



An initiative of Utthan

# Progress Report

## Awareness Program for Ecological Sanitation

Oct.-07 to Feb. 08



## Ecosan Services Foundation

### Pune



: Prepared by :



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## **Background :**

The present report is about the progress made by Utthan's People's Learning Centre for water and sanitation, in promoting Eco Sanitation, in the coastal area of Gujarat, with support from Ecosan services Foundation, Pune . This is the first quarterly report since the initiation of partnership, which took place in (September-07).

## **Introduction :**

'Utthan is an NGO based in Gujarat, established in 1981, by initiating sustainable processes of empowerment amongst the most vulnerable communities, specially women in the Bhal region, around their severe problem of access to safe and adequate water in Bhal of Ahmedabad district, in the coastal area of Gujarat plagued by Salinity, draught and migration Utthan facilitated the emergence of a community-based group known as *Mahiti* that initiated a women's movement for regular availability of safe drinking water. In 1994, Mahiti was established as an independent organization and has now become a strong force in the area through its women's federation.

As of today Utthan works with the communities two tribal districts (panchmahals and Dahod) and coastal districts (bhavnagar and Amreli), covering about 325 villages, through the local teams. Utthan's each intervention is based on the local environment and it's needs, which is consciously designed to mobilize community participation and ownership. It works for Women, tribal communities, Dalits, minorities and poor, from a gender equality empowerment, justice and accessing rights over resources perspectives.

## **About People Learning Center for Drinking Water And Sanitation( PLC- WATSAN)**

**People's Learning Centre for safe water and sanitation, is an initiative of Utthan**, which has come about after an experience and learning on the issue working at various levels from community directly affected to policy makers and other partners at state, national and international levels.

Over the years, UTTHAN has addressed the issue of safe water, health and hygiene based on gender, equity, water rights as well as environmental, economic and institutional sustainability. And the perspectives have been micro and macro. PLC, on its part, envisages sensitizing, helping build knowledge and integrate social and technical learning. This would in turn enhance the capacities and skills of communities and decision makers for a genuine paradigm shift. PLC is therefore an effort towards achieving the millennium development goal of genuinely reducing the number of people not having access to safe water and sanitation.

PLC has a multilateral approach for learning. It serves as a platform for various stakeholders to share their experiences and leanings. Developing and conducting need based and locale specific capacity building programs on drinking water and sanitation, the PLC will inculcate and disseminate lessons learnt. The PLC will as well focus upon intensive research and documentation to influence policies.

## **Vision**

"To enable communities to recognize their basic right to have access to safe, adequate, equitable and sustainable drinking water supply, affordable sanitation facilities for hygiene promotion and lead them towards self-reliance through gender, just, participatory and community owned systems"

## **Overall Objective:**

The broad goal is influencing the attitudes of various stakeholders as well as enhances their capacities to initiate processes and creating a value-based system that ensures reliable access, gender sensitivity, sustainability and equitability for drinking water and sanitation.

### **Specific objectives**

- Creating a platform where learning and experiences are shared to develop models and systems that are adaptable, equitable and sustainable and gender sensitive. ( for better decision making and implementation)
- Ensuring access to, dissemination and exchange of information through the creation of knowledge bank/ library/Resource center for various stake holders.
- Promoting creativity and societal values through aesthetic forms and designs found in traditional structures of collection, storage and distribution of water – for cost effectiveness and sustainability.
- Enhancing capacities of the communities and others concerned to address the issue of access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation
- Influence policy and practices of relevant government and non for profit organizations
- To promote local wisdom based on scientific knowledge, through systematic documentation and dissemination through indigenous methods such as folk songs, theatre, paintings etc.
- Initiating a movement towards self reliance among the poor in the villages and in the urban areas specifically and in the society at large
- Research, documentation and presentations will influence policy and practice.

### **Activities**

- Establish live demonstrations of viable and innovative models in water and sanitation systems (for water management and collection) and conduct technical Training for its effective conservation.
- Conduct various trainings on Gender Sensitivity, strengthening of village level institutions and value based approaches to change the individual attitudes.
- Policy based Research and documentation for identifying the present areas of policies and methods to be improved and for assessing its impact on various related stakeholders.
- Networks will be strengthened to effectively lobby at both micro and macro levels.
- Collecting and disseminating existing indigenous knowledge of community treasured in the form of folk stories, songs, oral testimonies, in particular those which celebrate togetherness of different social/ religious/ ethnic groups as well as preserve their distinct cultural heritage. As well as develop appropriate communication tools for dissemination of present scientific, socio –economic, ecological information to help various stake holders plan and play their roles more effectively
- Establish Linkages between various Training centers and Resource centers.
- Establish and enrich library with reference materials on Drinking water and sanitation and other related subjects.

## **Methodology.**

PLC – Watsan will conduct need based Training programmes and workshops on various aspects of water and sanitation through under mentioned innovative and interesting participatory methods.

