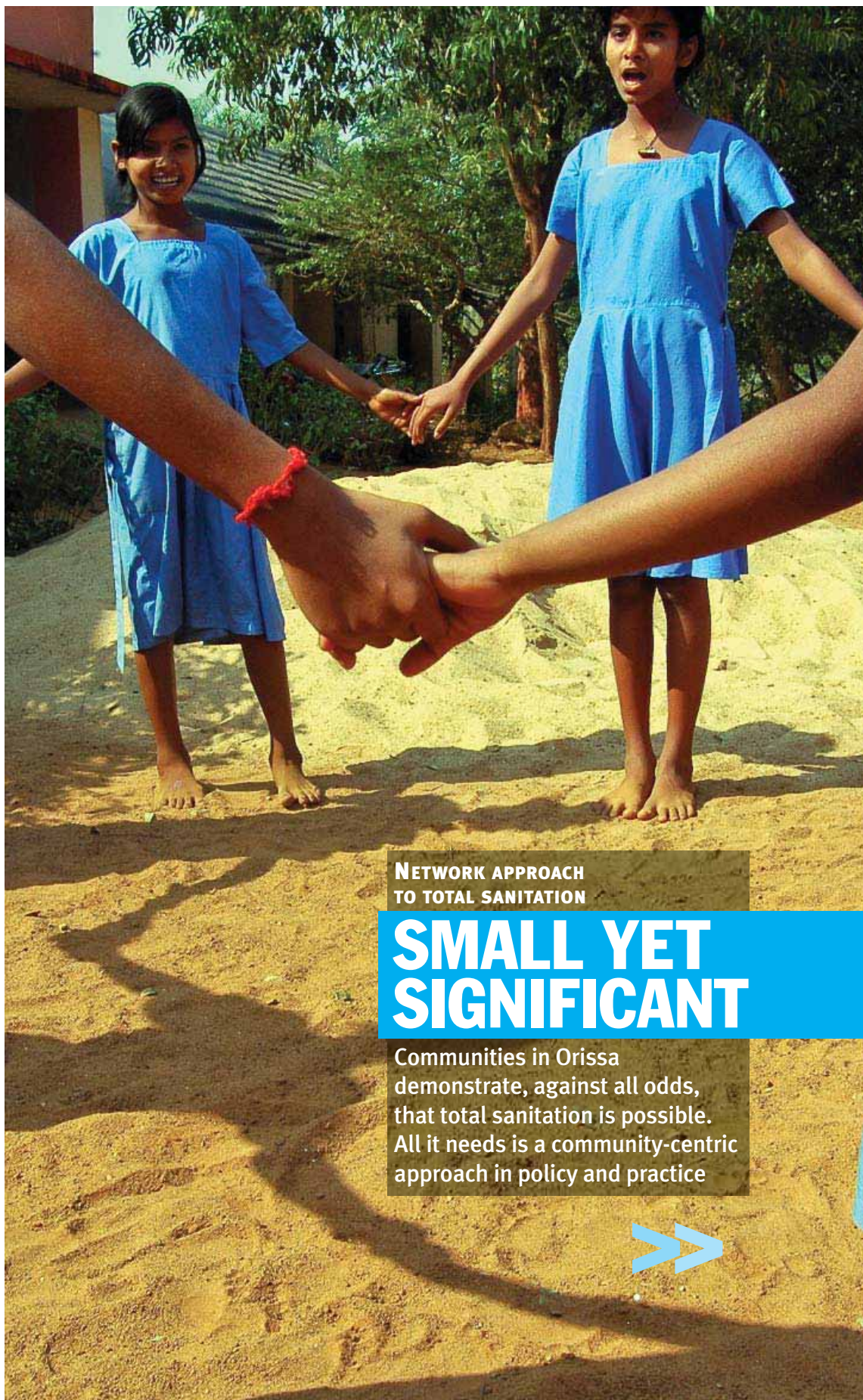


PERSPECTIVE 02



NETWORK APPROACH
TO TOTAL SANITATION

SMALL YET SIGNIFICANT

Communities in Orissa demonstrate, against all odds, that total sanitation is possible. All it needs is a community-centric approach in policy and practice



The Water and Sanitation Perspective series disseminates issues and experiences in India's water and sanitation sector. It is an outcome of WaterAid India's programme and policy work

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Others who made it possible

This edition of Water and Sanitation Perspective Series is an outcome of the works of the Water Sanitation Hygiene Promotion Network (WSHP Net) in Orissa, India. We appreciate the contributions of the four organisations whose experiences we have documented here – FRIEND, FREEDOM, Gram Bharti, SSUD.

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Acknowledgement

We are inspired by the communities who have made exceptional efforts to make their villages open defecation free. Women and children of these communities have distinguished themselves as powerful change makers. This paper has greatly benefited from them.

Foreword

The Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) Sector is a complex combination of technological, social, political and economic issues. This is one sector where people need to come together for a clean and hygienic future. The Government of India appreciates the needs of our communities and has made huge budgetary outlays over the years for the WATSAN sector.

However, India's experiences in this sector are not that desirable. We still have habitations with limited access to safe water and more than half of India continues to defecate in the open. But unless people come together, this scenario will not change.

An increasingly vibrant civil society in India has demonstrated that people can indeed work together, engineer behaviour change and increase their access to safe water and sanitation.

This edition of WATSAN Perspectives Series presents experiences of communities coming together from Orissa to access sanitation. What is remarkable is that it has happened in a backward state and led by very poor communities.

This is what gives us considerable hope at WaterAid. India has set an ambitious target of sanitation for all by 2012. Is it achievable? We feel so, strengthened as we are by our experience in Orissa, and elsewhere too.

I wish our readers happy reading and seek your comments / suggestions. We would happy to arrange visits, too, to these villages in Orissa.

Dr. Isha Prasad Bhagwat
Director Programme Operations and Acting Country Representative
WaterAid India
November 2008





Pre TEXT

Beautiful Examples in Difficult Places

In India's poorest state, Orissa, a group of non-government organisations make access to sanitation possible for communities living in difficult places. Their innovative strategies and ways offer a template for the country to adopt for attaining open defecation free status

Poor access to safe drinking water and sanitation has deepened poverty in Orissa, India's poorest state. Considered 'water surplus', all habitations do not have access to safe and secure drinking water. As in November 2008, 71 per cent of the habitations were fully covered. In case of sanitation, the situation is worse – only 27.5 per cent of state's habitations had sanitation coverage in November 2008. Total sanitation coverage for the state is a distant dream. However, the recent concerted and integrated drive for sanitation by the state and encouraging experiences in rural sanitation evoke hope that the state may soon see a turnaround.

This edition of Water and Sanitation Perspective Series is an attempt to document and dissect the experiences of around 150 villages spread across nine districts in the state in making safe drinking water and sanitation a reality. What make these villages outstanding is the means they adopted to achieve the difficult end of access to drinking water and sanitation. They have innovated community institutions like Village Water and Sanitation Committees, Self-Help Groups and Kumari (adolescent girls) Clubs to make drinking water and sanitation a community affair. These institutions give people the leadership role. On the other hand, the above community mobilization is a result of another innovative approach to solve the nagging problem. WaterAid India promoted Water Sanitation Hygiene Promotion Network (WSHP Net) of local NGOs working in the water and sanitation sector. The network NGOs gave strategic and timely support and training to the local communities who came forward to take over the drinking water and sanitation activities in villages.

Within a short span of four years, this network of small NGOs – some of whom are community based organisations – has helped at least 86,000 people in 150 villages in accessing sustained safe drinking water and effective sanitation. The journey was not without obstacles. They led a campaign to shatter the traditional development paradigm of 'poverty as barrier to toilets'. The network has been able to declare 60 villages open defecation free out of the 150 villages the network is currently working. Five Panchayats have got the Nirmal Gram Puraskars (NGP). For this, it has successfully tapped the potential of women and children. In some villages, children have not only internalised the message of healthy living themselves but also resorted to unique and unheard of methods to convince their parents. Women have proved themselves as effective social reformers. Women have successfully used loans as instruments to construct toilets.

The gains from this network are considerable. In addition to the direct beneficiaries of the programme, these villages have emerged as beautiful examples, in difficult places rather, of how to assure drinking water and sanitation in a sustainable manner. The network members have been provided with substantial knowledge and linkage support. They have developed in experience, confidence and stature. All of them now are engaged in the Total Sanitation Campaign of the state government and other development programmes as well. WaterAid India, the major financial and technical supporter of this network, has internalised the learning from this network approach into its District Wide Approach (DWA), initiated in April 2008 for Puri district of Orissa.

Out of 150 villages in which the WSHP Net works, 60 have become open defecation free.



In Puri district the WSHP Net has trained local communities in general operation and maintenance of handpumps. Local residents, as shown in this photo, manage their own sources of drinking water



Designs that work

The network approach shatters the myth that poverty and illiteracy are obstacles in accessing sanitation

An approach that helps achieve water and sanitation security

Way back in 1929, the then chief secretary to government of Orissa, P T Mansfield made a scathing remark: “Puri has had the evil reputation of being focus of cholera, and a centre from which the disease spreads to other parts of India.” After 80 years, Bhajamana Majhi, a resident of the district’s Terahalapatna village corrects the typical image of the district afflicted by the scourge of poor sanitation and associated diseases. “Diseases are now at bay in our village thanks to a water and sanitation project,” says Majhi.

A few villages like that of Majhi’s have developed the right vaccine to fight the age-old scourge of bad sanitation (See box: *Crying for attention*, p9). A programme implemented by a small group of non-government organisations under the Water Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion Network (popularly known as the WSHP Net) and with support from WaterAid India has made access to sanitation a reality.

