

Rural Shajapur gets 87 gender inclusive community toilets



To cater to the third gender population living in the rural areas of Shajapur District in Madhya Pradesh, the district administration has constructed 87 gender inclusive and modern toilets, under the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G).

The initiative has given the people from the community a sense of dignity.

With separate access for men, women and transgenders, the toilets are also disabled friendly and have separate space for women who are breastfeeding, according to Shajapur District Coordinator, Mr. Anand Tiwari.

Additionally, all the toilet locations have rail and road connectivity which makes the inclusive facilities available to both residents and the floating population, he added.



Commenting on the facility, Guru Bhadaru expressed her gratitude to the district administration for their service to the third gender community. She recalled that when she visited the Collector's office several years ago, she went into the public women's toilet to attend to nature's call. When she was inside, a woman came in to use the toilet and asked if

someone was inside. When Guru Bhadaru responded in her manly voice, the woman began to panic and shouted out that a man was inside the women's toilet.

"We feel very uncomfortable in both men's and women's toilets as we do not identify with either of them," Guru Bhadaru pointed out.

Lakhs of people from the transgender community feel the same as they face hostility when they attempt to use public restrooms in the course of their day. In the rural areas in particular, there were no public washroom facilities for them until now.

The Supreme Court recognises transgenders as the Third Gender. It has affirmed that they have fundamental rights just as men and women do. This initiative was taken by Shajapur District Administration on the basis of the SC order.

"The idea is that the right to sanitation should be available to everybody," Ms. Misha Singh, CEO-Zila Panchayat, Shajapur said.

People have started accepting the third gender community which they earlier ignored, a beneficiary said. It is obvious that the communities now accept them.

A smart action plan is being implemented for their maintenance, having roped in the local volunteers, SHGs and Gram Panchayats, some of who have outsourced maintenance to an outside agency.