- Participatory situational analysis, identification of issue and its alternatives, involving the most vulnerable communities, specially the women, identifying leadership
- providing appropriate support to Establishing live demonstrations of various models.
- Learning by Doing new experiments , implementing New concepts and adopting innovative methods.
- Intensive interactive sessions.
- Exposure visits.
- Documenting the process and learning through Video Films, case studies,
- Knowledge assimilation and dissemination for various purpose
- Team Building and Team work.
- Self Awareness on Attitudes and values, Water management in reference to Gender and Human Rights, Personal Development
- Support advocacy

## **Target Groups**

1. Panchayats
2. Water and sanitation committees
3. NGOs,CBOs,and other voluntary organisations. ( National and International )
4. School Teachers, Anganwadi workers.
5. Government sections/ Functionaries.

## **Progress on promoting ecosanisation in Coastal area of Gujarat**

Following activities were expected in the last four months :

1. Monitoring the effectiveness of the ecosan toilet that was demonstrated by one of the leading community woman, Dhaniben and observer the responses of the other members
2. Documentation of the process followed in implementation of eco sanitation by a family in, developing it as a case study
3. Promoting dialogue and exchange of information and learning around this demonstration as well as around the knowledge acquired from elsewhere
4. Building the capacity of the community members for promotion, advocacy and guidance to others



Program Initiation : As part of promoting safe sanitation and hygiene for accessing communities right to better health, PLC watsan and communities faced technical issue in hard rock underneath not allowing waste water in the toilet pits to percolate, high saline ground water table, flooding during monsoon. Apart from this it was found that fresh water sources if situated closer to the toilet pits got contaminated. PLC

had learnt about ecosanitation but did not have an example near by to see. As a result an exposure visit with some of the community leaders was organized to visit Arghyam in Banglore and Mayrada in Mysore, where they had built eco friendly toilets. PLC TEAM members, women leaders (Dhanuben Gujariaya and others from Aktaria village) from the women's federation, along with the masons were part of the team. After seeing these toilets and how it operates, Dahniben made up her mind to demonstrate one in her own house and train her family to use such toilet. Meaning, enabling them to change their behavior which is required for safe sanitation. She realized that this toilet would slowly be adapted by the community, specially the women who suffer the most, Financial assistance was provided by PLC upto 70% of the total cost. For widespread adoption of such technique and PLC Watsan, jointly decided to introduce the Awareness programme for ecological sanitation for the period of one year. The details of activities done under this programme is :

**Activities undertaken :**

**1. Observation :**

It has been almost 5 months since ecosan toilet has been demonstrated by Dhaniben in the backyard of her house (which is right in front). She and her family feels quite proud of having demonstrated it and they are untiringly explaining to others who come to see what a great relief it has been for the family, specially the women. Dhaniben explains all the technical and behavior aspects of using the toilet. She had to made lot of effort to train one of her youngest son, who would forget to shift to the other tub for washing after the defecation! But he has been trying hard and Dhaniben reminds him every time he enters the toilet! The toilet is quite clean and one can see the waste water being used in greening some of the plants she was so desperate to grow for long. They collect the urine and sprinkle it on their own manure heap.

**1.1 Meeting with members of water and sanitation committee and committees of representatives of Federation.**

There are two district level women federations in Bhavnagar and Amreli which conduct monthly meetings for their representative committees and executive committee members regularly. During such meeting PLC team members and the Ms. Dhaniben , and executive member of women federation who had joined the exposure visit to Banglore and Mysore and adopted the Eco friendly Toilet has shared their experiences and information on it.



Subsequently these committee members had taken responsibility for disseminating such information to the members of women federations of each village of working areas, Information in atleast 50 villages has been given about the demonstration through federation meetings, and Information Exchange centre.

## 1.2 Internal Exposure visit



when PLC watsan and Ms. Dhaniben jointly constructed the demonstrative model of Eco friendly toilet in front of her house, around 35 -40 members of women federation visited on their own, getting in-depth information regarding this from Ms. Dhaniben. As it happens to be the first Eco-Friendly toilet in the Saurashtra region Dhaniben was sharing minute information very enthusiastically and created the extensive awareness on it.

## 1.3 Feedback meeting and Review meeting

On completion of the demonstrative model of eco friendly toilet there is village level meeting was organized at Dhaniben's place to discuss the beliefs regarding having toilet facilities , the benefits of Eco friendly toilet and to know people's views about adopting such new innovation. There are 25 women participated in this meeting. Dhaniben also demonstrated the model of such toilet.

She also discussed about reasoning of not having toilet facility in the Aktaria village is due to the reasons like poor financial conditions of the local people and the geographically disproportionate situation. It may not be possible to accept the scheme of the government for the toilets with one or two soak-pits as there are black stones under the ground in one part of the village and the sea-water flows in, in another part of the village while digging the pits. she also explained the benefits of such toilet like .....