The WSHP Net, along with its nine partner organisations, is promoting an integrated approach to access water and sanitation in partnership with the communities in nine districts covering 150 villages (See map: *Wide spread*, p10). The network is silently yet significantly fighting the terrible trio of diarrhoea, dysentery and cholera in their own areas. As is obvious from Bhajamana’s statement, this network has been able to inspire hope and instill confidence in the communities to fight successfully.

Our analysis of experiences of four of the partners of WSHP Net shows that the economically marginalised people have resolved that they would not let their poverty and illiteracy come in way of their leading a healthy and hygienic life. The NGO partners, who were small players in the field at the beginning of the network, have now gained widespread recognition in their locality, districts and in some cases, beyond.

Crying for attention

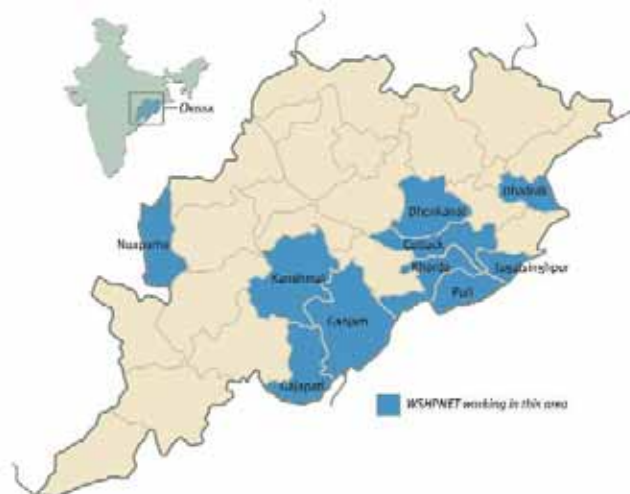
Access to drinking water needs urgent attention in Orissa

With nearly 1,500 mm of average annual rainfall, the state is considered as ‘rich’ in water resources. Yet drinking water availability continues to be a challenge. Government figures have put the death caused by various water borne diseases between 2002 and 2005 at 2,103. As many as 580,000 rural people were recorded victims of water-borne diseases in the same period.

Though the government claims to have provided drinking water supply to nearly 100 per cent habitations, in a statement submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for audit purposes, the government has conceded that till March 2006, about 6.5 per cent habitations had no access to safe drinking water and about 8.5 per cent habitations were only partially covered. As high as 42 per cent of the 65,680 tube wells installed between April 2001 and June 2005 were identified with severe chemical contamination thus unfit for consumption. Previously covered habitations are slipping back at a rapid rate, especially with regard to quality of water, with 16,492 habitations being identified as ‘quality affected.’ These have been targeted for coverage in 2008-09. This number is highest amongst all states in the country and accounts for about 12 per cent of the total habitations in the state.

Wide spread

The network works in many of the poorest districts in the state. Its seven partners are working directly with communities in 10 development blocks in nine districts, covering nearly 15,000 households in 150 villages. In the network's working areas 55 percent people are below the official poverty line. Out of the 150 villages, 60 have been declared open defecation free



The changemakers

The WSHP NET members and their work areas

Network member	District covered
Forum for Rural Education and Empowerment on Development Organisation Movement (FREEDOM)	Puri (22 villages declared ODF and 1 got NGP)
Society for Social Unity and Development (SSUD)	Puri (9 villages declared ODF and 1 got NGP)
Pragati Yuvak Sangha (PJS)	Bhadrak (8 villages declared ODF and 1 got NGP)
Friends Organisation for Rural Development (FRIEND) Gram Bharti	Dhenkanal Khurda (5 villages declared ODF and 1 got NGP)
Seva Mahila Mandal (SMM)	Nuapada (2 villages declared ODF)
Indian Institute of Youth and Development (IIYD)	Kandhmal, Ganjam, Gajapati and Cuttack (14 villages declared ODF and 1 got NGP)

The platform's four pillars

WSHP Net was conceived to:

1. Provide a platform that can serve as a coordinating body influencing the water sanitation committees at district level
2. Facilitate the NGOs to complement and supplement each other's activities
3. Generate volunteers, technical expertise and local leaders who can contribute to the spirit and objectives of the water and sanitation projects formulated and implemented by the network
4. Work as an influencing group so that it can articulate the needs and requirements of the people at appropriate levels of decision making and try to influence the formulation of people centric policies

The network has evolved over a period of time incorporating local needs and sensibilities

Tracing the roots

During a routine training for NGOs in 2001 by the Indian Institute of Youth and Development (IIYD), a resource organisation with experience in providing training and technical skills in the water and sanitation sector, the seed for a network approach to solve the crisis of drinking water and sanitation was sown (See box: Looking back). The participants realised that such sporadic trainings and interventions would not solve the problems of the sector. Hence a network was formed to address the issues in an integrated and strategic manner. As P. C. Mishra, the Director of IIYD and Convenor of WSHP Net says, “Our basic aim to start this network was to sustain the water resources and promote sanitation and hygiene through building up the capacity of the partner NGOs in the network”.

To begin with the network was informal - just a platform to propagate an approach. WaterAid India (WAI) started supporting the network in 2003. “IIYD continued his contact with WAI and also kept updating WAI on the plans of being an umbrella network for some small NGOs across Orissa. WAI accepted in principle the idea of a network but there was no formal programme till 2003,” recalls Chandra Ganapathy, a manager with WAI country office in Delhi, who was closely associated with the launching of the network.

A demonstrated design

The network adopts a multi-pronged approach to create hygienic villages where all sections of the society participate in the drive. In the integrated approach that the network is promoting to facilitate water and sanitation activities, the achievements have been many (see box: *Small network, big impacts, p13*). The programme has made village institutions the platforms for facilitating all other activities, which include both software and hardware provisioning. It has created and facilitated institutions at the village level like the Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSC), Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Kumari Clubs (Adolescent Girls’ Clubs). In some villages, where SHGs already existed, the network partner effectively capitalised on their strength and offered need-based support.

“We thought this to be a right approach to cover the rural areas where sanitation coverage was really low,” says B P Mishra, regional manager of WaterAid India’s regional office in Bhubaneswar. “This was designed as a demonstration programme so that the outcomes could help spread the approach to other organisations and networks who are interested in similar programmes,” continues Mishra.

The substantial knowledge and linkage support that the WSHP Net has provided to these small NGOs has shown that demonstration in a few villages really works and can make a big difference. What is more important is that this network has worked and succeeded in the state where rural poverty is the highest in the country. It has proved that, with a proper planning and strategic support, a water and sanitation programme can challenge its traditional bottlenecks – poverty and illiteracy. Majhi’s confidence-studded statement says it all.

Small yet significant

The network has achieved multiple objectives, but in an integrated fashion. There are three key achievements: increase in access to drinking water and sanitation and improved hygiene, enhanced capacity of local groups in managing projects and programmes and the spin offs of the campaign that resulted in communities having more access to other development programmes and resources.

It has helped in attaining open defecation free status for 60 villages. Add to it the large number of toilets being constructed – 6,038 household level low cost toilets have been constructed. It has been instrumental in creating new drinking water structures as well as restoring defunct ones. In one way the network led a campaign in villages on drinking water and sanitation and galvanized all attention to it. Using flexible approaches keeping the local sensitivities and problems in mind, the partners successfully managed to cross

initial hurdles and convinced the people to build toilets with community contribution. Almost all partners of WSHP Net faced difficulties in the villages convincing the people that toilets were actually not for free. Yet, as time passed, their contribution more than doubled from about 23 per cent in 2003-04 to about 60 per cent in 2007-08 with an average of around 30 per cent.

As Bibhuti Samantray of Gram Bharti explains, "While we are working with Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in five Gram Panchayats (GP), with WAI support we are working on our own in one GP. In the latter, though the financial support is not much, we have been able to cover both Above Poverty Line (APL) and Below Poverty Line (BPL)

Looking Back

The WSHPNET evolved as a community necessity

In 1994, WAI had no major intervention in Orissa, with the Indian Institute of Youth and Development (IIYD) being the only major partner. IIYD maintained constant contact with WAI and had evinced an interest to start a network of few selected small NGOs as member organisations. Even though WAI in principle agreed to this idea, it was given a formal shape through a programme designed in 2003 only. During this period WAI went through a major programme restructuring process and shifted its focus from Southern India to six poorer states in the northern and eastern parts of the country, including Orissa.

At that time, the state was known to have adopted low cost sanitation. In its earlier engagements, WAI projects promoted low cost sanitation. However, not much success was achieved in term of usage and behavioural change. There were few NGOs who were actively engaged in demand responsive approaches, and the reforms in sanitation sector had not taken off. At the same time, in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, WAI had succeeded in up scaling sanitation through networking of NGOs. The networks in southern states provided a good learning opportunity for smaller NGOs who did not have any prior experience in implementing sanitation programmes. The network and small member NGOs gained respect and credibility due to the presence of more experienced NGOs in the network. Gradually, through experience, exposure and opportunities for close interaction with wider sector players, these younger NGOs gained a reputation and respect on their own merit.

It was along these lines of thought that the WSHP Net was conceptualised and launched. As a first step, a workshop of around 40 NGOs was held in Bhubaneswar in July 2003. The purpose was to gauge their experience in water, sanitation and hygiene projects, relationship with the local government, rapport with the community, and conviction in promoting integrated, demand responsive and people centered approaches. Site visits were then made by WAI staff to strengthen the first level assessment of the NGOs. After this round, seven NGOs were identified to be part of the network for the WAI assisted water, sanitation and hygiene programme. The plan was that the other NGOs would continue to receive training and capacity building supports for future partnering.

WAI's new regional team took complete charge of the programme on December 1, 2003, and within a month a country level meeting was held in Orissa. The network members got an opportunity to showcase their works so far, such as base line findings and proposed plans. A significant level of solidarity and confidence was observed among all members of the network. On World Water Day celebration in March 2004, the network invited key stakeholders including the secretary to the government of Orissa, wherein the network members got an opportunity to showcase their achievements in a short span of less than six months. Since then there has been no looking back.

