

ODF-sustainability guaranteed with bath cum toilet in Punjab



A unique initiative under Mission Swachh and Swasth Punjab is the construction of 'bath cum toilet' in many households – a facility that while ensuring usage, promotes better health and hygiene and at the same time is time-saving and convenient.

A multi-functional toilet cum bathroom accommodates provision for water storage, bathing and washing facilities inside the toilet. Most importantly, it provides privacy to users - for defecation and for bathing.

It is common knowledge that open defecation has been a socially acceptable norm in our society earlier. To check this, many programmes and initiatives had been carried out over the

years to stop the evil practice. It was the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) campaign to eradicate open defecation that had a huge impact on the people, transforming into a Jan Andolan.



Over the past five years, the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation (DWSS) has been implementing Mission Swachh and Swasth Punjab under the aegis of SBM-G across the State. In this regard, it has been initiating novel ways to make the village communities aware of the ill effects of open defecation, the need for construction of the toilets and the importance of using them regularly by all members of a family.

Further, during a situational analysis, it was observed that toilets constructed before SBM-G were used either as a store or as a bathroom. This could be attributed to construction of toilets by contractors owing to which people did not take ownership and preferred not to use them.

To address this, a unique initiative was started under Mission Swachh and Swasth Punjab to promote construction of bathrooms along with toilet by beneficiaries themselves.

Eligible beneficiaries were motivated to invest from their resources either in terms of money or labour to construct bathroom along with a toilet if they did not already have a bathroom in their houses. The bathrooms cum latrines were instantly accepted in districts such as Fatehgarh Sahib, Patiala and SAS Nagar.

Given that ownership level of the households towards to such type of facility was very high, there was no risk of them being converted into storerooms; or house their domestic animals.

Observing the success of this initiative that was bound to ensure ODF sustainability it was decided to promote construction of bath cum latrines in a big way across the entire state. This

was done by organizing exposure tours to villages where people had constructed bath cum toilets. It definitely convinced the visitors.



Today, reports indicate that usage of bathroom cum toilets is 100%, ensuring long term sustainability. Having accepted this initiative cheerfully, some of the families, led by women have taken this a step further by including a washing area adjoining the facility.

About 60-70 per cent of toilets constructed in Punjab are bath cum toilets.