- It does not require constructing the soak-pits or digging the pits in the ground to avail any pipe line connections.
- Much less water is consumed by using such toilets in comparison to the routine toilets.
- It does not smell after using the toilet by sprinkling two bowls full of ashes over the same.
- The human excreta can be used after every six months as fertilizers.
- If the urine is collected separately, by adding ten times more water to the same, it can be used as pesticide in the farm land and if such urine is sprinkled over the dung-heap, it can be utilized as fertilizer.
- The maintenance cost of such toilets is much less as compared to the routine toilets.
- Time and energy are saved so I can go for wage paid work and daughters can go to the School.
- It does not harm the underground water or external environment in any way.
- There is no risk of sexual violence/harassment to the women or death due to the poisonous insect bites in the families.
- It provides much relief during natural calamities or specific conditions in the life of women like menstruation periods and due to this health problems like constipation, headache and stomach pain also reduced considerably
- we are using the water drained from such toilets for growing the trees/plants and greeneries outside the house.
- It costs Rs. 16500.00/-

After observing such toilet a number of women members, agreed to adopt such toilet provided they would be clear about how will they be supported., monitorily and technically. Dhaniben's response has been three folds. She does talk to them about how women could

assert their right to have this toilet at the family level by making the family reduce some of its expenses that may not be absolutely essential. She has also championed to bring up this issue at the federation level to see how the federation could support women in terms of loan.. Also, she and the federation women have been thinking of raising this issue before the govt. to get support from Total Sanitation Campaigning (TSC) or otherwise by govt. changing its present norms of subsidy. Dhaniben along with few other masons members in PLC they have been designing to reduce the cost of the toilet and feel that they should be able to reduce the cost by atleast 3to 4 thousands. Also, when women were discussing, they themselves felt only technical guidance and necessary information and not the monetary support in the form of subsidy or loan. She also shared that woman federation will try to get revolving fund or loan to assist the women living under the poverty line. one federation member is ready to adopt such toilet on her own expense.

### 1.4 exposure visit to Akatariya village and meeting with women

Members of women federations of Akatriya village are ready to adopt such toilet but they need financial support from government. Leaders of each women’s group in different village has been collecting names of women who are interested in adapting this toilet. Some of them have also agreed that if they got a long term loan (2 years) at a low interest 6-8%, they would be interested in implementing it. For the poorer families, women have been discussing with PLC members how they could be connected with TSC subsidy and also lobby and do advocacy at the govt. level to change the norms of subsidy according to specific geographical areas.

## 2. publication of case study on Eco friendly sanitation in various magazines.

For extensive dissemination of information on innovative ecofriendly Sanitation and subsequently it’s wide spread adoption by people , such information has been published in various magazines of NGOs in the form of Article and case study and also in the ‘ LOKSANCHALAN” – a News letter of PLC watsan.

## 3. Monitoring and supervision.

During every women federation’s meeting the discussion on the Eco sanitation being held and also on getting the revolving fund, loan or subsidy for construction of such toilets for poor. PLC coastal and PLC watsan Team members visit Dhaniben’s family very often for getting their feedbacks about the Eco friendly toilet. In the beginning they feel awkward to use such toilet now they are used to it.

## 4. Documentation.

### 4.1 Prepared case study.

As it happens to be the first Eco-Friendly toilet in Gujarat the case study on such innovative model is prepared in Gujarati and English language for wide spread dissemination and adoption of the same. Besides this more information and feedback of Dhaniben’s family are also being collected by the team.

### 4.2 Photographs on Ecosanitation.

Various photographs has been taken on different stages of construction of eco friendly toilet (Process documentation) and also of social process so as any one can get guidance and information by



seeing it.

#### **4.3 Posters and Film on Eco sanitation.**

PLC Watsan is preparing various informative and pictorials on Eco sanitation and also the Film for disseminating the information on such a innovative eco friendly model to a number of people.

#### **4.4 To prepare the informative Brochure.**

In this brochure all the in depth information regarding eco friendly toilet's construction process, social process, technical information and case study of Akatriya village will be put so any one interested in adopting such model can get minute information from this tiny brochure. People can demand for more information and guidance on Ecosanitaion by going through this. In this way wide spread dissemination of information and adoption of eco friendly toilet will be possible.

#### **4.5 Prepared power point Presentation for awareness and orientation**

To provide basic information on Eco sanitation and create awareness regarding the same a training module and power point presentation has been prepared in simple and interesting language. So people can easily understand about it. Visuals with explanations and interactions have always had a great impact on people. This has become very interesting medium to show to many of those who could not visit the demonstration,

#### **5. Linkages and Networking.**

To take this process ahead Linkage with different funding agencies , banks (Dena bank, NABARD) and also with Government has been done. PLC watsan has also built a strategic linkage with Arghyam, Jaldisha, Pravah for networking and policy advocacy at various levels. Advocacy issues as has been identified by women leaders and PLC team are issues of equitable distribution of resources and right to access safe sanitation facilities. To convince the govt. to change its norm of subsidy spefic to geographical condition and as per the SOR (schedule of rates). Effort is on to access revolving funds for implementation of ecosan.

Conclusion : There seems to be a great interest in adaptation of ecosan due to greater awareness in general about health, about technology about sources for possible financial support in terms of loans and the multiple disaster they face. Also, as what one sees in women to assert their right to end the drudgery which they face the most by getting this facility. Our future focus will be on capacity building of some of the members who could then emerge as an Area Resource Group and provide services for it, as well establish microfinance in for facilitating sanitation. We would also be preparing a complete booklet once the dry fecal matter is used as manure and its scientifically and systematically documented result.