Villages in the network opt for self-financing of toilets contrary to general trend of being majorly funded

Communities have localized the supply chain thus making access to sanitation sustainable

Small network, big impacts

The network has achieved significant progress under its integrated water, sanitation and hygiene programme during 2004-2008

The network has been able to increase access to sanitation. But more than that it has made sanitation a community affair. This has resulted in villages being open defecation free and improving their overall village environment. The initiative's impacts on overall state of sanitation are impressive:

Access to drinking water: The network has facilitated installation of 74 hand pumps; restoration of 1,036 hand pumps; recharging of five abandoned wells; establishment of 135 soak pits; construction of 14 rainwater harvesting structures; construction of 130 washing platforms; creation of 39 hand wash facilities; digging up of four sanitary wells; provision of 110 drinking water drums; mobilisation of eight Swajaldhara hand pumps; establishment of one iron removal plant and creation of 1,621 community kitchen gardens.

Access to sanitation: The network has been able to mobilise the community in constructing 6,038 household level low cost latrines; 356 community compost pits; 229 individual compost pits; one ecosan toilet; 19 school sanitation blocks; two child friendly toilets; 11 disability toilets and 2 sanitary marts.

Access to hygiene: The network has facilitated hygiene education and action through several training programmes so that the local institutions can sustain the benefits beyond the programmes life span. To list a few, 463 VWSC trainings; 1,190 SHG/PRI trainings; five staff trainings; 132 mason trainings; 1,137 school hygiene education programmes; 477 awareness camps; 796 school hygiene competitions; 451 Teachers trainings and 1,137 hygiene education programmes have been conducted.

families. In the GPs under TSC, however, we have only been able to cover the BPL families because the programme is not that flexible to allow us to change targets.”

Involvement of the community in programme implementation made another significant difference. In villages covered under the WSHP NET toilets are being constantly used where toilets built under other programmes lay unused. “This is the secret of the programme’s success and it will help usage and sustainability,” informs Raj Kishore Swain, Member Secretary of FREEDOM. The network has helped in making the supply chain a community-based mechanism by innovating financing mechanism, enhancing local skill in operation and maintenance and encouraging locally available materials to bring down overall costs.

Beyond Access

It has offered much more than safe drinking water and sanitation to the villagers. The network has created institutional models to achieve the targets in water and sanitation sector. These villages serve as models for others to emulate. The members are now primed to take on water and sanitation work in other areas and in other development activities as well.

The most important outcome of the network approach has been the empowerment and confidence the partners and communities have gained through various capacity building programmes. “In 2003, we received training with WAI support and then went to Tamil Nadu on an exposure visit. The visit really opened up our minds and we could design suitable projects,” recalls Pratap Rout, Director of FRIEND. “This network has given us knowledge, the most important instrument,” he says.

The network has helped partners to gain recognition. While they have become serious actors in water and sanitation locally, they have started gaining state level recognition as

Institutions created for looking after sanitation issues are now actively taking part in overall village development works

well. "We are now recognised as important players in the water and sanitation sector and are invited to many important dialogues and discussions," says Mishra of IYD. As Gobinda Chandra Nayak, Director of SSUD says, "Now, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation department regularly consults us. This is a significant change that has taken place, all thanks to the network." The District Collector of Puri, impressed by their work, has recommended SSUD as the nodal agency for the district in sanitation programmes.

The people-centric approach has served as a catalyst for villagers to get linked to several other government programmes. In fact, partners have been mobilising considerable resources through various government schemes for village development. And herein lies the success of such a network which began as a small programme but has really grown in size and coverage through various linkages. "We have been able to mobilise hardware support from the government for our work," informs Nayak. This financial support has gone a step further.

"Our programmes call for complete 'village environment protection' and that too with complete involvement of the people. We have been able to get support for other village level environmental sanitation works such as drainage from the government," adds Nayak. "The network was successful in leveraging funding. A modest funding of Rs 60 lakh resulted in leveraging approximately Rs 1.6 crore," says P C Mishra. On an average, the partners have been able to mobilise nearly 30 per cent of the total cost of their water and sanitation activities from government and other sources. According to Mishra, "While comparing the hardware figures, the community and WAI contribution ratio is 70:30."

For WAI, the learnings from the WSHP Net experience have been internalised and incorporated in to a new approach called the District Wide Approach (DWA) launched in Puri district in April 2008 (See box : *Off shoot*, p14).

"The learning has helped in building up the necessary confidence and effective planning for going ahead with the DWA that has been initiated by WaterAid in Puri district of Orissa in partnership with the Government of Orissa. Some of these NGOs are partnering in this approach. They are also now 'primed' to play a key role in such approaches in the districts where they work," informs B. P. Mishra.

Off shoot

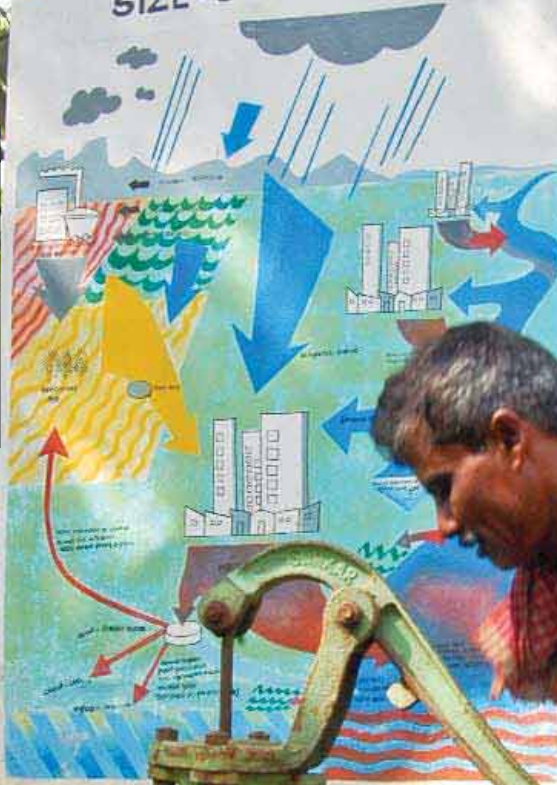
Nirmal Puri Abhiyan or the District Wide Approach is inspired by the WSHP NET approach

Implemented by Government of Orissa and WaterAid India, the new approach to fix sanitation problems will be replicated in the whole state. The state government and the WAI launched the District Wide Approach (DWA) in Puri district of Orissa in April 2008. The approach is innovative. A Gram Panchayat is considered a core unit of development. Government creates a dedicated 'Sanitation Fund' for taking up sanitation related programmes in a cluster of five Panchayats (including the core Panchayat). Similar clusters cover the entire district. Initially WAI will focus in five blocks of Puri, Pipili, Nimapada, Gope and Bramhagiri. In each block, five such clusters are formed. So in the first year, 25 Panchayats are being covered under this approach. In the second year a total of 125 Panchayats will be targeted and 80 more will be covered in the third year, which is also the year of consolidation. The approach then will spread to other districts to cover the entire state by 2015. Along with the initiation in Puri, five other districts, namely, Ganjam, Khurda, Cuttack, Bhadrak and Dhenkanal have also been selected to initiate the approach in one/two pilot Panchayats with the existing partners of WAI in these districts. As of October 2008, seven partners are involved in this programme and the State Water and Sanitation Mission is a major government partner organisation.

ECOSAN MODEL-1 COMPOST TOILET

SIZE - 5'6" X 4' 4"

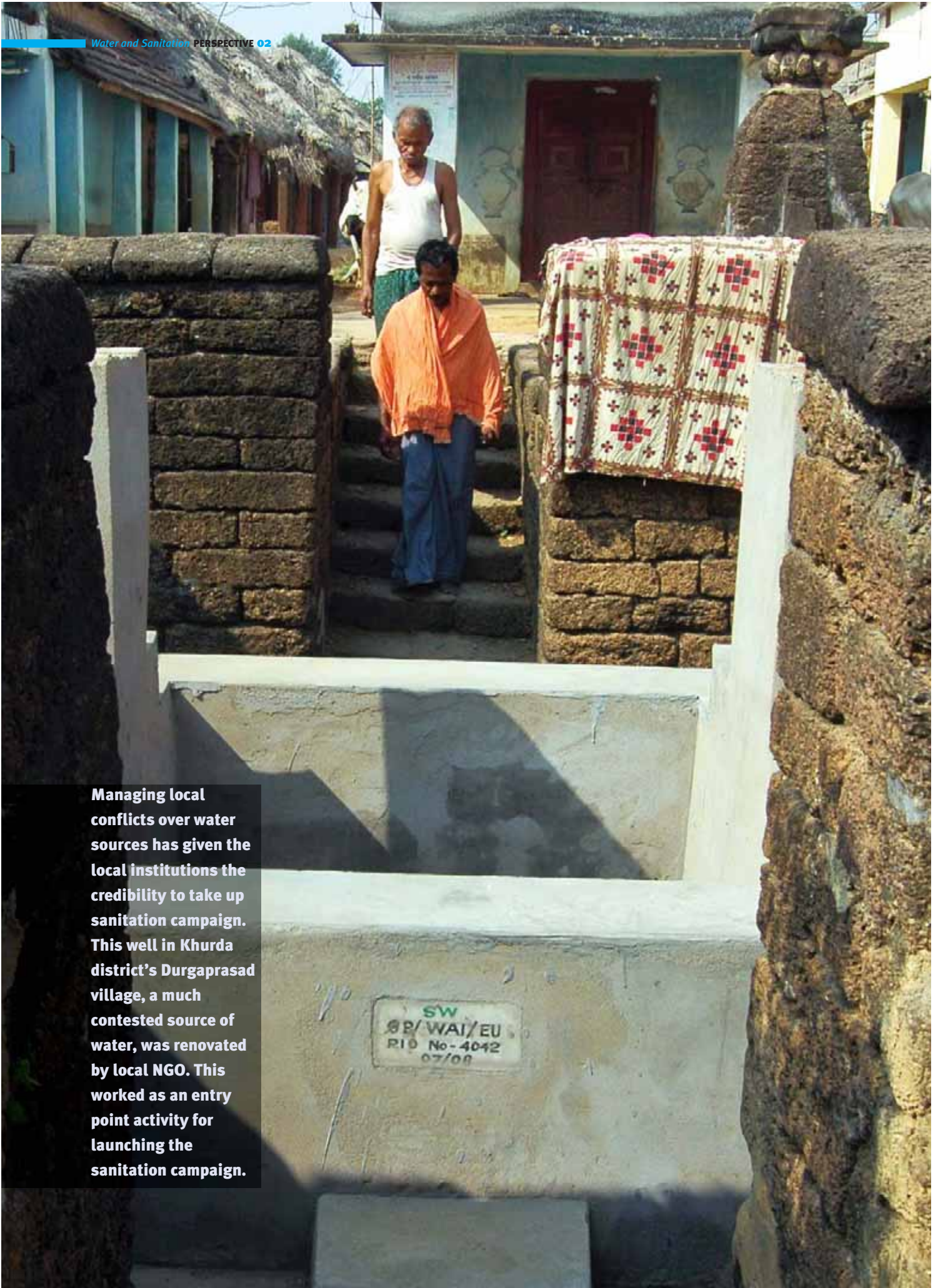
The network gave Orissa its first ecosan toilet in Puri district's Kumaeswar village. This toilet was built with a resident's own contribution and being maintained by him.



