

RAPID REPORT ON TIMELY, RELEVANT AND ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE FOR THE SBM-G

12th October 2017

Background

The momentum and scale of the Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin (SBM-G) is unprecedented. The speed of implementation means that the identification of gaps and finding answers to these in ways that provide practical ideas for policy and practice can have exceptionally widespread impact provided they can be timely, relevant and actionable. The trade-offs between timeliness and the time required for conventional academic rigour are vast. Fortunately, a range of innovations and approaches have recently been developed and applied in India for timely and practical learning on sanitation.

The workshop

WaterAid India and Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex, in co-ordination with The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS), Government of India, held a one-day workshop in Delhi on the 10th October 2017. It brought together SMB-G senior officials as well as representatives from development and knowledge partners including the World Bank, UNICEF, World Health Organisation, WSSCC, 3ie, rice institute, Praxis, Aga Khan Foundation, DevInsights, TARU, NAG-DNT, Public Affairs Centre and the India Sanitation Coalition. The main objectives were to present findings from new timely, relevant and action-orientated research, and to identify gaps and priorities for future rapid investigations with high potential applicability and impact.

The rapid learning exercises presented

Six types of learning initiatives were presented:

The toilet technology survey-based study (WaterAid India)

This is a more conventional method, but was executed in a speedy way, whereby initial findings were shared in record time: survey was conducted in 16 Districts in 8 States in the first half of March 2017, and presentation of initial findings was made to Central and State Governments on 22 March.

The study found that twin leach pits are the predominant technology, representing 57% of constructed toilets, while septic tanks are 21% and single leach pits 22%. Looking at toilets under construction, there is a rise of single pits at the expense of twin pits. Faulty or inadequate substructure designs mean that a third of the toilets are not safely protecting public health.

For more information: wateraidindia.in/publication/quality-sustainability-toilets/

Immersive Research (Praxis, WaterAid and IDS)

Praxis, WaterAid and IDS, drawing on the Reality Check Approach, were partners in immersions for 4 days and 3 nights in 8 villages in ODF declared Districts, living, observing and inquiring with an agenda concerning behaviour change but wide-open to other learning and topics. Immersions took place in April and May, with immediate informal feedback to Government. The process found the need for stronger local ownership and behaviour change communication, better information about different toilet designs and materials and more focused support to poor and marginalised households.

For more information: wateraidindia.in/immersion-sbm/

The Swachhathon (MDWS)

This innovative, large-scale and very rapid approach initiated by MDWS covered six topics: technology, menstrual hygiene management, monitoring usage, behaviour change, operation and maintenance of school toilets and early decomposition of faecal matter.

The Ministry received a rich harvest of over 2,000 contributions from many sources across the country. From these panels selected the most promising and practical. .

For more information: innovate.mygov.in/swachhathon-1-0/

ODF verification (WaterAid India)

WaterAid India, under request of Government of Chhattisgarh, did an independent ODF verification in 3 districts of the state. The mobile/ Android based tool (mWater) used for data collection and analysis helped to make the entire processes faster, making it a source of practical learning. Data was automatically represented visually and plotted in maps on an online dashboard, allowing the viewer to zoom in and see details, also making inter and intra district analysis possible. The state government has decided to use it in scale for the ongoing verification process and

Key realisation from the process was that rapid but reliable tools and processes are viable for ODF verification, which is also adaptable and scalable. The technology requirements are minimal too, with online and offline options.

For more information:

portal.mwater.co/#/dashboards/5b981aa50e7e4d5faa3121b564d5326b?share=2d122ac27292498fb21ae5d3d9252372

Peer sharing and learning workshops (WSSCC, IDS and Divisional Commissioner, Moradabad)

Two workshops – one in Bhopal in 2014 and one in Moradabad in September 2017– have been convened jointly by Government, WSSCC and IDS. The Moradabad workshop - ‘Achieving District-wide Quality and Sustainability with the SBM-G across Uttar Pradesh’ brought together 112 participants from different levels of government in 9 UP Districts to share and learn from each other.

Preraks played significant roles.

In a highly participatory mode, those at the Moradabad workshop identified successful practices and methods. It provided the opportunity for Districts to share and learn from one another and then strengthen their District SBMG plans by adopting and adapting what they had learnt.

For more information: www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/resource/report-regional-workshop-share-learn-and-plan-quality-and-sustainability-swachh-bharat

Rapid Topic Exploration and Review

Four consultants were asked to conduct a rapid review of accessible literature combined with key informant interviews and field visits on four key topics. They were given freedom to be highly flexible in their approaches. The topics and headline findings were:

1. Twin-Leach Pits: There is a lack of knowledge on technical aspects of costs and construction and technical information on toilet designs and functions.
2. Septic Tanks and Faecal Sludge Management: There a variations in the number of septic tanks in each state. Faulty construction and careless treatment of faecal sludge are second generation challenges that need attention.

