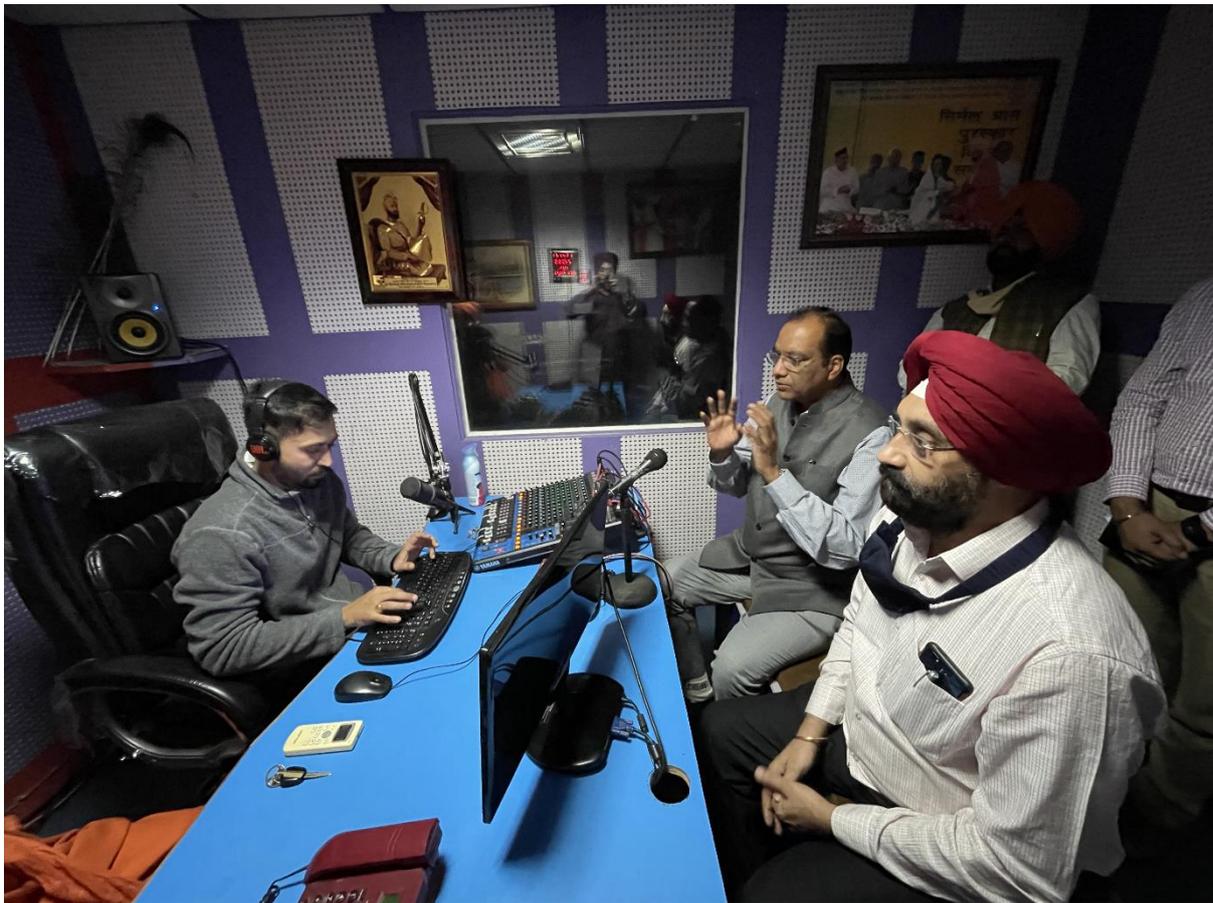


Sustainable waste management can lead to environmental & health benefits: AS-DDWS



Mr. Arun Baroka, Additional Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti advocated proper waste management practices which can contribute significantly to improvement in the environment and health of a community, along with maintaining clean surroundings and ensuring open defecation free (ODF) villages.



grassroots.

Speaking on November 5, 2021 at a Community Radio Station (Avtar Radio Seechewal 90.4 FM) that is popularly known as the voice of the environment, providing awareness on the environment and various social issues; he talked about the Government of India's Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), the world's largest behaviour change programme, that achieved the seemingly impossible task of making the country ODF by mobilising a massive people's movement at the

He expressed appreciation for Punjab which was able to achieve the target well before time and now is ensuring sustainability of the ODF Status. On Phase II of SBM-G, he said that goal was to keep villages clean and ODF while ensuring effective SLWM in all villages.

On the other hand, Sh. Balbir Singh Seechewal detailed the urgent steps that communities, the government and institutions need to take to recycle wastewater and do their bit to replenish natural resources, while promoting plantations and ensuring cleanliness.

