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Principles and challenges in scaling up CLTS: experiences from Madhya Pradesh, India

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India is the largest contributor in pulling down the MDG targets around sanitation. Within India, Madhya Pradesh is one of the poorer performing states in terms of sanitation coverage. The scale is huge and the government is trying out several approaches to meet this challenge. The success of CLTS in Bangladesh has led different state governments to attempt CLTS at scale in India. This paper discusses the challenge being faced in adopting CLTS in parts and how it contravenes some of the principles of this approach. On the other hand the state of Madhya Pradesh already has some very effective mechanisms for people led and people centric planning through Panchayats and Gram Sabhas. The paper recommends strengthening existing mechanisms to meet the huge sanitation challenge. This would help the state in effectively engage communities in planning, implementing and sustaining sanitation services in the villages and making it truly community led.

Introduction

The journey of making India Open Defecation Free (ODF) started with the launch of Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) in 1986. Since then a range of approaches and models have been implemented with varying elements of subsidisation, incentivisation, and behaviour change communication, yet the successes from these approaches have been well below the targets with more than 130 m households lacking toilets and 72% of the rural population relieving themselves in open in 2015. The present Government of India has sought to re-package the avowed aim of Open Defecation Free country by 2019 as Swach Bharat Mission. Sanitation has become the buzz word, though the meaning assigned to it varies considerably even among policy makers and practitioners.

In the year 2000, Community Let Total Sanitation (CLTS) was pioneered as an approach for total sanitation in Bangladesh. The basic premise of the approach is that sustainable sanitation can be achieved only if it is led and implemented by communities themselves. This can be achieved only if there is a collective understanding of the issues of open defecation and the problems associated with it – particularly the impact it has on health and wellbeing of the community. The process of CLTS entails lot of preparatory work with the community. Unless there is absolute trust of the community members, the process does not work and the results are definitely not sustainable. The process creates space for the communities to take collective resolve to stop the practice of Open Defecation and start constructing latrines based on affordability of the household - gradually moving up the sanitation ladder finally reaching to access of safe and sustainable latrine for each household. The premise being that people will not revert to open defecation if behaviour change has effectively happened. The realization that hygiene behaviour change will benefit individuals only if the entire community adopts them, motivates the community to monitor closely to ensure that the whole community is ODF. Therefore sustainability is built into the very design of the CLTS. Since this is a participatory and collective process, the communities collectively decide on recognising as well as reprimanding members from the community who continue the practice of defecating in the open.

With the MDG targets on sanitation heavily pointing towards India's poor performance, the government has been looking for sustainable and quick solutions to end this crisis. The success of CLTS in the neighbouring Bangladesh became a good reason for attempting this in India as well. However while

implementing, some of the basic principles on which the approach rests have been ignored. This has made it difficult to adopt CLTS at scale in government run sanitation programmes in India. The success of CLTS in terms of its demonstrated effectiveness in demand creation tempted policy makers to include parts of the approach in the sanitation scheme – without looking at the principles or the process comprehensively. As a result, in India we have a model where terms like CLTS, triggering, post triggering etc. is mentioned in several government guidelines along with clear mention of subsidies (which has increased more than 20 times), standard approved designs (giving little scope for need based alteration), behaviour change (without adequate human resource at the block and sub block levels), IEC (with more focus on information sharing than changing behaviour) and so forth. A combination of all these has resulted in an ineffective implementation of an otherwise effective approach like CLTS in India.

The following section describes the learnings in terms of challenges in adopting CLTS in the state of Madhya Pradesh, alternative approaches experimented and how things can be developed further to meet the sanitation challenge in the state.

Lessons learnt

Identifying the right trigger

The most critical part of the CLTS approach is identifying the right kind of trigger. This happens naturally as the facilitator engages with the community. Different communities respond to different triggers that work. However when CLTS is implemented as the government sponsored scheme, triggers are often predetermined in the guidelines. The sanitation scheme of Government of Madhya Pradesh heavily relies on the issue of dignity of women as the trigger for adoption of toilets and factor of behaviour change. Other triggers suggested in the guidelines are focused on naming and shaming people defecating in the open. Similar triggers have been adopted as in several other states and also in recent advertisement campaigns of the Swach Bharat Abhiyan. Triggering in CLTS is very context specific and it needs exceptional facilitation skills to identify the right kind of trigger in a community.

There are several examples of positive triggers which have not been highlighted enough. For example, Anita Narre – a newly married woman from Jeetudhana village of Betul district refused to go to her husband's home until a toilet was constructed there. In Dedakhedi panchayat of Sehore district, the awareness that excreta was carried by flies to the offerings given in the temple triggered the entire village to construct and use toilets. Such positive triggers empower the community. The changes may be gradual but are surely sustainable as compared to some of the coercive measures as mentioned in the following sections.