Organised by: **FREEDOM**
Puri, IYD

Finance Supported by: **WaterAid**
BENUDHAR MOHAPATRA
KUMAESWAR





Managing local conflicts over water sources has given the local institutions the credibility to take up sanitation campaign. This well in Khurda district's Durgaprasad village, a much contested source of water, was renovated by local NGO. This worked as an entry point activity for launching the sanitation campaign.



Well being

In Khurda district women self-help groups manage the sanitation campaign. They not only make using a toilet a healthy habit in the village but also churn economic benefits out of it

The century old well between Durgaprasad and Deuli villages is a mute witness to the villages' incredible journey to become nearly open defecation free in just few years. The villages in Khurda district are a testimonial to the success of the integrated approach undertaken under the WSHP NET. It was from this well that Gram Bharati, a member of the network, started its total sanitation and safe drinking water campaign in the villages in 2003. The well, located near the village deity temple, has been a source of intense political conflicts in the villages. "Approximately 100 years ago, a family dug it and dedicated it to the people here. The family deliberately located the well near the Gaon Deula (village deity temple)," recalls 66-year-old Prafulla Kumar Sahu of Durgaprasad village. Around 250 families of the village depended on it for decades as this was the only source of drinking water. The well was initially at the level of the road, walled from all sides to prevent accidents. Over a period of time, the road level rose higher than the well with the result that several accidents occurred. These accidents triggered political fights. "People here are active in various political parties and each party wanted to close the well forever," explains Sahu. In the 1980s private wells began to mushroom in the village and dependency on this well declined. For over a decade closing the well featured prominently in all local political leaders' agenda. "The only thing that saved it was its location near the temple," says Sahu. During elections to the state assembly in 2004, the well attracted considerable political attention. And villagers arrived at the decision to close the well.

Blurring political lines

It was during this period that Gram Bharati, a local NGO, came to the village seeking people's cooperation in a water and sanitation programme. "When we entered the village, the well issue had already divided the people into several groups. It was thus difficult to make a move without arriving at a solution," recalls Bibhuti Samantray, Secretary of Gram Bharti. Gram Bharti made an offer to the villagers: turn the well into a sanitary well with concrete walls and platforms so that the sacred well is conserved as a historical monument. After several rounds of discussions, Gram Bharti could make headway and finally the well was revived for use. "Even though the sanitary well was constructed after an understanding was reached in the village, for a while working here was almost impossible. However, when people realised that we were in fact having no political identity or agenda, all the political parties supported the effort," says Bibhuti. The process of settling the controversy over the well already laid the foundation for a stronger community in the village. "The village has successfully fought political divisiveness and forged unity, at least on development issues," says Sahu, who is now the President of the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC). It was a turning point for the VWSC – it is emerging as an institution with accessibility from all sections of the village.

The twin villages have around 350 families and the total population is about 2,500. While agriculture, the main occupation, is rain fed, drinking water sources are dependent on groundwater which is constantly declining. Groundwater level has depleted by 180 feet in early 1980s to 240 feet in 2004. In the wells, the water level has depleted from 30 to 40 feet", says Gopabandhu Naik, member of the Deuli VWSC. The initial survey of

“We have reached toilets to the last point of our village. With this we can claim that our programme has really achieved the unachievable”

Self-help groups have become the local source of funding construction of toilets

Gram Bharti found that as much as 87 per cent of people were defecating outside and there were regular incidences of diarrhoea and dysentery.

United, we stand

The conscious attempt to involve all sections of the society in the VWSC has resulted in taking the message of total sanitation to the entire village. The combination of software and hardware support in the programme has worked. People, earlier reluctant to build toilets citing socio-economic problems, are now not only proud owners of toilets but are also motivating others to have toilets. The programme has covered all sections of society and is in operation in 19 villages of the Gopalpur Panchayat of the district. It covers 972 households and 7,663 people, most of them belong to the Other Backward Classes.

“In Gopalpur Panchayat we have already achieved 90 per cent toilets coverage,” says Bibhuti. “Gram Bharti’s working with the Total Sanitation Campaign in five Panchayats and there too it has achieved success because our awareness programmes have worked well,” adds he. The programme has involved women, children, schools and the Panchayati Raj representatives. The programme has reached to the remotest corners of the Panchayat. “We have reached to the last point that is the Durgapur hamlet of Simapalli village. With this we can claim that our programme has really achieved the unachievable,” says Bibhuti. This village is unfortunately yet to get electricity, but it has toilets (see box: *Last call*, p18). The programme has also reached out to the schools, both government and private, located in the area for taking up sanitation as a mission. In fact the Debguru Adarsha Vidyalaya, a school in Mugumanda village, has built a child friendly toilet with a major contribution from its own trust. Gram Bharti has only provided the knowhow and has been helping the school in teaching hygiene. “People now invite us to their social functions like marriages and we feel we have really made inroads into the minds of the people, who

Last call

A remote village without electricity and roads has 100 per cent toilet coverage

Durgapur village in Gopalpur Gram Panchayat is home to the primitive Sabara tribe. Though it is hardly 60 kilometres away from the state capital, it is ages away from civilization. There is no electricity connection and no roads worth the name in the village. But it can well beat even a well developed city in the country in at least one count: toilet coverage.

All the 28 houses in the village have toilets. “People from Gram Bharti visited us and convinced us about the need of toilets. We thought going out to the forests was more convenient and beneficial given that some of us have small patches of agricultural land only,” explains Ghanashyam Naik, a villager. Most of them migrate out for livelihood thus having a toilet didn’t mean much to them.

Bibhuti Samantray Secretary of Gram Bharti explains the strategy: “We first invited the women to our training programmes and there they got opportunity to speak to the Sarpanch and other officials.” There was one tube well in the village which was defunct. So villagers were using the open well. “When the women started to go out to programmes organised by Gram Bharati, they approached the Sarpanch who agreed to repair the tube well and this built up confidence of the women in us”, says Naik. However, the village had its own doubts as for years many people promised many thing but nothing ever happened to the village. “Continuous motivation resulted in their coming around and now all the houses have toilets which are being used,” informs a happy Bibhuti Samantray. “We now realise that we save on time and hence have more productive hours,” says Naik.

“Thanks to exposure we gained from Gram Bharati, we could bag the contract for providing mid-day meals for the primary school in our village”

earlier did not even listen to us,” says Sahu on the growing influence of the VWSC. The VWSC in Durgaprasad is now four years old and has taken charge of the water and sanitation activities. “From one well, our village now has at least 70 wells and 25 tube wells. The political challenges are still there but we have been successfully managing the water sources,” he says.

A business opportunity

Involvement of women has helped the programme – and the women themselves. “We have empowered the SHGs through training and need based support. They are now active members of the VWSC. This has made things easier for us as women were motivated for taking part in the programme and building toilets,” says Suresh Mahapatra, Community Organiser, working with Gram Bharati. “Our women could build toilets for their families due to the interest free loan support that was provided by Gram Bharati,” informs Subharani Das, Assistant Secretary of the Maa Tarini SHG of Deuli, who is also a member of the VWSC. They have received a total of Rs.10,000 as loan to build toilets. “This programme strengthened our SHG and we have taken on more responsibilities for village development,” says Rupashree Naik, Secretary of the Maa Tarini Mahila Mandal. “Thanks to the exposure we gained from Gram Bharti, we could bag the contract for providing mid-day meal for the primary school here,” says Rupashree. So confident are the SHGs that they took loans to spread the toilet movement in the neighbourhood. For the Jana Seva Mahila Group (SHG) of Dakhinaparikhayata village, the campaign to build toilets brought an altogether new opportunity to prove their entrepreneurship skills. The group took a loan from a bank to build toilets for 30 families in Nayapalli-Haripur village. “It was really difficult to motivate the people in these villages and we had all but given up”, recalls Suresh of Gram Bharti. It was only after several visits and repeated engagement that the SHG members were able to convince the women in Nayapalli-Haripur village to build toilets.

“Thirty toilets are now complete and we have already invested Rs.35,000. Our loan from the bank attracts 11 per cent interest and as soon as we get the reimbursement from the rural development department, we will not only repay the loan but also earn some profit,” says Tillotama Naik, President of the SHG. “In that village there were only four-five toilets. For us it’s a great success as we had almost lost hope,” says Bibhuti.