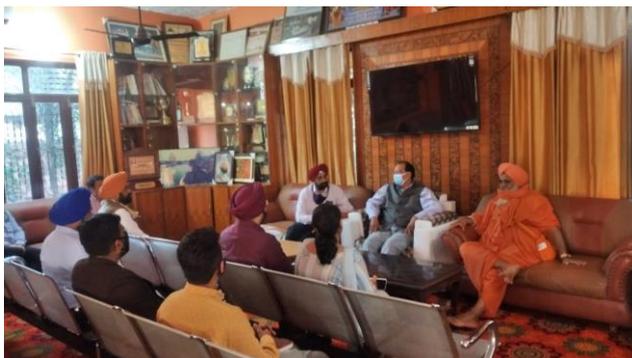
Others that participated in the radio programme were Shri Mandeep Singh and Sh. KS Saini Chief Engineer (North).

Visit to Amritsar and Jalandhar: The AS visited various villages in the Districts of Amritsar and Jalandhar to see different works related to SBM-G and plants dealing with removal of arsenic and iron in village Gunowal of Amritsar.

In Amritsar, he held discussions with Sh. KS Saini, Chief Engineer (North), Sh. JS Chahal Superintending Engineer, Amritsar Circle and Sh. Simranjeet Singh, District Sanitation Officer Amritsar, Department of Water Supply and Sanitation, Punjab regarding the overall sanitation situation in the rural areas of the districts, and particularly with regard to IHHLs, CSCs, SLWM projects.

Enroute to Jalandhar, he examined the CSC in village Razapur which had separate facilities for men and women and interacted with the Sarpanch, appreciating his good work in providing access to sanitation for all.

In Jalandhar, Sh Balbir Singh Seechewal apprised him of the techniques of wastewater management and rain water harvesting initiatives undertaken in the Seechewal village and how other villages in the State were learning from their experiences and eagerly taking up similar wastewater management and water conservation projects.



Field visits:

Wastewater management plant at Village Seechewal: The AS along with Sh. Seechewal, and State and District officials visited the wastewater management plant popularly known as the Seechewal Model which consists of one screening chamber and three wells.

Under the system, wastewater from all households is collected in the screening chamber where the floating material is separated before entering the first well known as the Digestion tank. In this chamber the effluent revolves in a circular clockwise motion due to which solid materials settle down in the base. The effluent then moves into the second well known as Skimming tank where the anti-clockwise motion of the water separates oil, grease and other impurities which rise to the surface. In the third well known as Stabilization tank, the treated effluent from the Stabilization tank is transferred to the oxidation pond where it is further treated through the interaction of sunlight, bacteria, and algae. Thereafter, the treated water is utilized for irrigation purposes.

The AS appreciated the initiative and discussed how it can be replicated at a larger scale in other States.

Rainwater harvesting plant and water reuse site: The rainwater harvesting structure built in the low-lying region of the village collects the surface runoff and recharges the ground water table. The simple system consists of a rectangular catchment with sand layers and other filter media through which the surface runoff passes into the soil. The treated water that is rich in nutrients is reused for irrigation and a eucalyptus plantation.



Kali Bein River: In Sultanpur Lodhi, the AS was apprised about the clean-up of the Kali Bein over a 3-year (2000-2003) Kar Sewa which involved clearing of water hyacinth and other weeds, construction of bathing ghats and an access road along the Bein. Today, the water is

clean, free from foul smell, and has transformed into a beautiful lake that attracts many tourists.



Community Sanitary Complex at Rurka

Kalan: The CSC caters to the sanitation needs of the rural nomadic tribe 'gaddiwale' residing in the village. Sarpanch Smt. Kulwinder Kaur of the village and Founder of NGO Youth Football Club, Sh. Gurmangal Dass jointly took steps to provide sanitation infrastructure to the village thereby resolving concerns of the community. The construction of the CSC was through convergence of funds from SBM-G, 15th Finance Commission grants and donations from the Youth Football Club. Spread over an area of 1035 sq.ft., the CSC comprises of 4-bathroom cubicles, 4 urinals, wash basins and 2 washing areas separate for men and women.



The AS interacted with the tribe, learning about the benefits of having a dedicated sanitation facility. The community exhibited the utensils and tools they make to earn their livelihood.



Discussion on Sampoorna Swachhata: Sh. Saini elaborated on the various initiatives of the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation, Punjab to ensure Sampooran Swachhata in the villages. He said that a community led total sanitation approach involving all stakeholders, and marginalized and vulnerable sections has been adopted in decision making for behavioral change and

creating demand for sanitation. As on date, more than 5 lakh households have been incentivized for providing individual household toilets. Further, in order to ensure ODF sustainability and ensuring access to safe sanitation, Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs) are being constructed in villages.

On SBM (G) Phase-II, they had adopted a novel model of convergence amongst various Central and State Governments schemes such as SBM-G, MGNREGA, 15th Finance Commission, with a focus on Solid and Liquid Waste Management. Currently, various projects are in the pipeline in Phase II of the mission envisaging cleanliness in villages and achieving ODF Plus status. He emphasized the focus on community involvement for successful implementation of these projects.

Sh. Baroka also visited the Shri Ber Sahib Gurdwara at Sultanpur Lodhi where he interacted with religious leaders.