

# The Community Incentive Model: Towards an Open Defecation Free Chhattisgarh

CLTS KNOWLEDGE HUB LEARNING PAPER

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**CLTS  
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Strengthening and broadening  
Community-led Total  
Sanitation at scale



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## Glossary

**Anganwadi Centre:** Government sponsored pre-school/crèche

**Block:** Administrative unit made up of a number of different Gram Panchayats

**Crore:** 10,000,000 in the Indian numbering system

**District:** Administration division of a State

**District Collector/District Magistrate:** Person in charge of the administration of a district

**Panchayat/Gram Panchayat:** Village-level administration most often made up of elected officials responsible for economic and social development

**Grama Sabha:** Regular village assembly open to all adults living in a Gram Panchayat

**Lakh:** 100,000 in the Indian numbering system

**Panchayat Raj Institution:** Three-tiered administrative system functioning at the village, block and district level

**Sarpanch:** Elected head of the Gram Panchayat

**Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin):** Current rural sanitation campaign

**Total Sanitation Campaign/Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan:** Previous sanitation campaigns

**Front Page Image:** Community members from Pinkapar GP, Rajnandgaon district. *Credit:* Vijeta Rao

## Summary

The Indian Government's Swachh Bharat Mission offers a 12,000 rupee incentive to Below Poverty Line and certain Above Poverty Line households without a toilet. However, translating the incentive into successful sanitation improvements has been a challenge. Innovative and customisable ways, ideas and processes are needed to ensure community buy-in and achieve greater ownership of the process and high rates of toilet use in an environmentally safe manner.

To date the State of Chhattisgarh has seen great successes in ending open defecation and ensuring usage of toilets. With two districts and over fifty blocks declared ODF, Chhattisgarh has also shown strong commitments to community-led processes and has seen a number of innovations, among them the Community Incentive Method. This method has evolved to meet the specific requirements of the State and has shown promise especially in areas where there is a mix of households who are eligible and those who are not eligible for the incentive. Through this method, Chhattisgarh has paved the path for many more districts, both in terms of innovations around the incentive as well as to customise solutions for their own state.

This Learning Paper documents the Community Incentive Method. It focuses on how and why it evolved, how it works, the challenges of using a similar approach and recommendations.

### 1. Introduction:

The State of Chhattisgarh is leading the way in the fight for ending open defecation through a strong commitment for community-led processes and innovations centered on ensuring usage and sustainability of open defecation free (ODF) status. As of December 2016, over 50 blocks and two districts (Mungeli and Dhamatri) have been declared ODF in the State. On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017 (India's Republic Day) another two districts (Rajnandgaon and Kawardha are going to be declared ODF). Through a uniform voice and understanding starting from the State leadership all the way to the *Sarpanch* and community members, there is a clear commitment to community-led processes. Innovations within the context of Chhattisgarh are evolving on a constant basis building on the commitment of the State and the passion to achieve a *Swacch* (Clean) Chhattisgarh ahead of the 2019 target set by the Government of India. The Community Incentive Method is one such innovation that cuts across the entire cycle of implementation, particularly with respect to mobilizing, incentivizing and monitoring ODF related processes and outcomes.

### 2. Context:

There is a history of sanitation policies and programmes across the country including in Chhattisgarh where depending on the local context, several models of implementation may be in practice. It is also important to note that the *Swacch Bharat Mission* (SBM) only provides broad recommendations for implementation building on the lessons learnt over three decades of sanitation policies. In Chhattisgarh, another key breakthrough came about in early 2015 when the implementing agency for SBM was changed from the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) to the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department (PR&RD) headed by the District Collector and Magistrate at the district Level and has a more

appropriate organisational structure and direct linkage with the *Gram Panchayat* (the village level unit of the *Panchayat Raj Institutions*). This brought about greater momentum in the implementation of SBM.

Several factors played a key role in the evolution of the Community Incentive method. In Chhattisgarh according to the baseline survey figures of 2012-2013, out of 44 Lakh households, over 17 Lakh toilets were constructed till 2014, out of which over 10 Lakh toilets were reported to be defunct. As there was a huge problem of existing/defunct toilets and therefore households that were not eligible for the incentive under SBM (G), and by targeting only those that were new constructions, the administration felt that this was very problematic and would not strengthen collective decision making and community solidarity. Other factors include:

- The change of SBM Implementation from Public Health Engineering Department to Rural Development Department (RDD) has made a tremendous impact on the scope and scale of the programme. As RDD is directly responsible for *Panchayat Raj Institutions*, the communication and ease of execution has had a clear and profound impact.
- Chhattisgarh has a history of women's empowerment and participation, which has also translated into strong roles for women in the sanitation movement. The Self-Help Group (SHG) network played an integral role for enabling community processes and ownership towards ODF.
- As there was a significant drive towards ODF under Total Sanitation Campaign and under *Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan*, even though the focus at that time was to saturate through construction and so the majority of the GPs have slipped back, there was considerable awareness and related to stopping open defecation.
- On the other hand, as there were over 800 GPs declared *Nirmal Gram Panchayats* or ODF *Panchayats* earlier, there were no more funds to incentivise those households without a toilet under the Government's scheme of Rs. 12000/- per household. Another strategy to tackle the problem was needed.
- The evidence from Rana Mattiya GP, Chhurria block, Rajnandgaon district, through the efforts of Knowledge Links-UNICEF using a CLTS/ CATS approach to achieve ODF GPs without any financial incentive convinced the entire district and State administration of the importance of focusing on community ownership to stop open defecation.

This was the context and the rationale for the inception and adoption of the Collective Incentive Method, as the community is triggered to stop 'eating each other's shit' through trained CLTS facilitators and they build toilets according to their own economic means. It was not possible, given the challenges highlighted in the baseline survey, the lack of sufficient funds and the learning that focusing only on construction and individual household incentives would not result in ODF outcomes. The answer was in enabling communities to drive the processes and incentivising the community as a whole for achieving and sustaining ODF outcomes. Buy-in and ownership of households can be seen through high levels of use but also innovative designs to combat space constraints that came from community members.

After the community declares themselves ODF and maintains the status for three months, the entire incentive (number of eligible beneficiaries x Rs. 12000) is released to the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) account and the community then decide amongst them

how to utilize the amount. They may distribute the fund equally among all households irrespective of those that had a toilet earlier, or may choose to dedicate the fund for other community level activities. Some of these activities included: institutional toilets such as at *Anganwadi* Centers/Schools; community toilets especially in those GPs which saw a large influx of visitors during village market/bazaar days; toilets at public places for example where there are bus stops; solid and liquid waste management such as dust bins and soak pits.

Whatever the use, the underlying principle is that the community themselves decide how to use the incentive and the focus is to ensure toilet use by all and sustainability of ODF status.

### 3. Process:

The lessons learnt from the Rajnandgaon example have resulted in a statewide instruction that outlines three types of SBM incentive disbursement mechanism:

1. Community Incentive – The entire incentive amount provided at the end of three months of the GPs self-declared ODF status.
2. Installment Based - 3 Installments of Rs. 4000/- per eligible household up to a maximum of 50% of the incentive after constructing of at least 50% of the toilets, and the remaining to be released three months after construction and continued usage.
3. Individual Incentive - In areas where the community decided that they would like the incentive to be given to the individual three months after construction and usage, the entire 12000 may be given to the individual.

VWSC, comprising of the *Sarpanch* as the Chairman and the *Panchayat* Secretary as the member Convenor and all front line workers, SHG members and others, is the main implementing body at the GP level. Sanitation funds from the State are released to the districts, which are in turn released to the VWSC at different intervals and amounts depending on the incentive disbursement mechanism employed.



**Image One: Community Members discussing the process in which Davri-Darri GP became OD, Dhamtari district. Credit: Vijeta Rao**

The process of construction of latrines within the GP may happen in multiple ways. Broadly, three models have emerged:

1. Households build their own toilets based on their preference and economic means. Funds are secured through their own methods, but there is collective action and mobilisation to ensure everyone constructs and uses. In case of very poor households or those that are unable to construct their own, the *Panchayat* identifies other sources of funds such as from the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, SHG loans and others to ensure support and completion of the toilet. Focus is on stopping open defecation and using a toilet by all at all times.
2. Several of the households build their own toilet and for those that are not willing to/able to construct by themselves, the *Sarpanch* may bring together materials through funds available at the *Panchayat* or on credit (on his authority) from suppliers and ensure the construction is completed. The money is then adjusted when the incentive amount for the beneficiary is released under SBM. Although, the money is to be released after three months of usage, in this model, it was observed that as it is an adjustment in the books where the money is paid to the supplier, the incentive does not follow the three month rule and the entire amount may be released soon after all the construction activity at the GP is completed. In some cases due to the lack of sufficient funds at the district level, the remaining portion of the installment may not have been released but the strict adherence to the three-month period of usage is not ensured here.
3. *Sarpanch* takes the responsibility of building majority of the toilets on his own through organising masons and materials for construction, with or without the approval of the community members. It is hard to gauge how involved or aware the households were about this process, how they have contributed and what their opinion on ownership and usage of these toilets, given the short visit to these communities. Through greater follow up over time, it may become clearer as to the robustness of the process to ensure usage and sustainability.