Taking stock

Gram Bharti’s water and sanitation programme is operational in all the 19 villages of the Gopalpur Gram Panchayat of Khurda district. It covers 972 households and 7,663 people, nearly 66 per cent of who belong to the Other Backward Classes (OBC).

Gram Bharti’s survey at the beginning of the programme revealed that majority of the people – almost 87 per cent – defecated outside and there were regular incidences of diarrhoea and dysentery. In just about four years, the programme has achieved more than 90 per cent toilet coverage and good usage. This is despite the fact that political fights are common in the villages, making it thereby difficult for the NGO to mobilise the people.

Some key achievements:

- Motivated people to take revolving loans to build toilets. As many as 63 toilets have been built with such loan support.
- Motivated people to build toilets without any outside support. Seventy nine families – all financially abled – lacked motivation. They now have toilets in their houses.
- Accessed TSC support to build 538 toilets





Children are the new found mascots of total sanitation. In Dhenkanal district many schools have built child friendly toilets, as shown in this photograph, and included hygiene as part of curriculum



No easy task

Children have become sanitation campaigners in Dhenkanal district to achieve total sanitation in remote rural areas. The strategy to use children to reach out to their families and then to the entire village is proving effective

Khandiabandha village in Dhenkanal district was always hesitant to buy any development initiatives, particularly from an NGO. For it had bitter experiences in the past with many organisations that came to the village with lofty promises but never delivered. So when FRIEND came here in 2004 to initiate a campaign for access to drinking water and sanitation, the residents naturally didn't encourage the workers to start work. "Everyone in the village treated us with suspicion," recalls Rashmita, a Village Animator working with FRIEND. "Despite we being from here, we had to face this situation because of the misdeeds of others," says Pratap Rout, director of the NGO.

"Then in August 2006, we knocked on the door of the WSHP Net members who came over to the village," Rout recalls. The network members stayed here for about seven days and helped us break down barriers and build trust. They convinced the people that this was a genuine programme and beneficial to the community. Besides getting the VWSC working, the members camped in the village and helped construct 36 toilets.

From doubt to confidence

As Parbati Rout, a villager and a member of the Siddheswari Swayam Sahayak Gosthi (SHG) recalls, "I doubted the intention of FRIEND people initially. However, when people from across the state came and camped in our village, I thought this must be a genuine organisation. As such also we had nothing to lose as they helped us construct toilets." Parbati herself took a loan of Rs.1,000 to build a toilet from the local SHG. FRIEND placed Rs.10,000 with the SHGs to give away as loans to their members for building toilets.

"I am a toilet owner for more than a year now and all my family members are living with dignity," says Kuntala Rout, a member of another SHG. She also took a loan from the SHG to build a toilet. But taking the loan was not easy. Her husband did not agree and hence she approached the Village Animator while her husband was away. Later, with support of the SHG members and motivation of the programme personnel her husband too came around and helped repay the loan from his earning.

"In two years we have seen a big change in our village," says Kalandi Rout, a village leader. "We have about 40 toilets in the village of 63 families. FRIEND has also helped us in getting a tubewell. Earlier we had only one pond which used to dry up in the summer and we had to dig a chua (a base well inside the pond). Now the tubewell is a big help. Diarrhoea was rampant in the village, which became worse in the aftermath of the cyclone that ravaged the village in 1971. Diarrhoea and dysentery are no longer epidemic. Thanks to the mechanics trained by FRIEND repairing is also not a problem," says he.

Like Khandiabandha, nine other villages in the Sogarapasi and Chaulia Gram Panchayats in the district are learning the new way to a safe life. FRIEND has been working in these villages covering around 10,730 people. Most of these people belong to Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Class communities. The area hosts tribes like the Juanga, Sabara and Khaira and each village has a substantial Scheduled Caste population.

"The economic condition of the people is not very sound and this was one of the major hurdles we faced during the initial years of implementing the programme," informs Pratap Rout. Most of the people depend on agriculture, that too rain-fed single crop farming.

"In two years we have seen a big change in our village. We have 40 toilets in a village of 63 families"

Forests supplement some income and off late cashew trees too are contributing a bit to the families. While the heterogeneity and the poor economic conditions were major hurdles, another major bottleneck was winning the trust of the people. The barrier of doubt was broken after FRIEND organised several discussions. “From doubt to confidence, the journey took time, but we did build up trust. And in doing this our WSHP Net helped us in many ways as is evident in Khandiabandha village. The village is now an example for others,” he informs.

The new mantra

“Our programme covers 20 schools and the children have been the real ambassadors to take the message of sanitation to each household,” says Rout. The strategy was to use children as pressure groups for families to take up toilet construction. It is seen that children are turning out to be very effective agent of change in the village. Many children have adopted innovative strategies to pressurise their parents to build toilets. Building of toilets in schools and teaching sanitation tips have motivated children (See Box: *Child soldier*, p22). In the beginning of the programme, FRIEND had conducted an assessment in the villages and found only four toilets in three villages. “As of June 2008, we have been able to cover about 60 per cent of the families and with a good usage rate as well,” adds Rout.

Child soldier

A child uses peaceful means to win a war against bad sanitation

Bijaya Parida, a class one student in the Khandiabandha Raghunathpur U.P. School in Orissa’s Dhenkanal district, was on the warpath. Inspired and motivated by hygiene programmes in his school, he went on fast demanding his parents must build a toilet at home. He also stopped defecating in open as the practice had been. After two days the parents gave in. “Thanks God he survived the fasting,” recalls her mother, who is now an ASHA worker. “As if it was a godly act and he got some supernatural power to protest,” says Mamata, who initially did not agree to Biju’s demand, only to succumb to the pressure later. “I asked him to wait for few months. But he insisted asking why couldn’t we have a toilet in house as there were already toilets in several houses and in the school,” recalls Mamata.

“FRIEND came to our school and started discussing with the children about their health and hygiene. Then we decided to have toilets in our school and classes were taken to educate the children about hand washing with soap. Biju took it seriously,” says Geetanjali Mishra, Biju’s teacher. He started talking to his parents but they did not listen to him initially. Meanwhile others in the village started building toilets as a result of FRIEND’s initiative. Biju could not wait anymore. He decided to go on a hunger strike and he did not touch any food for two days. His parents gave the excuse of costs not to construct a toilet. Biju’s answer to his parents was convincing: “Why don’t you cut down your expenses on your betel leaf and nuts costs? Mamata is educated hence she took Biju’s demand positively. “She in turn motivated her husband and then became an active campaigner of total sanitation in the village, which later helped her to be an ASHA worker,” informs Ram Narayan Natha, Village Animator working with FRIEND.

In the meanwhile Biju has grown to recognise other issues in sanitation. He is now demanding soap and clean clothes. Recently, when his mother was out in Dhenkanal for a meeting of ASHA workers, he directed his father to wash his clothes so that he could go to school.

The programme covers 20 schools and each student is a potential sanitation campaigner

During 2002-08 drinking water supply coverage has increased from 21 to 85 per cent and sanitation coverage has increased from two to 75 per cent

However, it was not that easy. When FRIEND started implementing the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), looking at the subsidy component people thought that toilets came free and stopped giving monetary contribution. “In the WaterAid supported programme by giving Rs.500 support, we used to generate Rs.3,000 contribution from the people. It took long deliberations and discussion with villagers to convince them the funding mechanism,” says Kaikayee Dehury, Village Animator, working with FRIEND. “The fact that we motivated people and organised them into groups and activated the VWSC have all contributed to this grand success,” she adds.

The local SHG has played a major role for making the toilet campaign a success. The SHG has been successful in disseminating loans for toilets. “A total loan of Rs.66,000 has been distributed,” says Rashmita Prusty, another Village Animator. So the programme has travelled from subsidies-driven to self-funded one through loans and has convinced the people to think about toilets as a necessity. “We want to create an example for others in the district to follow,” says Rout. Rashmita feels that if people start building toilets with loans, in a few years time they won’t even require much external support for such programmes.

