
Press Release

Bihar needs to build 6,900 toilets a day to keep promise of total sanitation, finds survey report

- Total Sanitation Campaign is a national programme to ensure sanitation facilities in rural areas with a goal to eradicate the practice of open defecation by 2010.
- WaterAid India, a UK-based NGO working in 22 countries on water and sanitation, carried out an assessment of Bihar's performance in this programme
- Bihar has to create around 99.3 lakhs household toilets in three years to achieve the targets set for universal coverage by 2012.
- Of the 17.65 lakh toilets already built, many are not in use and maintenance is hardly done

The UK-based NGO WaterAid (www.waterAid.org) that has been working in India since 1986 has found that Bihar is lagging behind in its target to achieve total toilet coverage for its rural population. "The state's performance is not encouraging. But there is scope for it to make it better. In fact given the current political focus on sanitation, we are confident that Bihar may well meet the deadline," says Dr. Indira Khurana, director, policy and partnership, WaterAid India.

The findings came at a time when the state's minister for Public Health and Engineering Ashwini Kumar Choubey has been touring the state for making sanitation a priority for people and government. His "Bihar Gram Gaurav Yatra" has been on since January 27 2009. The minister has been visiting household in villages to make aware them of the benefits of toilets. "It is a very encouraging step given the bad situation in regard to sanitation in the state," says Anand Sekhar, the regional manager of WaterAid India's north regional office.



According to the findings of its survey of the Total Sanitation Campaign, a national programme aimed at eradication of open defecation by making toilet facilities at household level, Bihar needs to construct 99.3 lakh toilets by 2012 to meet its target. This means a staggering 6,900 toilets every day for the next three years. This estimate assumes that the toilets already built will be used and maintained.

WaterAid India office assessed performance of five states - Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Karnataka and Haryana - on the Total Sanitation Campaign during May-November 2008. Its results are being released now.

The TSC has been in implementation since 1999 in the country. This is the only programme that is dedicated to toilets.

WaterAid studied TSC performance in Bihar and conducted primary survey in Vaishali and Nalanda districts. In Bihar the TSC programme commenced in 1999 with an objective to achieve coverage of 1,11,71,314 households. As per Census of India 2001, sanitation coverage in the state was 13.83% as compared to national coverage of 26% in rural areas. Out of the total 1,27,57,830 rural households only 17,65,061 households have house hold toilets. . The current coverage stands at 10.30% as against the physical target.

Key findings

- With a physical target of around 99.3 lakh toilets to be constructed by end of 2012 there is a need to mobilise huge amount of resources both physical and financial. This would require constructing some 2.07 lakh toilets per month. Given these targets to be achieved with the current subsidy pattern, some Rs. 1133 crore would be required in next 4 years. This means mobilising Rs. 283.39 crore every year or Rs. 23.62 crore every month.
- During first three years of implementation (1999-2003), no significant progress has been made in toilet construction. In total 7,42,203 (13%) BPL category households and some 1,89,096 (4%) APL category households have been provided with toilets, making an overall progress of 9,31,299 toilets or 9%.
- Construction of toilets in schools - an important feature in the TSC as children spend significant time in schools - has steadily been on the rise since 2005-06 even though the state is far behind in meeting target.. Till March 31, 2008 some 24,741 toilets have been constructed in schools, and 618 toilets have been constructed in Anganwadi as against proposed targets of 76,581 and 6,595 respectively.
- There are 39 Executive Engineers in position to take-up responsibilities in 38 districts and state headquarters. Many feel that the TSC work is an additional burden over and above the regular departmental work and without any additional benefits and staff. There is a demand for 40 more EEs. PHED has its internal review system for routine works and TSC is also being reviewed with Executive Engineers under this system. There is no dedicated review and monitoring system at the district level for TSC.

The survey report has also recommended steps need to be taken to make the programme a success and to enable it to be 100 % covered with sanitation facilities like toilets. They are:

The agenda for action

- There is an urgent need to revisit the current programme implementation strategy, as it has not been able to achieve the desired coverage, but has also been incapable of taking care of usage and behaviour change aspects of sanitation.
- Ensuring timely availability of funds is another important issue that needs to be addressed: as the delay in release of payment from GoI has been reportedly due to lack of availability of agreed state share
- Staff capacity both in terms of numbers and existing knowledge, skills and attitude have to be enhanced to strengthened the programme implementation
- Quality of construction emerges as a major issue to be addressed, as in many places, people even from the poorest of the poor communities such as dalits find the constructed toilets unusable. Hence, a strong mechanism for monitoring construction quality needs to be devised and put in place.

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