Community Approach to Total Sanitation (CATS) leading to sustainable ODF villages

Experience from four districts of Chhattisgarh
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CATS can be used as an effective means of empowering the local PRI representatives. Their involvement and conviction is essential for sustained behaviour change.

- Mr MK RAUT, Additional Chief Secretary

Chhattisgarh and sanitation initiatives
Sanitation in Chhattisgarh prior to CATS…1/2

The stark findings provide the backdrop to UNICEF to build a case to accelerate the sanitation agenda in the state

- Chhattisgarh is located in the central part of India with a population of 25.5 million
- The state has 27 districts with the majority of its population (almost 78 per cent) living in rural areas
- Chhattisgarh is considered one of the fastest developing states in India and is a major source of electricity and steel for India.
- Prior to the introduction of CATS, the dismal findings of various surveys were an eye-opener for the government of Chhattisgarh.
According to the results of the 2011 Census, Chhattisgarh ranked amongst the top five states in India with the highest percentage of rural households without toilets.

10,32,000 toilets constructed under various government programs were found to be defunct, Base line survey, 2012

Only 23.3% of household toilets in rural areas were being used, NSSO (2012)

Percentage of rural households without toilets
UNICEF Field Office for Chhattisgarh has been supporting the Government for sanitation programs ever since the creation of a separate State in 2001.

UNICEF launch this approach as a pilot in Churia block in Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh in 2013.

Based on its success, CATS was subsequently scaled up to cover specific blocks in Dantewada, Surguja and Raigarh.
When a family builds a house on their own, they take immense pride in it. In the same way, when the community members put their own efforts and manpower to construct a toilet, it instils a sense of ownership, which in turn results in sustained usage.

– Mrs Sheikh Reena, Field Mobilizer, Jankalyan Samajik Sansthan

Experience from four districts of Chhattisgarh
I am the change!. We women have to foremost pride ourselves and understand that the future of our children lay in our choices. Ensuring that I have a toilet is a statement in it self, it states that I pride myself, I care about myself, I care about the future…

– Pulken Bai
Resident, Rajnandgaon

Rajnandgaon
Rajnandgaon district at a glance

- Spread across an area of 8,222 square kilometres, it is located in the central western part of Chhattisgarh.
- The district is divided into nine administrative blocks and 696 Gram Panchayats (GPs).
- Census 2011 noted that 82.87 per cent reside in rural area.
- In 2012 UNICEF piloted the CATS model in Chhuriya block of the district.
- As per MDWS currently, 90.13 per cent of households, 94.96 per cent of the schools and 100 per cent of the Anganwadi Centres in the district have a toilet facility.
- Since 2006, more than 40 NGPs have been awarded and over 150,000 toilets have been built.
Rajnandgaon district at a glance

- In September 2012, UNICEF had organized a workshop in Raipur to share its experience and success of working with CATS in India.
- The workshop was attended by functionaries of the PHED along with field practitioners. However, the workshop did not result in a satisfactory outcome. PHED was not convinced by CATS and was apprehensive about its success in Chhattisgarh.
- To present an evidence base to the government of Chhattisgarh, UNICEF piloted the model in one Block of a District.
- Chhuriya block was selected basis:
  - Poor statistics on sanitation 84 per cent of HHs practiced open defecation.
  - 44.7 percent BPL population
  - Of its 8 NGP awarded villages, each had reversed to open defecation.
Experience of the pilot:

- Knowledge Links Private Limited was selected to implement the pilot intervention
- No target for ensuring the creation of ODF villages was set. Aim was to only conduct the triggering sessions.
- A cluster approach was adopted in selected remote and small villages
- By October 2013, 3 villages became ODF. Ranamatiya was the first ODF village in the State
- By February 2014, 20 more villages in Chhuriya block attained ODF status

A key operational learning from the pilot for the implementation of CATS was that seasonality plays a critical role in determining the schedule for implementing the approach and should be strongly taken into consideration.
Upscaling of CATS at Rajnandgaon

