each year, can be largely prevented when effective sanitation and water treatment prevents fecal matter from contaminating waterways, ground water and drinking water supplies. Infected water supplies can be treated to make the water safe for consumption and use. Many people in developing countries have no toilet in their homes and are resorting to open defecation instead. The Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation by WHO and UNICEF is the official United Nations mechanism tasked with monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal relating to drinking water and Sanitation, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Keywords: constraints, facilities

Introduction

The government first identifies an area that needs its attention when it comes to building toilets. An area is identified in terms of block, city, village or Gram Panchayat, then the data is taken out by the government which includes facts and figures about the community in terms of number of families located there, how many people have toilets at their homes, how many people do not have toilets and how many people practice open defecation. Once this basic data is there with the government, then begins the process of making that area open defecation free by constructing toilets for every individual. In terms of finances, the central government allocates funds under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to each of the state to carry the process of constructing toilets and make an area open defecation free. The allocation of amount depends on few

things like size of population, population living in rural and urban areas, the total number of people without the basic facility, and toilets in that particular state, to name a few.

Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic status of rural women.
2. Constraints and benefits of using toilet facilities.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Kanpur district. To blocks such as Kalyanpur and Chaubepur were selected. Total 10 villages were taken from both blocks. Independent variables such as age, education, caste, religion and dependent variables such as installation, impact, awareness were used. Statistical tools such as percentage, weighted mean and correlation coefficient were used.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of rural women according to land holding N=150

Land holding	Frequency	Per cent
Landless	45	30.0
Marginal	70	46.7
Small	25	16.7
Large	10	6.6
Total	150	100.0

The toilet scheme launched by the government was for all categories of land holding farmers including landless labourers. Community toilets were built for those rural families who did not have enough space for the construction of a toilet in their own house. The government is also

providing separate toilet facilities for rural women in and near hats, melas, weekly mandis, local bazaars, bus stands, etc. for the security of rural women and girls. The government is also providing subsidy to large and small farmers for construction of toilets in villages.

Table 2: Distribution of rural women according to the type of toilet they use

Type of toilet	Yes	No	Mean score	Rank
Community toilet	-	150 (100.0)	1.00	III
Home toilet	150 (100.0)	-	2.00	I
Open defecation public toilet	25 (16.7)	125 (83.3)	1.17	II

The government continues to send the message that toilets are for rural women, it reinforces destructive social norms that limit rural women's freedom and it misses. The opportunity to tell people that everyone should use a latrine. Men need to be convinced that open defecation is not

acceptable anymore, neither for women nor for themselves. It is not healthy. It is not modern. If men believe that they too, should use latrines, they will be more likely to invest in constructing and maintaining once. So it is urgent need to build to home toilet.

Table 3: Distribution of rural women according to the constraints faced in construction of toilets in village

Constraints	Yes	No	Mean score	Rank
Social barriers	114 (76.0)	36 (24.0)	1.76	II
Cultural barriers	116 (77.3)	34 (22.7)	1.77	I
Psychological barriers	108 (72.0)	42 (28.0)	1.72	III
Lack of finance	18 (12.0)	132 (88.0)	1.12	VIII
Construction of poor quality toilets by the government	10 (6.7)	140 (93.3)	1.07	IX
Old habits	36 (24.0)	114 (76.0)	1.24	IV
Lack of subsidy	20 (13.3)	130 (86.7)	1.13	VII
Lack of water provision inside the toilet	115 (76.7)	35 (23.3)	1.77	I
Ritual pollution	32 (21.3)	118 (78.7)	1.21	V
Lack of adopting new practices of defecating and safety inside toilet	28 (18.7)	122 (81.3)	1.19	VI

(Figures in parentheses denotes the percentage of respective values)

There are a number of constraints due to which people living in rural areas do not want to get a toilet constructed inside their houses. Some are socio-economic while some are psychological. Since, the economic status of rural people is not very good, they do not want to spend money on the construction of a toilet. They prefer going in open spaces for defecation as it does not involve any cost and no effort has to be made in cleaning of the toilet. Some old age rural people think that getting a toilet constructed inside the house and defecating within the house premises, makes the entire house dirty and unsuitable for gods and goddesses to bless

its inmates. They also feel hesitant in using different types of toilets especially those with seats as they are used to going out in the fields for defecation.

There are many social, economic, cultural as well as psychological barriers which keeps community members far from the use of household toilets. Various social, economic, cultural and psychological barriers prevents individual from using toilets. The research identifies these various barriers and come out with information's which would be helpful in designing various tools to increase the demand generation regarding construction, use and maintenance of toilets.

Table 4: Distribution of rural women according to their knowledge about the advantages of using toilets

Advantage	Yes	No	Mean score	Rank
It will save lives	150 (100.0)	-	2.00	I
It will improve rural women's safety and literacy	150 (100.0)	-	2.00	I
It will boost the economy	10 (6.7)	140 (93.3)	1.07	II
It will help eradicate manual scavenging	5 (3.3)	145 (96.7)	1.03	III

(Figures in parentheses denotes the percentage of respective values)

In recent days, open defecation has been in the news because it is hoped that building toilets could reduce rape. Sexual violence in India is a tragedy, deserving of far more attention and effort. But we worry that those who hope that building toilets will significantly reduce rape may be misguided. On one hand, they are misguided about the appropriate response to violence against rural women. We should not respond to rape by keeping young rural women in the house but by creating a society where all people young and old, men and rural women can move about freely and safely. On the other hand, people who think that building toilets will reduce rape are misguided because in rural India, building toilets does not mean that people will use them.

Conclusion

Rural women aware about the benefits of toilet use and also provided knowledge about various, toilet schemes that are being initiated by the Government of India for providing better health and sanitation facilities to the rural people. The respondents were also made aware about the subsidy provided by the Government for construction of personal and community toilets especially for rural people. During

investigation cases of sexual harassment and molestation came into light which girls and women faced while going into open space during dark and in isolated places. We also come across various news in newspapers and television that shows how unsafe our women and girls are in rural areas as they do not have a proper space to defaecate. Not only does a toilet provide safety and security to women and girls in rural areas, it also secures the environment from being polluted.

Recommendations

1. Toilets should be delivered to households only when household members commit and pledge to use it.
2. Staff should be imparted trainings on different aspects of the programme, exposure to both the successful and failed interventions in the past, behavioral strategies, facilitation skills and not just given toilet targets. Specialized trainings for staff capacity building are therefore recommended.
3. Central government makes the case for public toilets, removes legal barriers, empowers local government and communities to take positive action, highlights opportunities and encourages innovation

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