

Nothing is impossible if done, a success story on total sanitation, Bajhang

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'I recalled the days, almost 4 years' back, where my nose used to be running me with the stink of human feces while walking through my own village.' This is Jamuna's aphorism that surprises the visitors of the village called Seralagaun and Bhatgaun, Thalara-6, Bajhang. Januma Giri, Sanitation and Hygiene Triggerer working in the villages has still fresh memories in her mind about the worst sanitation situation. She says that 'open defecation free' was like a tale and no one was interested even to listen about it saying that it was never possible at the beginning of the sanitation movement in the village.

Time started turning around when RVWRMP started the project activates from 2016. After ODF, the project introduced total sanitation movement in the village in 2017. The project mounted the mobility of the sanitation triggerers, WUC, child club, FCHVs, RM officials and other stakeholders towards the sanitized behaviors. This effort finally reached to the decision of implementing total sanitation in the village. The competition started to show the total sanitation indicators house by house and village by village.



Community people and mothers' groups kept monitoring the activities frequently, and marking the households that required improvement with a certain color. The movement also established dish drying rack with washing slabs and hand washing station at each household, along with other components of total sanitation. 'I felt I was being submerged into a whirlpool that I could never come up from, while I was proposed to take the "Triggerer" training for the first time, says Manju', adding with a smiling face that finally 'we reached the place where we had to go covering the target of 70 HHs.'

The villages are now really a role model in the RM. Every HH has concretely made their own dish drying racks and utensil washing slabs, along with accessible hand washing stations for children and elderly people in each house. This happened due to the dedicated efforts of the stakeholders involved. The communities have formed *Saathi Samuha* in the villages to look after the movement.

Campaign initiation

Kotbhairav (former VDC) had planned to achieve the status of total sanitation in the village within the fiscal year 2074/2075 and assigned the lead role to the mothers' group. The group organized several activities in the villages. After structural reforms in the country, V-WASH-CC remained inactive. RVWRMO and the RM encompassed the sanitation project under 'Simsar water sanitation and hygiene project' with the mothers group and users committee leading the project.

Implementation Process

During the implementation of the project, a reward system including one bucket with tap and one day's labor cost was introduced for all households to take place only after building concrete dish drying rack and hand washing station. The monitoring for these activities were done by *Saathi Samuha*. The 'Samuha' marked all the HHs in three categories as with a *yellow* flag in the household lacking doors in toilets, *blue* flag in the household having a good toilet but temporary dish drying racks and a *green* flag in the household achieving all five indicators of total sanitation. The marking finally made aware and compelled the HHs to fill the gaps as soon as possible. The movement made the communities conscious towards achieving the total sanitation which further motivated them to establish community garbage pits in several places for waste management.

Present situation

Time has changed now. Every household has dish drying rack, hand washing station, access to soaps and clean household surrounding in the villages. A hand washing campaign that was doing advocacy on the critical stages of hand washing has been very effective for changing the behaviors. Besides this, regular monitoring of the household by *Saathi Samuha* is encouraging community people. The group has established a norm to fine the HHs neglecting sanitation and hygiene behavior. The community people are now aware about the practices they need to do with a feeling that they are maintaining the sanitation behavior not to escape the fine, but for their own dignity and healthy lives. The other wards of the RM, and adjoining RMs, are now learning the lessons and initiating the practices in their localities as well. The movement has proved that nothing is impossible even in rural communities if people are willing to get the job done.