- From the pilot, a pool of 30 trained and motivated Natural Leaders had emerged; they were engaged in the upscaling too.
- Capacity of government staff in CATS was developed, to generate additional human resource.
- Local NGO was engaged to implement the project. 5 day training workshop on the implementation of CATS was organized.
- Clear quantitative target, for number of GPs to be focused upon, was set.
- Remote areas including those affected by civil strife were focused upon.
- Within a period of 4-5 months, 8 of the villages attained ODF status.
Learnings from implementation CATS in Rajnandgaon…1/2

1. Involvement of the District Collector as the key propagator or champion for the programme is a game changer.
2. Prioritizing knowledge transfer and utilizing trained resources throughout the course of the programme supports in developing the capacity and motivating the engaged resources.
3. Innovations designed as per the specific context of respective community supports in building ownership. For e.g. Swachh Senani awards were given for contribution towards ODF.
4. Women are key change agents for influencing behavioural change.
Learnings from implementation CATS in Rajnandgaon...2/2

5. Leveraging the existing SHG Federation can support in resource mobilization and in developing strong channels of communication within rural communities

6. Frequent follow-up visits subsequent to triggering sessions are important

7. Children should be actively engaged and motivated towards sanitary behavior

8. Giving the freedom to the households to introduce innovations in the design of the superstructure further strengthens the sense of ownership and pride in the toilet as a household asset
“While using CATS, it is extremely important to complete the entire process, in one go, right from triggering to construction to follow-up. Many times we have seen villages where a triggering session has been conducted, but subsequently there has been no follow-up for two to three months. In such a scenario it becomes very challenging to effectively re-trigger the village. The initial [failed] triggering session often acts as a barrier and impedes our work as the villagers do not take the issue seriously. Once the community has been ignited and has resolved to end the practice of OD, the momentum should be sustained by frequent follow-up visits”

– Mr Bhagwat Jaswal, Block CEO, Chhuriya
The practice of open defecation is detrimental to the growth and development of the overall community. However, the use of toilets cannot be enforced, it has to be individually acknowledged, accepted and internalised by the people themselves. We believe that human beings are powerful; they can solve all their problems. Attitudinal changes hold the key to at least seventy per cent of all problems.

- Ritu Sain, IAS, District Collector, Surguja District
An overview of sanitation situation in Sarguja prior to the implementation of CATS...1/2

- In 2009, the then DC prioritized sanitation
- Holistic focus on health, education, safety, women empowerment and rural development was adopted
- Community participatory approach was adopted
- 256 GPs (out of a total 1,090 GPs) were selected across three blocks; aim to construct 90,000 toilets in six months
- UNICEF supported the drive with technical advice
Understanding the context: what triggered the district to adopt the CATS approach

- Earlier engaged in the planning and implementation of the TSC in Surguja, Ritu Sain (DS Surguja) prioritised the issue of sanitation in the district.
- A bottom-up approach was adopted wherein the community was effectively mobilized to proactively took ownership of regular use and maintenance of toilets.
- Clear and consistent communication with community members about the need for sanitation prioritised.
- DC decided to pilot CATS to test the results. UNICEF was approached for support.
Understanding the context: Key challenges towards sustaining ODF status in the district

- Limited availability of funds with district administration to repair and reconstruct defunct toilets
- Increase in population
- Limited control over the external communication channels and misconceptions caused communities’ resistance towards ownership to one’s toilets

Having heard the strong reviews of the CATS approach, the DC approached UNICEF for support and piloted CATS in select villages
Results of the pilot

- In January 2015 the pilot was initiated. UNICEF partnered with Knowledge Link (KL) to implement the approach.

- The DC selected the frontline workers to be part of Nirmal Samuhs; including pro-active SHG federations, Rozgar Sahayaks, and Saksharta Preraks.

- KL trained 7 batches of 280 people to be members of Nirmal Samuhs.

- Results of the pilot:
  - 10 slipped back NGP became ODF.

Following the conclusion of the pilot, the district collector asked UNICEF’s support for the entire district to became ODF.
Timeline of CATS implementation in Sarguja district

What should be done to ensure:
1. CATS in 50 GPs in 9 months
2. 20 GPs attain ODF

Entry strategy?

How to effectively implement strategy?

Long term ODF sustainability?