Taking stock

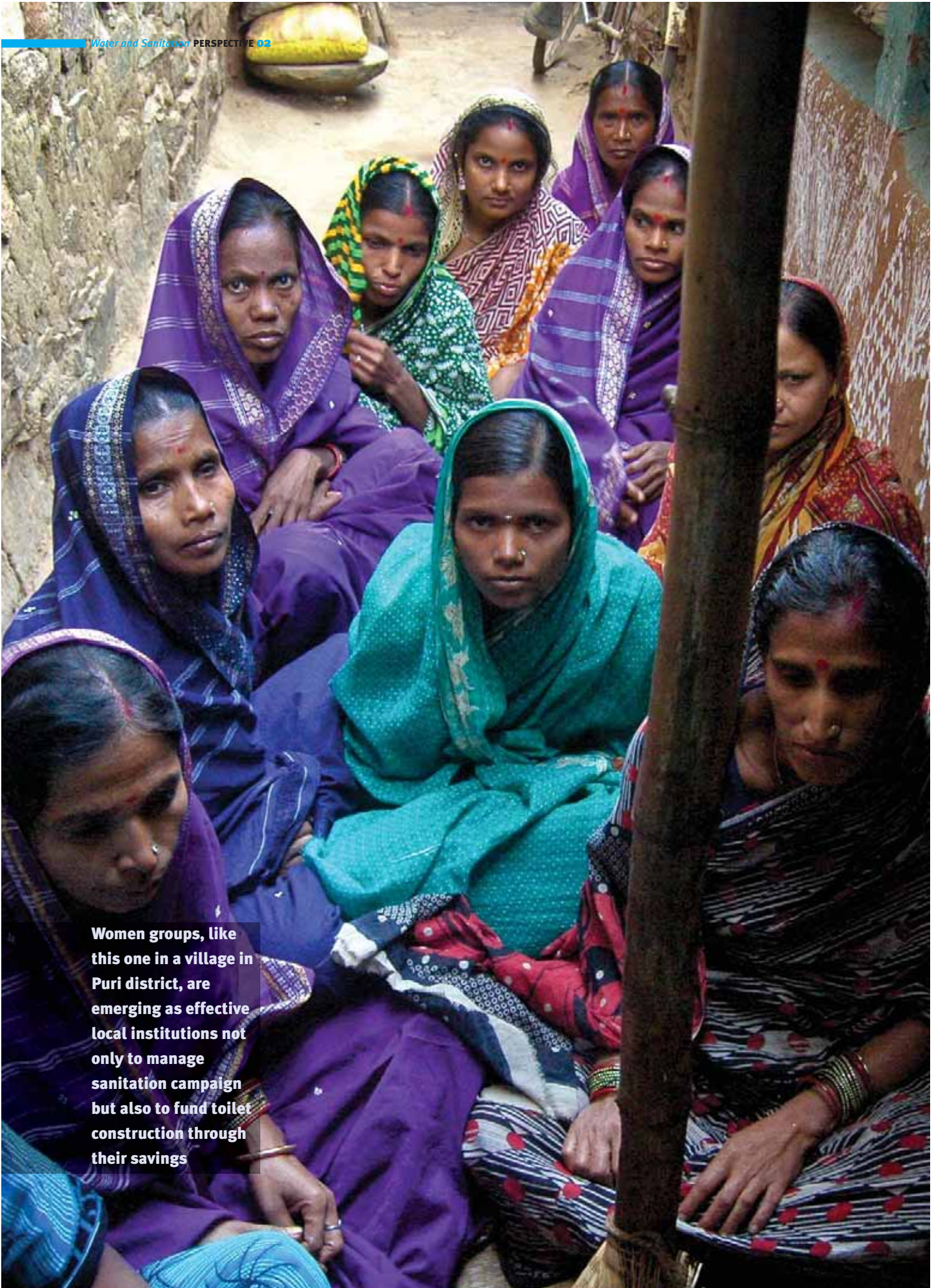
FRIEND works in 10 villages with a population of around 10,730 in Dhenkanal district. These villages are inhabited mostly by Scheduled Tribes like Juanga, Sabara and Khaira (constituting about 40 per cent) and Scheduled Castes (constituting about 30 to 40 per cent).

In 2003, when the programme started, the villages had 64 per cent population below the official poverty line. In 2008 it has come down to 50 per cent. According to FRIEND this is largely due to drinking water and sanitation programme which reduced health related expenses. During 2003-08 drinking water supply coverage has increased from 21 to 85 per cent and sanitation coverage has increased from two to 75 per cent. This impact has also been possible by other interventions aimed at economic empowerment of the people.

Some key achievements:

- Has been able to motivate community to build toilets as a necessity, not as a programme driven activity
- Has been able to motivate children as the sanitation ambassadors to bring in over all change in village
- Has been able to mobilise government resources for the village





Women groups, like this one in a village in Puri district, are emerging as effective local institutions not only to manage sanitation campaign but also to fund toilet construction through their savings



Kanakalata to Kumareswar

“We are a joint family. Even though my husband wanted to have a toilet, convincing other family members was tough”

A village revolving sanitation fund empowers women to take up toilet construction as a social campaign ensuring good household hygiene and economy

Kanakalata Dash of Kumareswar village in Puri district has assumed iconic status. Her house became the first one to have a toilet in the village in 2003 and it was after long persuasion of her family members that she achieved this superlative. She is a champion of total sanitation campaign in the village and FREEDOM has been a constant companion in Kanaklata's journey. “We are a joint family. Even though my husband wanted to have a toilet, convincing other family members was tough,” recalls Kanakalata, who credits her conviction to arrival of FREEDOM in the village. Kanaklata's journey did not stop with a toilet in her own home. She has been actively involved in strengthening Village Water and Sanitation Samitis (VWSS) so that their village never reverts back to the past practice of open defecation. She happily declares that almost all the households in the village now have toilets.

About 26 kilometers from the district headquarters of Puri, Kumareswar houses about 664 people. Out of the 119 households in the village, 76 are below the poverty line. Caste wise the village is dominated by the Other Backward Castes (OBCs) inhabiting 76 households, followed by the Scheduled Castes (28 households). There are 15 General Caste households in the village. FREEDOM has given priority in its helps to build toilets to economically and socially marginalised families (*Box: A first for Orissa, p26*).

“Kumareswar is the number one village in the district as far as toilet coverage is concerned. Thus it always gets the well deserved attention,” informs Raj Kishore Swain, Member Secretary of FREEDOM. Tracing back the events that led to a veritable toilet movement in the village Kanaklata recalls, “The toilet in my house triggered interest in others. But we never had the knowhow to build and manage a toilet. Women in the village took the initiative to achieve both. The anganwadi and NGO workers also helped us in getting toilets built in our houses.”

From one toilet in 2003, all 119 households in the village have toilets now. “When we started, the biggest hurdle was people's distrust,” says Sushama Pradhan, Village Animator (VA) working with FREEDOM. In the first meeting that they organised, people participated with lots of skepticism. Organising people and regular awareness drives paid off. Soon things changed and people got organised into VWSS, Village Disaster Management Committees and Self Help Groups. It also led to behavioural changes.

“Since 1996, despite considerable efforts, I was unable to convince people to wear chappals (footwear),” says Chabirani Dei, an anganwadi worker. Now in addition to wearing chappals, the overall cleanliness of the people has improved. They are trying to adopt healthy and nutritious food habits. This programme has targeted the children too and the school toilet and cleanliness programmes have really been effective. “We motivate children, who in turn motivate their parents and even grandparents,” she explains. According to her, visits to doctors for treatment of diarrhoea and dysentery have declined.

Self-help rule

The village has innovated the financing mechanism for toilets, moving from subsidy driven practice to self-financing options. FREEDOM has created a revolving sanitation fund as support to Self Help Groups (SHGs), which have enabled many to seek loans for building toilets. “Our strategy to convince the women and organise SHGs amongst them has helped

The village is reaping the benefits of going open defecation free: drastic reduction in health related expenditures

us,” says Swain. Kukuma Behera, Secretary of Shakti Committee SHG, says, “We knew our strength as the real drivers of the family. Yet, somehow, we did not realise that toilets were critical. It was only after FREEDOM motivated us to have toilets that we understood its importance for our health and hygiene. So as soon as the SHG was formed and we had access to finance, we gave emphasis to sanitation.” A loan from FREEDOM came handy for some of the members who lacked funds to construct toilets. The Shakti Committee got Rs.2,000 to help its members construct toilets. “We give this as interest free loan of Rs.500 each and the members refund it in 10 equal monthly installments of Rs.50 each,” explains Kukuma. Sixteen women and their families have benefited out of this in the last three years.

“This revolving support is a unique concept and we have tried to rope in the SHGs in utilising this fund properly,” says Swain. The loan is not given in the form of cash but in kind like rings cover for toilet pit and other such material. “In 2003 when we introduced this scheme, no one was interested since they wanted grants. But Kukuma helped here too by taking the first loan. Kukuma took the challenge and availed the first loan,” informs Renu Pradhan, the Village Animator. “I felt the need of a toilet and also the need of showing the way to others. So I took the lead by availing this loan,” says a proud Kukuma who spent an extra Rs.2, 000 in making her toilet.

The benefits are now clearly being felt by the villagers. If Chabirani Dei is to be believed, the villagers’ medical expenditure has reduced drastically. “Fever like dengue, which is increasingly getting common in our area affects us less,” informs the Sarpanch. There are three SHG groups in Kumareswara village alone and its 60 members are active in spreading the message of health, hygiene and sanitation. “It is from these groups that the sanitation message percolated to the others in village and the VWSS was formed,” says Duryodhan Pradhan, Village Animator.

Naturally, recognition poured in. “We got the Agrani Gram Parimal Puraskar of Rs.10,000 and most of the credit goes to the active SHG members,” says the Sarpanch. The VWSS is active and sits every month to devise strategies for keeping the village clean and green always. “We have taken the programme to each family and the children have also proven to be very instrumental in it,” says Swain.

A first for Orissa

An ecosan toilet makes economic sense as well

Benudhara Mahapatra is perhaps the first person to own an ecosan toilet in Orissa. His toilet has become a ‘must visit’ site for many. In Kumareswar village where motivating people for ordinary toilet construction were difficult for FREEDOM, this dalit family took up the challenge. “As a Village Water and Sanitation Committee member, I was one of the first persons to build a toilet. But an ecosan toilet was not an ordinary one. I had to convince my family members for the extra cost and also land,” narrates Benudhara. It was taken as a model and FREEDOM decided that the family who showed interest to contribute first would be given the opportunity. Benudhara feels this toilet will be beneficial in the long run and other people will soon show interest. “In fact we have been receiving requests from others already,” adds a staff of the local NGO. “Even the cost will be reduced in future ecosan toilets,” predicts Benudhara. According to him, “Because this was the first such toilet and the masons had little idea about it, the input cost was a little high. This could be reduced in future toilets.” The toilet was built at a cost of Rs.11, 370 of which WaterAid contributed Rs.2, 300.

Taking stock

FREEDOM's programme is operational in 24 villages under the Jasuapur gram panchayat in Pipili block of Puri district benefitting about 10,200 people from 1,621 families. About 55 per cent of the people belong to the Other Backward Classes. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes comprise 21.3 and 2.35 per cent of the population respectively. According to an analysis by FREEDOM, nearly 78 per cent people are poor.

