

Swachhata Sangram for Sanitation in Vizianagaram

Vizianagaram - Andhra Pradesh

Vizianagaram ranked second last among 13 districts in Andhra Pradesh, with sanitation coverage of only 21.8%. Out of the total 34 blocks in the district, 29 had less than 30% sanitation coverage. It was also rated as one of the most backward districts in the country on the basis of various national level data on health. The Vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh thus undertook a huge task, with people's participation, to construct 10,000 Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs) under Swachh Bharat Mission in a record time of 100 hours. The objective was simple - to construct 10,000 household toilets in 71 *Gram Panchayats* in hundred hours, which resulted in 71 villages becoming Open Defecation Free (ODF). No block in the district had more than 50% ODF coverage till February 2017. Only 44 out of the 923 *Gram Panchayats* had achieved the ODF status.

The district was duly recognised by the Central Government and was awarded the 11th rank at national-level under Swachh Bharat. This campaign was also appreciated by Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi in his radio programme 'Mann ki Baat'. Until now, 4.27 lakh toilets were constructed, while many more are under construction. The mission for '10,000 toilets in 100 hours' was also entered in the Limca Book of Records.

The implementation of this campaign has several layers to it. Considered a health hazard, the practice of open defecation is a major cause of fatal diarrhoea. Malnutrition in children is another health

CHALLENGE FACED

- Encouraging the beneficiary to take up the construction of an IHHL as a manifestation of their self respect and not as mere subsidy from the government, was a major challenge





problem associated with open defecation. As a victim of one of the diseases passed on due to the lack of proper sanitation and hygiene, children tend to lose essential bodily fluids and appetite. To stop this age-old practice, the District Collector decided to rope in school children to influence the adults. In May 2017, the District Collector wrote letters to 2.3 lakh school children in Vizianagaram, urging them to be a part of the Swachh Bharat campaign. He called for an active participation of all the students to achieve the goal of an ODF district. The students, in turn, persuaded their parents to take part in construction of IHHLs.

The construction of IHHLs was quickened using the core

FINAL OUTCOMES

- Made sanitation a mass movement in the district
- Immense trigger towards the ODF activities that followed in the district
- A model for intra-departmental co-operation and convergence programmes

strategy of mass groundings and mass inaugurations. So far, five mass groundings of toilets were conducted in the district at strategic intervals. This was highlighted by the local media. The result was grounding of 10,000 IHHLs, 20,000 IHHL, 53,000 IHHLs, 65,000 IHHLs and 37,000 IHHLs in the last three months of 2017. In addition to achieving the goal of an ODF district, this campaign opened up employment opportunities for the masons of the district.

The campaign, which is the brainchild of the District Monitoring Cell was aided by the Mandal Development Officers. Several other districts drew inspiration from the campaign and scaled this campaign across various states.