- Identify and partner with a local NGO to implement CATS
- Set up a project office in district head quarter
- Appoint key project staff and orient them clearly on the objectives, timelines and the requisite techniques

Collaborate with key stakeholders from the District Administration, Zilla parishad, and PRI members at the district, block and panchayat level
Build a rapport at the intervention communities
Get a clear understanding of the current situation/extent of defunct toilets

- Develop a volunteer network from representatives from among the community
- Orient the volunteer network on designed clear messaging for mobilizing communities
- Train volunteers on the CATS process
- Pre-trigger, trigger and follow-up
- Provide technical advise for toilet construction
Key activities
Stage I: Planning

**Target:** Implement CATS in in 40 GPs across Lundra block and 10 GPs across Batauli block. Ensure that 20 GPs attain ODF status during the intervention

- Step 1: Develop a roadmap.
- Step 2: In coordination with the district collector and block CEOs, set a goal
- Step 3: Identify a local NGO partner to implement CATS and orient them on the process
- Step 5: Ensure availability of sufficient human resource
- Step 6: Develop a Whatsapp group for regular connectivity and updates
Key activities
Stage II: Collaboration with likeminded stakeholders

**Key challenge:** Despite a large number of initiatives in the past, people were defecating in the open. Important to understand why

- Step 1: Collaborate with stakeholders that had been actively working for ODF
- Step 2: Gain corporation of administrative officials
- Step 3: Finalize list of GPs
- Step 4: Gain Sarpanch’s consent
- Step 5: Identify opinion leader within the communities. Teachers and children are key influencers
Key activities
Stage III: Mobilizing participation…1/2

- Step 1: Gather a clear understanding of the sanitation situation in the village.
  - A baseline survey was initiated. Data collection took approximately four weeks
- Step 2: De-brief administration on data gathered.
  - Issues on toilet construction emerged as a key area of concern. The district administration decided that a daylong training should be held with the Sachivs (Secretaries of the GPs), to orient them on details of SBM and toilet technology
Key activities
Stage III: Mobilizing participation…2/2

- Under the district’s annual action plan for SBM, 85 GPs were shortlisted for focused sanitation drives

- Secretaries from each of the shortlisted 85 GPs were invited to attend the training, which was hosted by the SBM team at the district level

- Block level representatives were sensitized and oriented. Trainings were imparted for Sarpanchs, Rozgar Sahayaks and Saksharta Preraks

- These trained volunteers formed a “Nirmal Samuh” to support vigilance mechanisms
Learnings from implementation CATS in Sarguja

1. CATS facilitators were recognized as key divers for achieving success

2. A strong network was developed for close interaction amongst key stakeholders across different levels

3. Assessment of GPs was conducted through field observation prior to the intervention

4. The local government gave prime importance to the initiative

5. The focus was to make toilets a subject of pride for multiple stakeholders.
CATS is not only about meeting targets in terms of construction of toilets. The PHED can build much better toilets, but that is not the purpose or aim of this approach. Bringing about effective behaviour change is the key component here. The community should understand that constructing a toilet is their own responsibility as it is for their own good. A toilet is not a public good, and therefore it is important for the community to understand that the role of the government is not to construct toilets. The government can only provide the necessary support, wherever required.

– Mr K.C. Devasenapathi, Collector and District Magistrate, Dantewada district
Sanitation situation in Dantewada

- Dantewada district lies in the southern part of the state of Chhattisgarh

- As per the latest data of the MoDWS, 48.38 per cent of households, 100 per cent of the schools and 100 per cent of the AWCs in the district have a toilet

- A unique feature of this district is that the villages are sparsely populated and hence each village comprises of a number of hamlets spread across five to ten kilometres, on an average.

- Dantewada has been a priority district for the state (and therefore for UNICEF) since 2013, due to the level of exclusion and deprivation
CATS implementation in Dantewada…1/2

What led to adoption of CATS?

- Under the Total Sanitation Campaign program, 11 GPs in Dantewada district were awarded the NGP from 2008 to 2011. However, the momentum could not be sustained, resulting in reversal in all the 11 GPs.

- Some of the reasons for reversal were poor design of toilets, defunct toilets and improper execution of behaviour change communication for demand generation.

