

## Sarpanchs, Jal Sahiyas share challenges, efforts to sustain ODF status



As the country is on track to being declared open defecation free (ODF) on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019, the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) has rolled out a capacity building initiative through which training information and knowledge will be imparted to Pradhans, Panchayat Secretaries and Swachhagrahis to carry out ODF Plus activities.

The Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 launched the capacity strengthening initiative of the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, in Ranchi, Jharkhand. This initiative will create a pool of 2800 field trainers in its initial trainings, who will reach out to around 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across the country.

ODF Plus refers to bio-degradable waste management, plastic waste management, grey water management, faecal sludge management, water conservation and rain water harvesting.

As a part of the capacity building initiative, states were asked to set up State Training Management Unit (STMU) at state level and District Training Unit (DTU) at district level, and recruit four trainers per district to conduct training to PRIs functionaries and Swachhagrahis.

Ahead of the national roll out of capacity building initiative in Ranchi, a meeting was held at the STMU of Jharkhand that consisted of a discussion between officials of the training unit, field trainers, Sarpanchs and Swachhagrahis.

The meeting was chaired by Director-SBM, Ms. Sonali Ghosh and presided over by Mr. Kumar Premchand (UNICEF WASH Specialist-Jharkhand) and Lakshmi (UNICEF WASH Officer).



The following Sarpanchs shared their experiences of sustaining ODF status and how they address challenges that arise:

**Jyoti Nisha Nag of Kande West in Ranchi** said that all families in her village have toilets and people are using them. They have understood fully well that sanitation would lead to good health and well being of the entire community.

However, drinking water supply is a big challenge as also management of waste from the market place.



**Rina Devi from Sukurhutu in Ranchi** explained that even though waste is collected from households regularly, and there is a system in place to management waste, the non-biodegradable waste is not being recycling effectively.

**Bina Devi from Sukurhutu North** said that of the 1300 toilets that were needed in the village, just 441 were sanctioned under Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen. The remaining toilets were built by households themselves.



While all schools and anganwadis have working toilets, they would need a few public toilets in common spaces.



**Rameshwar Mahali from Barhu in Ranchi** said that people in his village are constantly reminded about the benefits of using toilets. The Swachhagrahi appointed for their village keeps a check on sanitation aspects. The village now needs to put in place systems for water conservation.

**Munni Devi from Pithoriah in Ranchi** said that water is indeed a big problem considering that her village is situation in a hilly region. To address this, a water tank is being constructed. At all their schools and anganwadis menstrual hygiene management is promoted and people are told to prevent water stagnation and how soak pits could help recharge ground water.



**Shanti Kumari Munda from Neori in Ranchi** said while people are regularly using their toilets, there is an urgent need to clean up their water bodies. She



now intends to put in place a system to manage their waste.