When contents are put in a government document or guidelines, in a way they get legitimised. The facilitators following the guidelines often do not go beyond the prescribed examples and accepts these as the only possible trigger. In Madhya Pradesh, the state government came out with guidelines for sanitation scheme which had stated examples of triggering the community to change behaviour. Some of these were also attempted in parts of the state. However the methods suggested directly contravenes the existing laws of the land to protect the marginalised and are in conflict with the CLTS principles.

Photographing or video graphing people defecating in the open

The guidelines suggests photographing or video graphing people defecating in the open and threatening them of displaying it to public if they do not stop this practice. This contravenes the following legal provisions in India

- In case of women, this can be treated as a case of voyeurism as per the amended Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013 – Section 354C (refer notes) which was formulated for ensuring safety of women. The Act says says '*Any man who watches, or captures image of a woman engaging in private act in circumstances where she would usually have the expectation of not being observed either by the perpetrator or by any other person at the behest of the perpetrator or disseminated such image*'. For the purpose of this section, 'private act' includes an act of watching carried out in a place which, in circumstances, would reasonably be expected to provide privacy and where the victims genitals, posterior or breast are exposed or covered only in underwear; or the victim is using a lavatory; or the victim is doing a sexual act that is not of a kind ordinarily done in public.
- This also contravenes the Section 292-A of Indian Penal Code (refer notes), which is meant for penalising anyone who '*Prints or causes to be printed in any newspaper, periodical or circular, or exhibits or causes to be exhibited, to public view or distributes or causes to be distributed or in any*

manner puts into circulation any picture or any printed or written document which is grossly indecent, or in scurrilous or intended for blackmail'

As reported in The Hindustan Times on 13th January 2015 the Sarpanch Khusli Bai of Chauthiya village of Betul district says "We tried our best to get them to use the toilets. First we started taking photographs of offenders on mobile phones and made them public, but it didn't work…." This clearly show that such methods does not work to promote behaviour change.

Use of offending pictures for triggering

The state government's guidelines has a particular section which has a sketch of a girl (shown with bare buttocks) being watched by men while reliving herself. This picture in a government guideline is against The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986- Section 4 which prohibits "*publication or sending by post of books, pamphlets, etc.; containing indecent representation of women.- No person shall produce or cause to be produced, sell , let to hire, distribute, circulate or send by post any book, pamphlet, paper, slide, film, writing, drawing, painting, photograph , representation or figure which contains indecent representation of women in any form*" (refer notes).

While there is a legislation which prevents indecent representation of women, even men have found some IEC initiatives of the government scheme offending. In May 2014, the Zilla Panchayat of Harda district, Madhya Pradesh put up a poster in the Zilla Panchayat office showing a man defecating in the open and adjacent to this image was an image of a dog pooping. The poster compared people (defecating in the open) to a dog – which cannot use a toilet. In India, it is abusive to compare a people with a dog. There was an immediate reaction and the Hindustan Times reported that the poster was torn up by '*unknown elements who found it offending and embarrassing'*. There is a need to adopt a more sensitive way in approaching the issue.

Suggestions for reprimanding open defecators

- The guideline suggests following and whistling at open defecators as a measure to discourage open defecation. If this is done in case of women, then this can be seen as 'Stalking' as per the Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013 - Section 354 D, which reads as *'Any man who attempts to follow a woman and contact, or attempt to contact such woman to foster personal interaction repeatedly despite a clear indication of disinterest by such woman; or monitor the use by a woman of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication commits the offence of stalking'*.
- It is not practical to implement the reprimanding methods suggested in the government guidelines such as writing names of open defecators on the walls, flagging the shit of the person, garlanding open defecators etc. in a multi-caste society without the risk of this being misused. It is not possible that any 'upper caste' person would be subjected to such humiliation to bring about change their behaviour. This invariably implies that such measures would be implemented mostly on the lower caste (often SC and ST) communities. In such cases, it clearly leads to a violation the SC, ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 Section- 3 (refer notes) which reads as, '*Anyone who... (x) intentionally insults or intimidates with intent to humiliate a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe in any place within public view; (xi) assaults or uses force to any woman belonging to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe with intent to dishonour or outrage her modesty will be punishable by imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years*'.

There have been instances where the local government have used such measures – in a way legitimising criminal acts as good practice for achieving ODF. For example in Chauthiya village (Betul District, Madhya Pradesh) naming and shaming was used as a deterrent to open defecation. As published in a national newspaper - a villager, Kachroo Barange, said "Not only are the names of offenders announced but a running commentary is done on their movements. This truly embarrasses them and most of them have stopped the practice". Even though some members might have changed their behaviour, but sustainability remains a question as such coercive measures may not lead to a change in mindset. Also such measures are not changing the behaviour of the entire community, so the element of communities taking decision on the issue is missing.

