

CASE STUDY

2016/No. 61



Kovera Palem Panchayat
Thotapalligudur Mandal
SPSR Nellore District

A Walk of Pride



Photo Credit: District Team, Nellore

With victorious smile on face, Sri Mutyala Srinivasulu, a Natural Leader from Kovera Palem Gram Panchayat (GP) proudly says, “we have been part of 100 ODF GPs celebrations that district conducted as we have achieved ODF too. Surprisingly, we were fortunate enough to have the presence of Dr. KS Jawahar Reddy, IAS, Principal Secretary, PR & RD department, who held walk of pride in our village. Not only that, the Principal Secretary during his walk in our village discussed about water supply system and announced sanction of Rs. 5.00 Lakhs for revival of water pipes to ensure proper and clean water supply as well. We received the funds and started pipeline works. We feel bounce of joy”.

Kovera Palem Gram Panchayat in Thotapalligudur Mandal in SPSR Nellore district is one among the 100 ODF GPs achieved under Athmagowravam initiative, a special drive with slogan- self respect and self-dignity of Women (Meaning Athmagowravam in telugu) to speed up the progress under Swachh Bharat Mission. The 154 households GP could achieve ODF with construction of 60 toilets for households who did not have access to toilets. The GP was declared ODF on June 14 2016 after ensuring usage of toilets by all households.

A case of stubborn woman...

The triggering activities carried out under Athmagowravam and an act of stoppage of ration by the mandal officials taking the support from gram panchayat has immense impact on the minds of stubborn households. The case of Smt. Mutyala Sujatha, age 48 years w/o Ganesh in the village is an example to this. According to Sri. Mutyala Srinivasulu:



Smt. Sujatha used to say, "I don't want a toilet. I do open defecation as I was doing right from my childhood. I do not find doing defecation in the open is a problem. If at all I want to construct a toilet in the future when I have sufficient funds, I would construct a big size toilet with my own money. But, I don't want to have a small size toilet (4/6) under SBM. Don't ask me again and again to construct a toilet, let me do my open defecation in which I feel comfortable rather than having a narrow toilet". This was the attitude of this woman and some others as well. The size might have been a cause for them to show a reason for not willing to have toilet.

What worked....

After the triggering activities such as door-to-door visits, sensitization, awareness campaigns, frequent meetings, night stays by task force officers, initiation of Natural leaders and village level vigilance committees that did monitor, watch and demotivate people who practice open defecation have caused changes in the attitudes of many households, who later showed interest to have toilets. Yet, people like Smt. Sujatha, though award, persisted. Finally, as a warning, the officials with the consent from GP stopped her ration for a month to convince her this way. Stopping of ration has become a problem for her. So, she did finally come forward to construct a toilet and built it.

Success factors...

1. **Community Led Total Sanitation Activities** : Nigha Committees/Natural Leaders/ Night stays by Officials/ regular awareness and sensitization / Natural Leaders initiation
2. Stoppage / threatening of stoppage of Ration card and other facilities to the households
3. **Third party construction:** Sri. Mutyala Srinivasulu, a natural leader in the village constructed 30 toilets as a third party when households had lack of finance to initiate construction
4. Mandal officials support and regular monitoring

Sustaining ODF: The Gram Panchayat wants to continue regular sensitization activities and determined to suspend ration and other facilities if any would again start open defecation. The Nigha committees constituted would continue to do monitoring in the open defecation areas.



Display of Open Defecation Warnings

Photo Credit: R. Srinivasa Rao, Program Officer, PRIA