#### 4. Rajnandgaon District:

Six GPs across three blocks were visited to understand the processes and key features of the community incentive method that was piloted here. Two blocks, Chhurria and Ambagadh Chauki have been declared ODF. The local context of these two blocks is as follows:

- Close knit society, predominantly tribal communities
- People are dependent on government schemes and support and trust the administration
- High number of ODF villages that have slipped back and therefore the sanitation coverage is at different levels and usage is poor even among those with a latrine.
- Given the shortage of funds under SBM, it was not possible for the district administration to release incentives for only those households that were eligible as they felt it would lead to animosity, incomplete participation and divided communities. It would never be possible to achieve 100% open defecation free communities by only distributing the incentive to households entitled to the incentive. Instead, it was decided to focus on strong triggering and mobilization where the community was placed in the center of planning and implementation



- The administration also felt that for the community to own the process and collectively decide to fight against open defecation, it was important to facilitate them in a way where they would come up with ways themselves to construct their own latrines and also to assist those who needed additional resources through other fund options at the GP (14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission for example)
- Therefore, the issue of incentive was never raised and the facilitation never centered on providing money as an incentive for constructing toilets. They were mobilised to understand the harmful effects of open defecation, to end fecal oral contamination through the construction of toilets according to their own means and funds available at the GP.
- Communities were informed that achieving ODF status would enable priority for accessing other development/government schemes and funding such as piped water scheme, pond beautification and solar pumps. This also seemed to be a strong motivator in addition to CLTS triggering for the community to stop OD and work towards development of the GP.
- Ambagadh Chauki was the first block to become ODF within the community's own means without releasing any incentive until after the community became ODF and maintained the status for three months.
- In both blocks however, as there was a severe drought across several districts in the State in the past year and especially in *Nirmal Gram Panchayats* where there were many households without toilets, after the completion of 90% of the work related to availability of latrines for all households, the first installment of Rs. 4000/- per eligible beneficiary (according to the baseline survey) was released as a community incentive from the Information, Education and Communication funds available at State level. This was done to support the community's efforts thus far.



**Image Two: Household toilet Mararpara village, Ambagadh Chauki block, Dhamtari district. Credit: Vijeta Rao**



**Image Three: A community toilet complex for women, Dhumridih village, Churriya Block, Rajnandgaon district. Credit: Vijeta Rao**

## 5. Dhamtari District:

The context in Dhamtari district is quite different both in terms of the communities as well as the administration. The communities are better educated, economically sounder, more vocal and are aware of the government schemes and the incentive structure. There is less trust and dependence on the government and therefore they may not be willing to think or act collectively and appreciate the Community Incentive Model. Here, the innovation is focusing on a delayed community incentive, where the communities are informed up front of the incentive under SBM, are provided with seed money in the form of Rs. 2 Lakhs (as was seen in some of the GPs) or with the first installment after 30-50% of the construction work completed. There is not a shortage of funds (probably as there are not as many *Nirmal Gram Panchayats* in this district) and so the district team was not constrained with respect to using the incentive for pushing construction and also usage of latrines. The process in this district is as follows:

- A block approach was adopted right from the start and the *Sarpanch*, *Panchayat* Secretary and a few other members from all the *Panchayats* in the block were called for a meeting to discuss the goal of making their block ODF, their roles and responsibilities outlined and timeline was decided. They were asked to commit to ensuring ODF communities and were also provided with orientation on CLTS
- *Sarpanch*, *Panchayat* Secretary and Field Assistant were provided training on CLTS (2 days at the block level) and then facilitated CLTS in their respective GPs. CLTS based triggering was not the main strategy and was not done in a fully-fledged manner as the approach here was to enable construction in a time bound manner and to work with *Sarpanch* and *Panchayat* Secretary and not the community as a whole to drive the processes
- Given the understanding of the district team that demand and supply are to go together, the *Sarpanch* and others were assisted by the district administration to identify suppliers and assist with material procurement and others during the construction process. It was encouraged/recommended strongly by the district teams for the *Sarpanch* and others to ensure usage immediately after construction. However, there was not an equally strong or committed emphasis on collective action and community ownership as was seen in Rajnandgaon. However, usage of toilets was clearly observed in the GPs visited.
  - The community members said that in this district most of them practiced the double crop, meaning they worked in the fields all year long and agricultural fields surrounded their living space. This made it very difficult to find appropriate open spaces for defecation and the community felt that it was inconvenient and costing a lot of time.
  - Rs. 12000 was much more than the incentive they had received earlier which was around Rs 1500 and in some rare cases, Rs. 9100. When they heard of the increased incentive, clubbed with the inconvenience of defecating in the open in their current living spaces, households took to constructing toilets however did not know or had insufficient experience and knowledge on the required materials for construction. Therefore, they did not take an active role and left it to the *Sarpanch* and others in the GP to procure the materials and to



construct the toilets. It may be hard to conclude on the usage and sustainability aspects, as it is too early to tell.