In contrast to this, a positive trigger was used in Taj village of Sehore district where WaterAid had installed a piped water supply system. The water users committee decided that water connections will be given only to those households which would construct toilets and start using it regularly. This helped in

attaining ODF status in the village of around 300 families within 1 month of completion of the piped water supply scheme.

Engaging children for behaviour change

The government guidelines recommend that when names of open defecators are put up on the walls so that their children feel ashamed and they persuade their parents to construct and use toilets. It is unfair to make children feel ashamed for decisions that are not in their hands. In Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh, a government official (who wished not to be named) working in the scheme shared that they (the officials and facilitators) are forming child brigades – whom they call *vaanar sena* (monkey army). These children would get up early in the morning and would follow people going out to defecate in the open and chase them away by whistling at the open defecators. This flouts the meaning of child participation and is certainly not in the best interest of the child. This is against the UN Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – particularly Article 2.2, Article 3 and Article 19 (refer notes). These Articles are to ensure that the State takes appropriate measures to protect children against discrimination, violence (including mental and emotional) and to ensure that best interest of children remains the primary concern of adults. India being a signatory to the convention and having ratified it on 11th December 1992 is bound to be committed to the clauses laid out in UNCRC. The above example violates the articles meant for safeguarding and protecting the rights of the children.

In contrast to this, in a Child Rights and WASH project implemented by WaterAid and partners, children's rights to a safe environment led the community members to ensure adequate WASH facilities in schools as well as in households in Lasudia Parihaar Panchayat of Sehore district. Similarly interventions around WASH rights of children were effective when youth were involved as support groups for advocating the issues faced by the children. Alternative mediums (like child newspapers and notice boards) were used to ensure meaningful participation of children. These examples show how children can be engaged in a dignified manner (Arickal 2014).

Scale and institutional challenge

It is true that in a country like India, where there are more than 60% population defecating in the open, the concern is to scale up and accelerate sanitation coverage. The sector is struggling on making sustainable change at scale. However adopting CLTS for scale needs to be looked at from the point of view of two essential elements for the facilitators and the implementing agency.

- *The attitude and behaviour of facilitators*: The government led CLTS is based on the cascading model of capacity building for developing CLTS facilitators. The transmission loss in any cascading models of training is quite high. The challenge is greater if the issue is as sensitive as ones defecation practice. While chasing the huge targets to construct toilets, the quality of facilitators that are identified and developed as CLTS facilitators fall short on their skills, attitudes and behaviours. As a result, the programme is led in the field by facilitators who are tempted to take short cuts to generate demands from the communities for meeting targets thus compromising the principles of community taking the lead.
- *The flexibility of institutions supporting the process*. CLTS can be applied by institutions which are flexible in terms of their approach towards sanitation, which can invest in time and which does not push disbursement driven approach towards reaching the goal. Government scheme and the departments implementing the scheme are exactly the opposite of this. The government schemes have very limited flexibility and their implementation is regimented – to the extent that there is no scope of approving alternative technologies for sanitation other than the prescribed ones. Even the IEC/ BCC content is quite directive with very little scope of alteration.

Recommendations

Madhya Pradesh has been one of the pioneer states in establishing and strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions after the 73rd constitutional amendment passed in 1992. The state has undertaken several innovative steps in empowering the *Panchayats* and *Gram Sabhas* (village councils) by devolving powers to the grassroots governance structures. The scale of sanitation challenge can be effectively mitigated if the role of *Panchayats* in WASH governance is effectively developed. As of now, their involvement has remained constrained to that of an implementing body – as an extended arm of the government and not as a governance institution. Effective devolution of funds, functions and most importantly functionaries to the

three tiers of *Panchayats* could become a critical intervention for scaling up and meeting the huge challenge of sanitation in the state.

Constitutionally *Gram Sabhas*, are the most important decision making body for any development work in the village. This body is mandated to take collective decisions on different aspects of economic and social development in the village. The *Gram Panchayat* is also accountable to the *Gram Sabhas*. It would be worthwhile to let the *Gram Sabhas* start take decisions even with regard to sanitation. The CLTS approach also emphasises on the need for the community to take collective decisions. Village level *Gram Sabhas* are best positioned in taking collective decisions for universal access to sanitation in the village. This calls for efforts to generate awareness and strengthen *Gram Sabhas* on the issue. WaterAid partners LSS has been successful to use this approach to bring ODF status in 36 villages in Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh.