3. Men and Open Defecation: Several studies have found a clear gender gap in toilet usage. Many campaigns have focussed on women leaving men's open defecation as a major problem. Examples of national and local efforts to stop men openly defecating have revealed promising approaches. .
4. Sanitation Coverage, Usage and Health: Partial usage is varies widely across studies which have methodological inconsistencies. Current knowledge points to the need for a high coverage *and* usage to achieve major benefits in health and nutrition.

For more information: www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/resource/timely-relevant-and-actionable-reports-sbm

Reflections on learning and methods

In much conventional academic research, the term rigour is reserved for conforming to the norms of statistics. A complementary use of the term is to apply it to a combination of timeliness, relevance, and being actionable. The workshop showcased methods and approaches for learning which are rapid, meet needs to know, can contribute to better action, and are in consequence cost-effective. This is exceptionally pertinent in the context of the SBM G in which so much is being made to happen so fast and on such a vast scale, and data and insights from conventional approaches can be rapidly out of date and too late for useful application.

As with all explorations and creativity, there should be no single approach and no one size fits all, but rather an innovative multiplicity of methods and approaches, presenting a range of choice of methodology to fit context and what is to be researched. Multiple methods can also contribute to rigour through triangulation. The six approaches that we have here differ quite sharply which is cause for celebration.

Priority areas for rapid learning

Workshop participants brainstormed topics which need urgent attention and could benefit greatly from a rapid learning approach. Key ones were:

Water: its relationship to usage, especially in dry states. Are there seasonal differences for usage? What are current water use practices? Can they be improved to use less? What toilet technologies are available that minimise water usage? How can people be informed about minimum water requirements use?

Capacity Development: how to train Gram Panchayat level actors. This includes masons on appropriate technologies and how to construct them correctly. Also foot soldiers (Nigrani Samitis, Natural Leaders, Swacchagrahis, religious leaders etc.) about effective IEC/IPC. Furthermore, training of the wider community, for example on monitoring.

Institutional Toilets: What successful systems are out for the continued operation and maintenance of toilets in schools, anganwadi toilets and health care facilities, and how can these be spread?

Innovations in BCC: How to help people understand better the benefits of twin-pits alongside the correct ways to construct and use them? How to provide technical guidance of different options and empower households with information on the quality and quantity of materials needed. What ways are there to encourage total usage through health messaging?

Actions needed Post-ODF: How do we cover people who will inevitably be missed? How to deal with second generation issues such as problems with pits, slippage, dysfunctional toilets, groundwater pollution etc. How to deal with FSM both in relation to service providers especially for septic tanks?

Human rights violations. What are the boundaries of sanctions beyond which human rights are violated, such as denial of legal entitlements? How can such infringements be prevented?

Recommendations for SBM

Recommendations found across the different learning processes are grouped by themes below:

Ideas for consistent behaviour change and total usage:

- Diversify IEC moving away from gender stereotyping to counter previous patriarchal sanitation messages. Alongside this search, collect, learn and share on more ways to change behaviour of everybody, especially men.
- Assess coercive behaviour change techniques that may be infringing human rights and identify and advocate alternatives
- Design and distribute easy-to-understand messages focusing on twin-pits, their benefits and dispelling misconceptions and misuse. Pilot campaigns for sharing by champions with personal experience of the value of twin pit manure, and more widely highlight the livelihood and income opportunities the manure presents. .

Ideas for improving the quality and appropriate construction of different toilet technologies:

- Refresher training is needed for many masons for both septic tanks and twin-pits. Current good practices in training should be identified and disseminated. Empower households by giving them information technologies. This could be done through the preparation and distribution of local language IEC as leaflets, and multiple media.
- Monitoring through geotagged photographs of substructures as well as superstructures.
- Retrofitting for badly built septic tanks and twin-pit models which only have one pit.
- Modify the standard superstructure to accommodate those with disabilities, recognising different challenges people face and not limited to just those who need wheelchairs.

Ideas for rural FSM:

- Focus on the safe management of faeces for all toilet technologies.
- Prepare and disseminate protocols and policies – especially in states with a high concentration of septic tanks
- Map agencies that provide emptying services, learn from how they currently empty, transport and treat the sludge, and assess how this could be extended and improved to meet pending needs.
- Train those already providing FSM services. Infrastructure will be needed to ensure safety across the sanitation chain beyond containment (emptying, transporting and treating).

Ideas for beyond ODF:

- Policies are need post-2nd October 2019 to ensure second generation challenges are dealt with appropriately and help those who will inevitably slip through the net.
- Stagger verification (one study proposes a bronze, silver and gold system) to include FSM, total use and SLWM.
- Handwashing and access to water are both in major need of attention

Ideas for future sharing and learning soon and at scale

- Focus on actionable recommendations and communicating them to those who can take action
- Assess whether preraks and their networks have a role in learning and sharing
- Assess the strengths, weaknesses of the learning and sharing approaches presented at this workshop and their potential for being taken to scale, acted upon and having an impact, of the rapid learning and sharing approaches presented at this workshop.
- Identify who can follow up proactively to ensure rapid action on a wide scale