

## Educating Rural Karnataka through Social Media

ನಮ್ಮ ಇನ್ಸ್ಟಾಗ್ರಾಮ್ ಕುಟುಂಬ ಹೊಂದಿದೆ

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ಮತ್ತು ನಮ್ಮ ಪೋಸ್ಟ್‌ಗಳು ತಲುಪುತ್ತಿವೆ ಸುಮಾರು

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Effective use of social media can bring about behavioural and lifestyle changes, particularly with regard to hygiene and sanitation. However, it requires the right strategies, while utilising available mediums, and creating a right mix. Karnataka is currently using social media extensively to bring about sustainable changes.

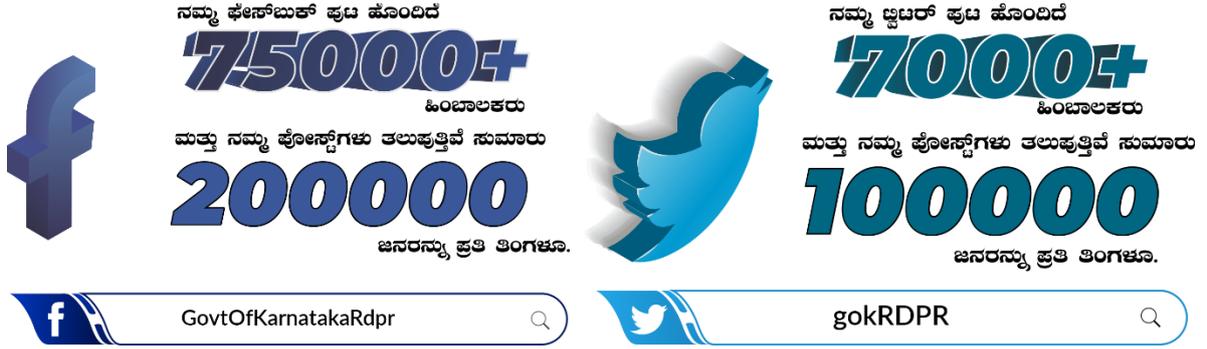
It is common knowledge that the number of social media users in rural India is considerably small when compared to urban India. Nonetheless, the Department of Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation (Government of Karnataka) has taken it as a challenge and is using Social Media to effectively aid the Implementation Support Activities (ISA) of both the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) and the Jal Jeevan Mission campaigns.

Implementation Support Activities are quite important in bringing about behavioural change and educating the rural audience in achieving sustainable water and sanitation practices. Towards this, the State is using both traditional methods as well as social media to increase reach and cover a wider audience. In doing so, it has instantaneously spread the achievements / important messages / timely educative materials of the Department to the required audience.

The Department has its official Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Slideshare channels through which it communicates various formats of messages such as technically verified infographics, success stories from across the state, weekly cleanliness/swachhata activities, Department updates, myths and facts, and theme-based video stories. It also engages the audience by communicating important national and international calendar days. Further, its official website (<https://swachhamevajayate.org/>), contains information

on water and sanitation, schemes, blogs, guidelines on Department projects, job opportunities and other important details.

Based on various factors related to Karnataka and its rural population, the Department has created a calendar which provides a month-long focus on a particular subject or theme to effectively create awareness. The subjects are predominantly focused on SBM-G and JJM, such as toilets (construction-usage-maintenance), solid and liquid waste management, water conservation, water quality monitoring and surveillance programme, menstrual hygiene management, village water and sanitation committee, etc.



The Department also communicates about various water and sanitation related activities that are being carried out across the state and portrays experiences of rural audience about the schemes and the benefits they had availed of, to educate and inspire others.

It needs mention, that each social media channel is helpful in reaching out to different sections of people. While Facebook and YouTube reach the rural masses, Instagram connects with youngsters, and Twitter is predominantly used by government officials, organisations, political and popular personalities.

The Department wants to consistently reach out to all kinds of people; hence its presence is quite active across these 4 platforms. On the other hand, the Slide Share account is meant for permanent storage of the designed educative material which can be accessed by all and used for training and development programmes.

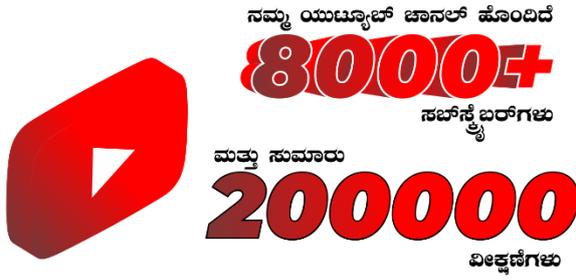
### Social media pages of Districts:

The Department of Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation (RDWSD) of each district has also created its official Facebook and Twitter pages. This has further strengthened the connect between the Department and the respective District audience. The District pages which have been showcasing the achievements of each District / Taluk / Village inspire and motivating people by spreading awareness on water and sanitation at the grass root level.

Apart from these initiatives, the RDWSD has used various tactics to increase its reach, some of them being cross promoting on channels to consolidate followers, promoting social media channels to website subscribers through emailers, posters across State / Districts / Taluk / Gram Panchayat offices with QR codes of social media channels. Besides, it has

created various WhatsApp and Telegram groups to connect and mobilise its entire workforce across the State.

On these platforms, it shares posts on similar interest Facebook groups, promoting through alternative social media tools (Facebook stories, Instagram Stories, Twitter Fleets and YouTube Community), while Google tagging the work done by the districts to the respective locations and creating YouTube thumbnails which are catchy, driving the attention of users towards the video. Such key messages are also promoted internally through the notice board, encouraging its employees to share their related stories which will be utilised in future communication materials.



The Government of India has repeatedly stressed the role of community contribution in making any scheme / project successful. Thus, social media plays a vital role in educating and creating awareness amongst the rural audience about the schemes / projects, as well as their roles and responsibilities in making it a reality.

On the other hand, the rural audience has excellent social media platforms to connect with the Department / like-minded people / NGOs and other organisations. This allows them to share their opinions and make their surroundings better. Hence people should support this initiative of the Government by connecting with all social media channels and educate themselves and do their bit in creating enough awareness about water and sanitation related practices.