- Concerned about the slippage of NGPs, PHED approached UNICEF for support to adopt CATS.
Pre-triggering activities

- Capacity building – 70 people (including relevant government personnel, SBM coordinators, PHED staff and FLWs) trained in two batches in Nov. 2014
- Trainees divided into three teams and given a target to make 2 to 3 villages ODF in two months
- Unemployed youth were engaged for implementation, 20 youth workers underwent 5-day technical training and were allocated villages for implementation
- Work started in Feb 2015 with the volunteers conducted a pre-triggering visit to one village

Since implementation started in February 2015, triggering sessions were carried out in all villages of the two blocks, 12 villages have achieved ODF status and follow-ups are currently in progress in 15 villages
First ODF village in Dantewada Jodiabaram

- The triggering session was conducted in Patel para of Jodiabaram in November 2014. By March 2015, two hamlets, Patelpara and Thothopara achieved ODF status
- Subsequently, there was a ODF celebration organized in the village where the DC and district CEO were invited, and they visited each household of these two hamlets
- During the event, the Sarpanch and a Natural Leader, Mr. Balram shared their journey and experience of attaining ODF status
- The event grabbed the attention of the other hamlets in Jodiabaram, who then came forward and contacted the district SBM team to implement the approach in their hamlets as well

Village profile
- Situated close to river Karli in Geedam block of Dantewada district
- Comprises of seven hamlets
- Surrounded by a dense forest
- Spread across three kilometres
- Main occupations: Paddy cultivation, selling wood from the adjacent forest and brewing local liquor

In May 2015 the entire village was declared ODF
Key learnings from implementation of CATS in Dantewada

1. Volunteers were divided into groups of three individual including at least one female. **Gender balance ensured effectively reaching out to the female members** of the community and mobilizing the women.

2. As the district is spread across a large area it took significant amount of time to implement CATS. Two to three triggering sessions were held for each village. Also it took time in conducting follow-up visits and subsequently to reach 100% ODF in villages.

3. To ensure sustaining the ODF status, 40%-50% of the incentive amount (SBM) was given when the GP pledged to become ODF and the remaining was given after 3 to 6 months of sustaining toilet use.
While raising awareness to eradicate OD and construct toilets it is very important to address two things: ensuring regular access to water and raising awareness on the correct hand-washing practice. This will help to reduce water-borne infections to a large extent.

– Dr Habail Singh, Chief Medical and Health Officer, Raigarh
Sanitation situation in Raigarh

- Raigarh is a district located in the north-eastern part of Chhattisgarh.
- As per the latest data of the MoDWS, 55.92 per cent of households, 100 per cent of the schools and 100 per cent of the Anganwadi Centres in the district have a toilet.
- Sanitation work in the district is carried out through the district SBM team. A District Water and Sanitation Committee exists which is headed by the district collector.
- The district CEO is the Secretary of the Committee and its members consist of officials from the PHED, Women and Child Development Department and Education Department, among others.
- In addition to this a SBM Cell is present which consist of 22 members which belong to the District SBM team.
Understanding the context: what triggered the district to adopt the CATS approach in Raigarh

- During the NBA, 27 GPs were awarded NGP status. However, the 2012 baseline survey revealed that all of the GPs slipped back to OD.
- In October 2014 while the SBM was launched at the national level, the district sanitation programme account had funds amounting to approximately INR 3.72 crore which was decided to be distributed among 28 villages at INR 12,000 per household.
- Implementation started under SBM and the district administration, with a construction-led approach however by December 2014 it was realised that there was hardly any progress in terms of achieving usage of toilets, and therefore a change in approach was required to address this problem.
Timeline of CATS implementation in Raigarh district
CATS in Raigarh
Capacity building…1/2

- Raigarh’s approach was to develop the capacity of a cadre of select staff from various government departments who would implement CATS across the blocks and GPs of the district
- Aim was to develop a team at the grass root level - “Nirmal Samuh“ who could understand the importance of community based approaches and were equipped with the CATS technique and could infuse a collective initiative at the community level to achieve ODF status
- The trainings were conducted by Knowledge Links (KL)
- Starting in Feb. ‘15, Over the next few months, trainings were organized in all the blocks and thus CATS was rolled out across the district (details given in subsequent slide)
- These were attended by various SBM and PHED staff, other district and block level administrative staff and key individuals including Saksharta Preraks, Rozgar Sahayaks and Anganwadi Workers (AWW)
A rigorous capacity building program was carried out across Raigarh

