

Sanitation champion Sarbjit Singh is honored



The State Government of Punjab on 25th January 2021 recognised 45 personnel who had performed their duties exceptionally well in their respective fields. One among them was Mr. Sarbjit Singh, who has worked with the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) since its inception.

Mr. Sarbjit Singh, Sub Divisional Engineer (Sanitation), State SBM-G, Department of Water Supply and Sanitation, Punjab will receive the Praman Patra 2020 for his work in Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) - rural sanitation, at a State level function that will be held later this year. In this interview, he shares his thoughts about the flagship programme and his contributions.

What do you feel about this flagship programme?

The SBM (G) programme is a one of its kind sanitation programme, implemented in a manner never attempted before. Its chief focus was on behaviour change and demand generation for sanitation and its beneficiaries especially women had their say in deciding the type, size, and location of the toilet. The process led to the creation of sustainable assets. Women in Punjab took it to the next level and included a utensil washing area along with a bath cum toilet.

How would you summarise your duties?

My duties involved planning, implementing, and monitoring of SBM-G in all the districts. This included organising state level meetings, capacity building programmes for district teams, allocation of funds, preparation of state specific guidelines; monitoring and implementation of various components of SBM-G; developing MIS modules and Applications, assisting with the preparation of Annual Implementation Plan, Project

Implementation Plan and Utilization certificates; social media, audits, IEC programmes and special events such as Swachhata Hi Sewa, Swachh Shakti, etc.

What are your achievements?

Construction of bath cum toilets: Over the past five years, I have contributed to the promotion of construction of robust bath cum toilets by beneficiaries themselves. Bath cum toilets in the villages were promoted on a large scale to ensure 100% usage of toilets and maintaining health and hygiene.

Developing an Effective MIS system: I was instrumental in setting up an efficient yet simple MIS system for district teams. Through this, the construction of toilets is being monitored in three stages of construction thus eliminating ghost toilets. The MIS is extensively being utilized for reporting every detail of the eligible beneficiary under this programme right from beneficiary validation to the construction of toilet and payment.

IEC and Capacity building: Development of toolkits for field level functionaries containing information on triggering (nudging), school triggering, key messages, wall writing samples, albums of pictures containing various design of toilets constructed in villages, videos on community led total sanitation, etc., were a part of this.



Your thoughts about Phase II:

Sustainability of ODF status, practice of hygienic behaviour by all and solid and liquid waste management are indeed the need of hour. Given that waste management in villages is less developed than in urban areas, and their waste composition varies differently, it is important to develop waste management systems specific to their region.

Which areas need additional focus?

Since the objective of SBM-G Phase II is to make our villages clean, community interventions are required to a greater extent. Communities need technical guidelines to manage their waste particularly black water, menstrual waste, and hazardous waste. Adequate funding for piloting new technologies, and research and development are required, as also tie-ups with IITs, Start-ups, Entrepreneurs as well as an e-market place for selling of treated waste; among others.

How do you feel about receiving the award?

This acknowledgement is something I will cherish throughout my life. I feel that the hard work that I have put in to make this project a people's movement in the rural areas has finally paid off. But I have to mention that it is not an individual effort but a team effort. It is an achievement of my entire State team.