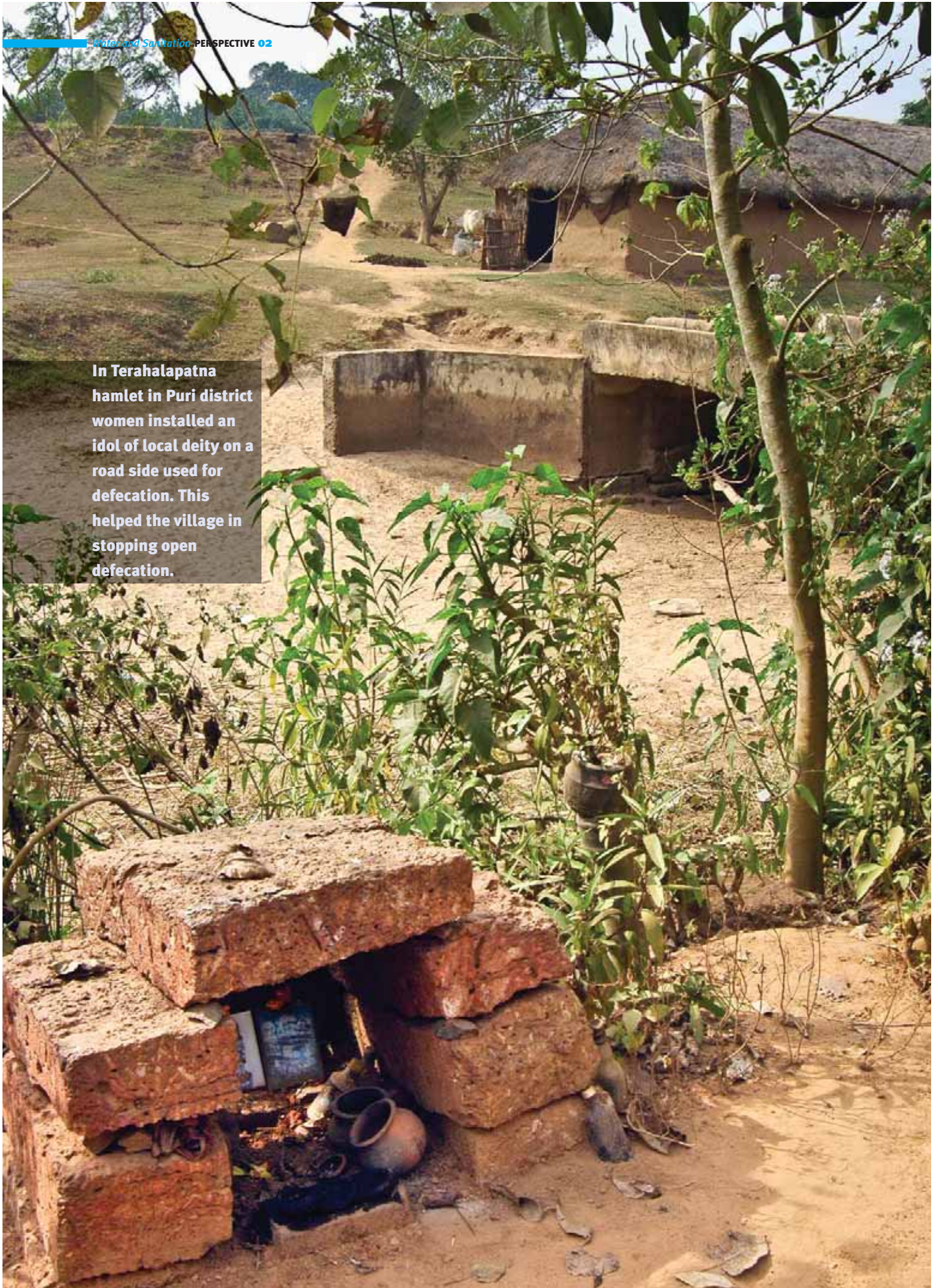
During the programme the village has complete toilet coverage and cases of water related diseases have come down drastically. The village has also the state's first ecosan toilet. It has created 26 new water sources and has repaired 109 handpumps. There are 435 toilets in the village.

Some key achievements:

- Has initiated financing mechanism for building toilets through local institutions
- Has put women as the key catalysts to bring in total sanitation coverage
- Has built in sustainability as the core principle of intervention



In Terahalapatna hamlet in Puri district women installed an idol of local deity on a road side used for defecation. This helped the village in stopping open defecation.





A new dawn

“When our mothers told us to use toilets we didn’t like the idea because we used to go in groups and enjoy ourselves”

An NGO sets up village level adolescent clubs to persuade girls to leave their open defecation habits. In turn these girls become the new messengers of total sanitation

Satyabhama Sahu, a resident of Terahalapatna hamlet in Puri district, has not forgotten the years of desperation she went through after birth of her first kid. She used to leave her son alone at the house for hours to go out for bathing and defecation. “I always risked his life as there was nobody to look after him,” she says. “Pregnancy does create certain discomfort. In that situation going out for defecation and bathing has its own problems,” she says.

However, things had changed when she conceived her second child in 2004. “I have a bath and toilet at home. The village has undergone a sea change in its surrounding,” she says. In 2004 SSUD landed up in the village with the dream of making the village clean and the inhabitants healthy. The village was infamous as the dirtiest village of the locality. Its main road, the canal embankment was the place everyone from the village went for defecation. The canal was the common bathing place. Only one house had a toilet in 2004. “We defecated everywhere,” recalls Bhajamana Majhi, President of the Village Water Sanitation Committee (VWSC). “Women were the worst sufferers of this practice. But everyone accepted it as a way of life: to go defecating outside and bath in the canal,” says Satyabhama.

Terahalapatna is a hamlet of Terahala village having 420 people in 61 houses. The only village road in between two rows of houses was in ruin and a big patch of it was encroached by a family for rearing cows and sheep. The animal wastes were discharged in open often sipping into houses. The village was always in news for diarrhoea and dysentery outbreaks.

The first victory

As a strategy SSUD targeted village women to begin the cleaning up of the village and initiated toilet construction. The plan was to target two public places to begin with – to remove the cow shelter encroaching the road and to make the canal road defecation free. Clearing the cow shelter was of crucial importance to overall village cleanliness. So it became the first target. The women were in a mission mode. And the change dramatically came about when the owner of the cow shelter agreed and shifted his cowherd to a place near the canal. “We asked him to shift the herd to a place near the canal and even helped him to build him a cowshed there,” informs Sulochana Sahu, Secretary of the VWSC. Initially he was hesitant to vacate. But women were on the verge of boycotting his family socially. That forced him to shift. The village road was cleaned. “This may sound trivial to outsiders, but for us it was a powerful and positive development in the village and gave added momentum to our cleanliness drive,” says Bhajamana, an active member of the VWSC.

The women have played an active role in transforming their village into a hygienic one. Each household now has at least one low cost toilet. Earlier only one house had a toilet. “That’s because the house owner is working with the Indian Navy, and has the money as well as awareness”, informs Prados Kumar Pati, President of SSUD.

Women of substance

Encouraged by this success, the women then decided to make the side of the canal side ‘defecation free’. But keeping an eye on the road was not always possible. “We first went

“There were days when we made 20 to 30 rounds of the village to ensure that nobody defecated outside”

to each home and asked people not to defecate on the canal road as that’s the only road and outsiders had a dirty impression about us due to that,” remembers Sulochana. “Men did not listen to us. So we decided to go in groups and clean the road ourselves at least twice every day, particularly at times when people go there for defecation. Even this did not work as people decided to shift their time rather than changing their habit,” she says adding, “Some people would even deliberately come to defecate immediately after we had cleaned the road.”

Finally an unconventional idea played the trick. It was decided to install an idol of god at the main point of defecation near the bathing ghat. This worked like magic – people stopped open defecation. This also encouraged people to go for household toilets. Coupled with simultaneous efforts through village awareness meetings and children education programmes the pressure was maintained and resulted in toilet usage.

Interestingly the next challenge was to convince the adolescent girls of the village to stop open defecation. For many girls open defecation meant a session out for socialising and gossiping with friends. Hence they resisted initial attempts to change their habits. “We then decided to form a Kumari Club (Girls Club) to motivate the girls,” explains Sarat Kumar Dash, Community Organiser with SSUD. This committee was formed in 2004 and provided a platform for local girls to interact as well as take up village issues concerning their interests. Currently Pratima Nayak and Geetanjali Behera are the President and Secretary respectively. “When our mothers told us to use toilets we did not like the idea because we used to go in groups and enjoy ourselves,” confesses Pratima. “As the committee was organised and meetings were conducted, we realised that not only is it healthy to go to toilets, it also saves us from rowdy passers by.”

These girls subsequently became active partners of the programme and invaluable ambassadors in spreading household awareness. “They visited each house informing people about various hygienic practices such as washing hands,” says Jyotirmayee Majhi, a Village Animator with SSUD who has herself undergone a great transformation in her life (see box: *A different call*, p30). “There were days when we made 20 to 30 rounds of the village to ensure that no body defecated outside,” recalls Rashmita Majhi, a member of the committee. Now the visits are minimal as people are gradually shifting from the open defecation habits to toilets. However the vigil is on with the women and VWSC members also chipping in.

A different call

A girl, who resisted stopping open defecation earlier, is leading a consistent campaign to make her village open defecation free

Jyotirmayee Majhi is frank when she narrates her story. “Even when my family constructed a toilet and my mother started using it, I did not like it,” she says. She used to go out to the canal side for defecation with her friends in group. But when she became a member of the Kumari Club, she started realizing the ills of open defecation. “In one meeting me and my friends were fined Rs. 20 for defecating in the open. This really took me by surprise and shocked me,” recalls Jyoti. She was not earning and this was a monthly fine that the Club had imposed on her and her friends. Other women – even her mother – supported this decision. She decided to rethink on defecating in the open. As she started using the toilet she realised that she was no more having the worm infections which was a regular problem when she went out in the open to defecate. Her friends also followed suit. A reformed Jyotirmayee went beyond changing herself. She got involved as a staff of the programme to motivate other girls in her own and nearby villages.