- The non-eligible beneficiaries in a community are provided with toilets through the incentive under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. This also covers those that need to repair toilets that were constructed earlier, but the incentive amount for this case is only Rs. 8400.
- Incentive amount is still released to the VWSC account in bulk in installments and is either provided to the individual himself in cash (if constructing latrines on their own) or is used by the *Sarpanch* to procure and pay for materials.
- The three month period for usage is not adhered to here and although everyone is informed that a portion of the incentive amount (~10%) would be given after usage is seen, the process involves releasing the incentive immediately or soon after construction is completed (provided there are sufficient funds at the district level)
- *Nigrani* (Monitoring) Committees have been formed with female and male members, youth, children and others to ensure usage as and when construction is complete. Whistle campaigns, sanctions and penalties (also incentives for those that report someone defecating in the open) are common practices across all GPs irrespective of incentive disbursement mechanism as signs of ensuring usage and sustainability of ODF Status.



**Image Four: household member in front of her toilet in Khisora GP in Magarlod Block of Dhamtari district. Credit: Vijeta Rao**

## 6. Challenges:

Across both districts there are still a number of challenges. These include:

- The toilet technologies and the quality of construction is not uniform. Some are not environmentally safe (vast number of septic tank based toilets) or cost effective (as people have built very expensive toilets).
- Different models in different contexts are a fact of large sanitation programmes and there must be flexibility. However, the use of incentive upfront in some places and no incentive at all in other places until after ODF may present a conflicting and complex situation when it comes to replication and scale up.
- Target based approach to block saturation may be hampering the focus and emphasis on community processes that may be perceived as taking up more time
- The role of *Sarpanch* in ensuring construction of toilets may take away from community's ownership and participation, which may then result in the same failures experienced in earlier supply driven and construction oriented approaches.
- The GPs that have become ODF on their own (Marartola Village in Ambagadh Chauki, one of the first villages to become ODF and inspire the entire block to achieve the same, for example) had not received any incentive amount at the time of data collection (June 2016). The disbursement process was made less rigid after a few months of experience and due to the drought situation. However, these GPs must be provided with the community incentive/reward immediately as they have maintained their ODF status for close to two years now.

## 7. Recommendations

- While it is important to be flexible, the core principles that need to be adhered to as part of the ODF implementation strategy may need to be tailored to each district. These could include:
  - Community-owned and led ODF strategy- functional committees involving members of the community along with *Panchayat Raj Institutions* and Front line workers
  - Focus on inclusion of all groups within the community in the processes
  - Accountability and Transparency- through community meetings and resolutions on all major decisions taken and proactive disclosures of all financial transactions
- An effective tracking system of the predominant implementation strategy in each district will help the state administration to address bottlenecks and accelerate the processes
- In order to supplement the efforts by *Sarpanch* who may have taken a lead role in the ODF implementation, focused efforts to strengthen the *Nigrani* (Monitoring) Committee through training and other support may be useful to ensure usage of toilets constructed and ensure sustainability.
- In Rajnandgaon and Dhamtari districts, the Pink and Green Commandoes who are responsible for the monitoring and mobilization efforts, should be constituted through a *Grama Sabha* with clarity on their roles and responsibilities. This is crucial to ensure their credibility and impact on the community.

- For those GPs becoming ODF and maintaining it for three months, Community Incentive to be released in a phased manner and based on an agreed timeline so that the reward for those GPs is not overlooked. The community may be able to utilise this fund for multiple reasons that could benefit from the timely release.

## The Community Incentive Model: Towards an Open Defecation Free Chhattisgarh

The Indian Government's flagship Swachh Bharat Mission offers a 12,000 rupee incentive to all Below Poverty Line and certain Above Poverty Line households without a toilet. However, translating the incentive into successful sanitation improvements has been a challenge. Innovative and customisable ways, ideas and processes are needed to ensure community buy-in and achieve greater ownership of the process and high rates of toilet use in an environmentally safe manner.

To date the State of Chhattisgarh has seen great successes in ending open defecation and ensuring usage of toilets. With two districts and over fifty blocks declared ODF, Chhattisgarh has also shown strong commitments to community-led processes and has seen a number of innovations, among them the Community Incentive Method. This method has evolved to meet the specific requirements of the State and has shown promise especially in areas where there is a mix of households who are eligible and those who are not eligible for the incentive. Through this method, Chhattisgarh has paved the path for many more districts, both in terms of innovations around the incentive as well as to customise solutions for their own state.

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