

Achieving District-Wide Quality and Sustainability with the SBM-G Across Uttar Pradesh

A rapid action sharing, learning and planning workshop

Organised by

Varanasi Division, Government of Uttar Pradesh

In collaboration with

Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council & Institute of Development Studies

Introduction

A regional workshop to share, learn and plan with quality and sustainability in the context of Swachh Bharat Mission was held in Varanasi on January 11 to 13, 2018. It brought together 75 participants from seven districts of Uttar Pradesh (Bhadohi, Chanduli, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Sonabhadra and Varanasi) across Varanasi and Vindhyachal Divisions. The workshop was designed to provide and facilitate a learning platform for sharing experiences and ideas between districts.



Image 1: Group photograph of participants

Background & Context

Since the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin (SBM (G)) Uttar Pradesh (UP) has achieved some successes. To identify successful practices and using methods for rapid sharing, learning, adopting and adapting of these for local needs and conditions, the Divisional Swachh Bharat Team, Varanasi, organised a three day workshop at Hotel Surabhi International. The workshop was held in association with and facilitated by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

Over the three days Varanasi and Vindhyachal Divisional and district level staff from seven districts came together to share and learn insights, innovations and successful practices for changing behaviours and establishing and maintaining Open Defection Free (ODF) Gram Panchayats (GP), blocks and districts. Participants included Mr Akash Deep, UP SBM Mission Director (MD), Mr Nitin Ramesh

Gokarn, Varanasi Divisional Commissioner (DC), Mr Ashok Shahi, Deputy Director, Mr Yogeshwar Ram Mishra, District Magistrate (DM), two Chief Development Officers (CDO) and five District Panchayat Raj Officers (DPRO).

The overriding aim was to provide the state, districts, blocks and GPs with the ideas and means to accelerate progress towards Swacch Bharat while ensuring sustainability and quality. The workshop was designed:

- To learn from successful experiences and to provide opportunities for sharing of insights, innovations and successful practices, including methods, processes and approaches developed in the districts
- To make these accessible for adoption and/or adaptation as desired by other districts
- For district teams to review practical lessons learnt and to integrate that learning into district specific actions

The process involved:

- In advance documenting insights, approaches and methods. At the workshop **sharing** these, along with others, through a mix of plenary and group discussions.
- Proactively **learning** with each district team working together to gather information from others, and through field visits and participants' reflections.
- District teams given time to **review** lessons learnt and **plan** what recommendations and actions can be taken forward in their own districts.

Selected Practical Actions:

Good practices, experiences and insights covered a wide range and included:

- Updating the baseline
- Block level war rooms
- Decentralisation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) funds
- Ensuring a range of different sanitation champions e.g. masons, religious leaders, community groups etc.
- Priority to the most disadvantaged
- Utilising different funding streams
- Incentivising Nigrani Samitis and ensuring they are representative of a whole village
- Building and maintaining school toilets
- Celebrations and religious festivals
- Children as change agents

Examples of Practical, Scalable initiatives:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-Surveying: In order to update the baseline data a team was created to go door-to-door to identify beneficiaries that were unregistered and remove households on the list that did not exist. Results are then presented back to communities making the process more transparent.• Decentralisation of IEC Funds: One lakh rupees is transferred to each block into account of Block Sanitation Officer/Assistant Development Officer (Panchayat). Any IEC activity at block

and GP level utilise this funds. After the fund is finished another one lakh is transferred after submission of a signed Utilisation Certificate. This has helped maintain a smooth fund flow.

- **Selecting a Range of Champions:** Across the divisions a wide range of champions have been enlisted to help motivate and help promote toilet construction, and use. These have included masons, religious leaders, boat drivers, and Block Development Committee members.
- **Priority Given to the Disadvantaged:** Widows and those with disabilities are registered in the district war room and verified by block level teams. They are then given sanction letters assuring households that the incentive will be provided once toilet construction is complete. There were also examples of DMs, DPROs and CDOs gifting toilets to extremely poor households from their own pockets.
- **Strengthening and Supporting Nigrani Samitis:** Corporate Social Responsibility funds have been used to purchase blankets for Nigrani Samitis while IEC funds have been used to buy them saris and tracksuits. In addition, participation of women and people with disabilities was reported. In one Nigrani Samiti all caste groups in the village were represented.

Process

Over the course of three days the process enabled peer-to-peer horizontal learning between districts all at different stages of the journey towards ODF. The workshop was focused on action - with the end goal being district teams generating recommendations for ways forward and action plans that strengthen their districts SBM programme to ensure quality and sustainability.

District teams were made up of approximately 7-8 people including Pradhans, Block Coordinators, Block Development Officers, District Programme Consultants, Preraks, DPROs and CDOs.

Day One: Brief sharing of practical experiences in plenary followed by district teams hunting and gathering to find out more from other districts.

Day Two: Districts teams were mixed up in different field teams to maximise interactions and then visited 9 villages across 5 districts, finding out about issues of concern and what approaches have been used. On return they then shared their findings with their district teams and started work on action plans.

Day Three: District teams developed further their action plans before they were presented to the DC, MD and DMs who were in attendance.

Though there are ways the process could be strengthened, the written feedback was exclusively positive. All participants said that the ideas and insights shared were useful and that the three days will make a positive contribution to their work.

Selected Participant Feedback:

- "I got new ideas and innovations and finally practical goals to achieve success in SBM. The final action plan is the most important implementation tool"
- "I got ideas about how to apply new tools and techniques"
- "Learning gains by from participation will be used to improve the system of work in my district team"

- “Certain methods that have been initiated by other blocks were really interesting and we were keen to use them in our district”
- “Useful in obtaining innovative, feasible, implementable ideas”
- “Learned about the flaws and positive efforts of other districts. We’ll follow the good examples and try to avoid the mistakes they have done.”
- “It is definitely going to improve my way of work, as reading from books does not give as much knowledge as learning from each other.”
- “By learning from other districts we will be able to improve our work strategies and get better results and make our district ODF”
- “Similar workshops should happen at district level as well”



Image 2: Teams presenting good practices



Image 3: Presentation of Action Plans being to DC

Key Learnings:

Key learning identified by participants included:

- New GP level events and activities including ‘swachhta Olympics’, training and strengthening Nigrani Samiti’s etc.
- Ideas about block level activities for example block war rooms and monitoring systems and the decentralisation of IEC funds.
- Different IEC ideas such as organising trips to well performing villages, community-wide events and celebrations, utilising religious festivals etc.
- Better ways to effectively manage and operate of school and Anganwadi toilets.

Follow up and ways forward:

The most critical next steps are:

- Districts to implement actions plans that were developed
- To continue to share innovative practices with other districts

Several requests were immediately received for similar workshops in other districts, UP wide as well as interstate. A note has been prepared to help others convene and facilitate other similar rapid action learning, sharing and planning workshops drawing on experiences including a National Workshop held in Bhopal in August 2015, Divisional workshops in Moradabad and Varanasi and a district level event also held in Varanasi.

15th January,2018