Workshop on CATS approach

1st 5 day training (Raigarh) (16th to 20th February 2015)
67 participants

2nd 5 day training (Raigarh) (21st to 26th February 2015)
22 participants

3rd 5 day training (Tamnar) (21st to 26th February 2015)
32 participants

13 one day orientation (all blocks) May to October
1597 participants

Nine 5 day trainings (all blocks) May to October
587 participants
CATS in Raigarh Implementation

- The initial capacity building was followed by creating batches of trained people or “Nirmal Samuh” to implement CATS in their respective areas.
- As members at the GP level were also trained, they were responsible for supervision and support in their respective GPs.
- A work plan was developed wherein SBM cluster coordinators (ground level staff) were supported by the Nirmal Samuh.
- For the initial few months, KL provided handholding support to the Nirmal Samuh during triggering sessions in villages and also during the follow-up activities.
- By the end of March 2015, Raigarh had its first ODF village, Tipakhol.
- The movement picked up pace after the first ODF village emerged and created confidence among the district officials that this approach could succeed in the district.
First ODF village in Raigarh Tipakhol

- The village which was previously unheard achieved praise and recognition all over Raigarh district as a result of the collective effort of the community to achieve ODF status without any external financial support.

- The women of the village led by Parvati Naik who is the President of the village self-help group, played a significant role in achieving this feat within a short span of 15 days.

- Low-cost leach pit toilets have been constructed in every household using bamboo, which is abundantly available in the surrounding forest.

Village profile:
- Small village with about 70 households
- Situated in Khairpur GP of Raigarh block
- Approx. seven kilometres from Raigarh city
- Located at the edge of a reservoir and surrounded by a forest and hills on all sides

No government official had ever visited our village. When Nilesh sir came here and educated us, it gave everyone immense motivation to work together.

- Parvati
Teachers took the lead

“We ask people, ‘why are they using slippers as in the past humans used to walk barefoot? We strongly feel that human beings need to evolve in their habits with time, and the present times demand eradication of OD due to the immense health hazard posed by this practice.”

- Devprasad Chuhan and Shukla Nigwash, Teachers at the middle school in Budiya village, Raigarh
Key learnings from implementation of CATS in Raigarh

1. **A target based approach might be in conflict with the essence of CATS**, implementation of CATS involves bringing about behavioural change in habits which are generations old. This process will not be effective if its success is based on target achievement.

2. **Capacity building and handholding support of the implementing team**, to leverage the full potential of this method, capacity development of the field staff as well as of the facilitators and technical handholding support in the initial stages of implementation is of utmost importance.

3. **Under play the financial incentives**, CATS method has been found to be most effective in remote and backward villages where the community is not aware of the monetary provision under SBM

4. **Tailor-made strategies as per the local need**, CATS provides a basic methodology to be followed, it is important for field staff to contextualize this method by identifying local strategies that would motivate the community to become ODF
When a family builds a house on their own, they take immense pride in it. In the same way, when the community members put their own efforts and manpower to construct a toilet, it instils a sense of ownership, which in turn results in sustained usage.

– Mrs Sheikh Reena, Field Mobilizer, Jankalyan Samajik Sansthan

Conclusion and way forward
Conclusion

- Top level bureaucracy has been instrumental in the success of the CATS approach. Their active participation ensured that the program moves ahead smoothly.
- Supportive supervision provided by the block level officials to the facilitators at the community level supported in generating communities' interest and participation.
- Emphasis on capacity development, through periodic trainings and orientation workshops, at all levels was a key factor in human resource mobilization.
- Provision of collective “Community Incentives” supported in developing the ownership for the cause.
- Encouragement of an inclusive model to involve civil society and community based organizations increased ownership.
- Effective use of media for regular external and internal communication supported in engaging public interest.
- Women and children were focused upon as key change agents.
Way forward for Chhattisgarh

The success of Chhattisgarh was rooted in the fact that it was able to identify, equip, and motivate (natural) leaders with the mission to become ODF

Going forward, Chhattisgarh might want to look into:

- Developing an ODF sustainability strategy
- Focusing on systematic monitoring and supervision
- Continuously engaging all stakeholders, from government, civil societies, and community members, towards maintaining sanitation and hygiene
End