Since 2009, the Madhya Pradesh government has been undertaking extensive exercise of decentralised planning. This involves development plans for different sectors like Health, Education, Livelihood, etc. Under this initiative a Technical Support Group constituted of officials from different departments work very closely with the *Panchayats* and the *Gram Sabhas* for development of village level plans. Experience from the previous schemes (like Total Sanitation Campaign, Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan etc) show that construction alone will not ensure sustainable use of sanitation infrastructure. It is essential to have communities involved in developing effective sanitation (or WASH) plans. This can be integrated in the state's decentralised planning process. This will ensure adequate convergence with other departments and schemes as well. In 2012, WaterAid and its partner Samarthan ensured that WASH micro plans get integrated in the decentralised plans of 23 villages in 15 panchayats of Sehore district. This helped in converging resources for WASH from other schemes as well (for eg Watershed work, untied funds from the panchayat, school education etc). This helped in many aspects of sanitation beyond construction of household toilets.

The sanitation scheme in the state, focuses extensively on meeting the mammoth target - 9.5 million household toilets in the next 4 years. The risk in this approach is that new toilets would most certainly get constructed, however, the defunct toilets from the previous schemes or the missing toilets (the over reported cases) would not be constructed. It is essential for the government scheme to shift its focus from construction of individual toilets to ensuring ODF villages in the state. This shift in approach will serve two purposes – a) it is ensure that all households will become a priority (including the defunct and missing toilets) and b) it will ensure greater thrust on village level planning (an element which CLTS emphasises on).

CLTS has been more successful in places where there were no government subsidies for toilets. In Indian context, the subsidies have actually worked as a perverse incentive. With the IEC specifically mentioning the amount that a household would get for constructing toilets, and removing the clause of community contribution totally, people have become entirely dependent on the money from the scheme for construction of toilets. The Swach Bharat Mission provides opportunity for the states to bring in flexibility in how they want to implement the scheme. It would be worthwhile for the state to move away from household subsidy to village incentives. The village incentive can be based on ODF states, effective Solid and Liquid Waste Management and adequate water management. The amount for individual subsidies can be given to the *Gram Kosh* (bank account of the village council) and the *Gram Sabha* can take decisions on how to use this money. This money can also be used for taking care of any O&M of WASH infrastructure or even to provide soft loans for families which cannot afford to construct toilets.

The success of sanitation scheme will also rely heavily on the cadre at the field level. It would be essential to invest a lot on identifying the right kind and capacitating a large cadre of field level facilitators. This could be the swachata doots or other volunteers and CSOs working at the village level. The state would need to invest in building the capacities of this cadre in each of the 51 district and 313 blocks of the state. This will help the state in accelerating the speed to achieve universal sanitation coverage.

The state of Madhya Pradesh has also been a pioneer in bringing about effective accountability systems like the Public Service Guarantee Act 2010. This gives citizens an opportunity to make complaints for accessing public services and these complaints are redressed within a stipulated time making the government departments more accountable. It would be worthwhile either to include sanitation scheme also in this or build in other provisions for accountability by introducing tools like Social Audit (as in NREGS) or Community Based Monitoring (as in NRHM) in the implementation of the scheme to make it more transparent and effective.

Conclusions

The experience from the part adaptation of CLTS show that there is a need for the state to invest on developing understanding of the principles in this approach. In the hurriedness to meet targets and to achieve numbers there are distortion to the true version of CLTS. This is doing more harm to the approach than to strengthen its base. It is important that any organisation – government or civil society- which claims to use CLTS adopts it in totality. The experience very clearly show how part use of CLTS leads to disempowerment of the community and non-achievement of the outcomes. Whereas, CLTS in true sense is an empowering tool which helps in communities to collectively analyse situation, take decisions and be responsive to the needs of the community. The need of the hour for a country like India which has a massive challenge in meeting the sanitation target should revolve around alternatives which would be more effective and sustainable. In order to be able to do that it is essential to look at the existing constitutional provisions by meaningfully engaging the *Panchayats* and *Gram Sabhas*. It is also important to take up large scale behaviour change communication with more investment on human resource – preferably local and building their capacities. There is a need to understand the importance of having a gestation period before construction with clear indicators to measuring progress. This is a must so that communities realise the importance and start taking corrective measures on their own. Also in the context of India where sanitation scheme is pushing the construction of toilet in a big way, post construction behaviour change would be an essential component in the coming years.

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Note/s

i. Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013 – (Section 354 C) of Indian Penal Code – Punishable by imprisonment not less than 1-3 years on first count and 3-7 years for repeat offences

ii. Indian Penal Code Section 292 (A) - shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both. Provided that for a second or any subsequent offence under this section, he shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than six months ** [and not more than two years].

iii. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 (Section 4) - Punishable by imprisonment up to 2 years and fine of Rs 2000 on first count and on repeat offences punishable by imprisonment up to 5 years and fine up to Rs 1lakh

iv SC ST Atrocities (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 – (Section 3), clause x and xii – Punishable by imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years

v. **Article 2.2 of UNCRC:** States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

Article 19 of UNCRC: Protection from all forms of violence – physical, mental and emotional

Article 3 of UNCRC: The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

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