Village women have set up rules to penalize those who defecate in open

With a halt to open defecation and better hygiene in the village, disease outbreaks have almost stopped. “This used to be a diarrhoea-prone village,” informs Bhajamana. “There were years when the entire village fell ill, the most recent being in 2002. An emergency medical camp was organised to address the serious health situation then,” he adds. Things have changed for the better since 2004. “My own family has gained. Our medical cost has come down to almost minimal from Rs 4,000-5,000 annually earlier. Besides cutting on direct medical costs, people have also gained indirect benefits as productivity has increased due to increase in their working days,” says Gobinda Chandra Naik, Secretary of SSUD.

Taking stock

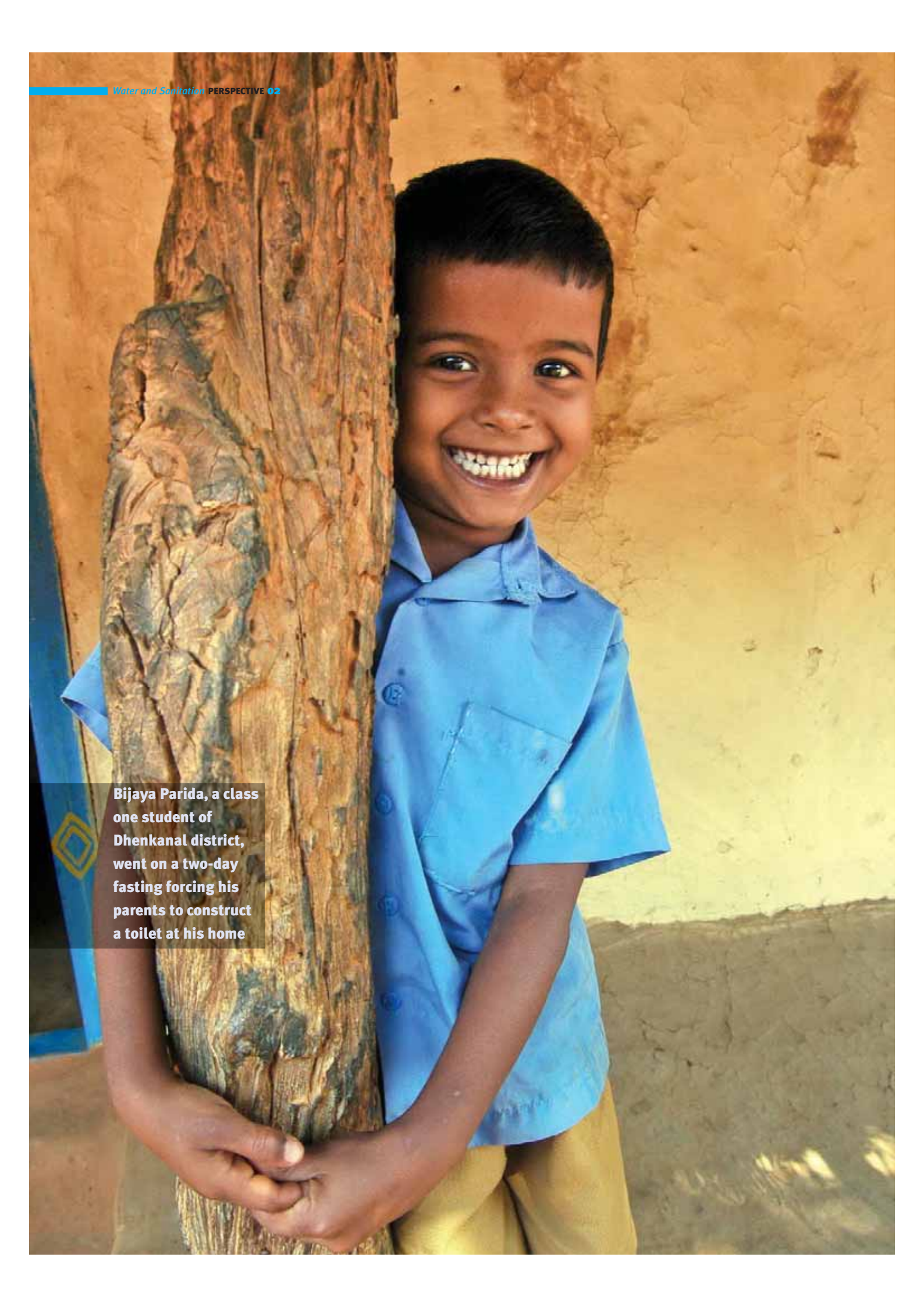
SSUD’s programme is in operation in 20 villages of Nimapada block in Puri district. The programme reaches out to more than 17,000 people, most of them belonging to Other Backward Castes.

During 2004-8, the villages have got more than 500 household latrines. It emerges that most of the villages have above 80 per cent toilet coverage by 2007. The programme has also restored and constructed handpumps and borewells, compost pits, soak pits at community places and school and kitchen gardens. Drinking water drums to store water have been provided as well. Washing platforms have been a hit and have been constructed at community and household levels.

Some key achievements:

- Has motivated village women to take lead. This led to their empowerment
- Innovated in creating public bath and toilets for larger and cost effective sanitation coverage
- Has created village institutions and converged all village development issues into these institutions



A young boy with a bright smile is leaning against a thick, weathered wooden post. He is wearing a light blue short-sleeved button-down shirt and yellow pants. The background is a textured, light-colored wall, possibly made of mud or plaster. The lighting is warm and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

Bijaya Parida, a class one student of Dhenkanal district, went on a two-day fasting forcing his parents to construct a toilet at his home



Net works

Water and sanitation, as experiences of the network show, form the very foundation of overall village development

Community experiences bring home the point loudly – sanitation promotion is not linked to poverty and illiteracy. What makes the difference is the right approach that sees the problem from the local perspective. Poor communities in India's poorest state vouch for this

The experiences of communities under the WSHP Net have some important lessons for making sanitation a reality for thousands of households in the country. The most important import from these experiences is that the community must be made a partner in such programmes from the stage of conceiving to implementation. This ensures two things: the programme becomes relevant to local sensibilities and needs and secondly, with community at the helm of affairs, the initiative becomes sustainable. The much talked about problem of bringing in behavioural change in the community to attain sanitation coverage, as seen in the experiences dealt in this paper, is possible when the community is closely involved and feels a sense of ownership to the initiative. The idea of using women and children to bring in change in hygiene habits in villages is a step towards this.

As these examples point out, only focusing on behavioural changes without highlighting its impacts on daily lives of people would not help in making any sanitation programme successful and sustainable. These villages shatter another myth that resource constraint is often an obstacle for not attaining total sanitation coverage. These villages show that with the right kind of commitment and leadership, the villagers need little external support for building toilets. In fact most of these villages have used local financing mechanisms to build toilets. Interestingly building on the community mobilisation for constructing toilets, many villages have been able to mobilise extra resources from the government for other village development works. At the end, the network had a modest donor funding of Rs. 60 lakh but mobilised Rs. 160 lakh for sanitation from the community and government.

Analysing these experiences, below are few lessons that must be learnt:

- **Poverty is not necessarily a barrier for constructing toilets and adopting sanitation practices:** All this needs is a committed promoter and a sensitive approach. The network has demonstrated that it is indeed possible to reach to the poorest through small organisations like its member NGOs and CBOs, armed with little other than their determination and drive to succeed.
- **The approach is of vital importance:** When a community is approached with locally specific and appropriate models, they are going to be convinced. Each village needs a model for itself to tackle issues peculiar to it and to capitalise the opportunities that are available with the communities and through their institutions. The network approach has succeeded in setting up such small models in diverse areas which could serve as examples for spreading sanitation.
- **Sharing experiences and skills is important:** Working under a network has the advantage of getting access to various experiences and situations. This helps in solving problems in a sensible and quicker way. The network members have effectively complimented and supplemented each other and pooled their diverse capacities to achieve both, the common goals of the network and the local goals of their respective programmes.
- **Children are effective agents in sanitation programmes:** Working with school children

Local institutions must be innovative in approach to incorporate local needs and sensibilities into overall decision making process

has been a good strategy. Their hygiene consciousness has increased tremendously, which then spread to their families. In fact, children and women have been powerful drivers of the programme and the network has been able to recognise, build and strengthen the institutions through women, adolescents and school going children. The other advantage of working with children is that once transformed one need not to convince them again when they grow up.

- ***Institutional innovation specific to local need is vital:*** Empowerment of SHGs, VWSC and schools and Anganwadis to spread their reach beyond management of savings and credits has proved to be extremely useful. In several villages these groups are successful managers of the sanitation programme. Often communities who need support the most are the ones left out due to limitations of government programmes. NGOs also sometimes fail to reach them. Under such conditions CBOs like the SHGs, can fill in the gap. With limited experience and capacity, but with a determination and drive to succeed, these organisations can deliver.
- ***Water and sanitation programmes serve as the foundation for overall growth:*** Water and sanitation programmes, as the experiences documented here show, start the process of overall village and communities development. The network has helped the small NGOs and CBOs to emerge as the platform for other development issues in the villages. The confidence of being in the network has provided the right opportunity for the village level organisations to scale up their activities towards addressing other socio-economic and ecological development issues.





WaterAid is an international charity established in 1981. It recognizes water and sanitation as basic human rights and the foundation for overall development. Presently, WaterAid works in 17 countries across Asia, Africa and the Pacific region.

WaterAid India

WaterAid started working in India in 1986. It works in 10 states – Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Water and Sanitation Perspective series

The *Perspective series* disseminates issues and experiences in India's water and sanitation sector. It is an outcome of WaterAid India's programme and policy works. The series is a platform for our knowledge-based advocacy arising out of our programme and research work.

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