



India WASH Forum

WASH News and Policy Update Bi-monthly e-Newsletter of India WASH Forum Issue # 32 October 2013

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India WASH Forum News

India WASH Forum stands for an independent credible voice in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. WASH News and Policy Update is a bi-monthly e newsletter of the India WASH Forum. It is an open platform for engagement on contemporary issues in WASH sector in India and elsewhere. We are pleased to share the 32nd Issue of our once in two months WASH Policy Newsletter.

WASH Policy Newsletter promoted an independent credible voice in the WASH sector, promoting information and knowledge sharing, research and analysis for advocacy on critical issues. We have been consistently producing these newsletters since 2009.

Our newsletter provides an analytical perspective on contemporary WASH issues. We are conscious of the need to engage with and understand other larger debates in the social and economic development scenario, of which drinking water and sanitation is a part. Hence we include in our news analysis and policy updates, events and developments from other related development fields, besides the WASH sector. We invite readers to share their experiences and reports that can be disseminated from this WASH Policy Newsletter.

In this issue of WASH Policy Newsletter we share the work of Vinod Riana on Right to Education and its relevance to Right to Water. We highlight the contradictions in the recently concluded research results on sanitation and malnutrition correlation and news analysis of honour killings of women in India and its relation to land grab issues within the family. We also bring excerpts from the India Paper on Sanitation presented at SAOSAN Kathmandu, summary of a discussion on Equity and Inclusion in the Right to Water and Sanitation Handbook under preparation by the UN Rapporteur, progress chase matrix of WASH in Schools in Asia, and an article on easy to make at home sanitary cloth pads developed at Auroville.

Cloth based pads and not commercial disposable sanitary napkins – Eco Femme. Auroville has developed re usable sanitary pads as a viable environmentally safe option for menstrual hygiene.

“What have been your biggest challenges in this field?”



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Time! There is always so much to do, not enough money to pay professionals, so we end up doing it all, often under time pressure and probably not as well as professionals could manage it. We have worked with professionals and that was also not always easy— we sometimes felt misguided as they did not really understand the ground realities of our work. We also get flooded with advice –so many people want to help us, and yet it is sometimes difficult to make sense of what is the right focus for us.

In general, the whole subject of menstrual hygiene has big players – multinationals that promote a particular message of convenience over the message of what is inside the products and their environmental impact. It sometimes feels like a David and Goliath story.

We are small compared to the multinationals and don't have the capital to play the field on that level."

The issue of cruel honor killing of women has rocked India in the recent decade. Are these honor killings purely arising out of a sense of social disharmony and dishonor of the family? Is there some economic linkage that is clouded in the veil of honor? We bring three articles from the Jivika Livelihoods listserve, on the issue of women's claim on land in north India and the possible link of this issue with rising murder and social boycott of women by khap panchayats and by the families of women who demand their rights.

The so called honor killings show how age old and dead customs are being revived to serve the current interests of land grab, how gender violence is rooted in a given economic context and is reinventing itself in newer forms in India as we go ahead with unbridled commercialization and reduce all relations to economic relations.

Honoring Vinod Raina. Educationist and champion of the Right to Education Act, Vinod Raina, who passed away recently, engaged tirelessly with the state even as he worked at the grass-roots level to take education to the most marginalised. While doing this, he helped to evolve child-friendly and activity-based methods of teaching science and set up the Eklavya Foundation to implement

the innovations, field-tested at the micro level, on a larger scale.

Vinod made an excellent presentation in a Right to Water and Sanitation Meet in Delhi in 2009. He shared the experience of the then recently secured Right to Education. In this newsletter we share excerpts of his presentation and guidance on right to water and sanitation (the full presentation and discussion is available in the Workshop Report).

"Whether to secure a separate legal framework for the right to education – whether it was valuable to keep a holistic Right to Life, or to fragment and "departmentalise" it by getting a separate right to education. The decision to go ahead with the campaign for a separate right to education was based on the observation that the right to life itself is not taken very seriously by the state. The issue of whether to keep the right to life holistic is more true for water, as the right to life gives citizens the right to water. It would be interesting to consider what would be the outcome of a public interest litigation (PIL) on whether the right to life includes the right to water. He noted that the state had responded to the Unnikrishnan judgment by saying that it would make a law for the purpose – provide education to children between the ages of six and 14 "in such manner as the state, by law, may determine." There were two negative consequences of this action by the state. First, whereas the Supreme Court judgment enjoined the provision of education below the age of 14, the state's pronouncement "knocked out" the early childhood education component, education for children up to six years of age. Second, by saying that it would make the law, it set aside the judgment, or, effectively, kept Article 21 in abeyance with respect to the right to education from 1993 till 2002 when the 86th Constitutional Amendment was passed. It was important therefore to be alert to such strategies of the state, which may reduce or delay entitlements given by the court."

"Sri Vijay Mittal of the Department of Drinking Water Supply wondered whether the movement in favour of a rights-based approach was giving the



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central government more powers, as against the effort to decentralise. By seeking more justiciable rights, citizens were burdening the government with more rights and responsibilities.

Dr. Raina opined that this was becoming necessary because of the increased role of the market. The community was not able to take the onslaught, and the State was being called upon to play a role in balancing the community and the market. The call for greater State responsibility was not in terms of giving away customary rights to the government, but ensuring that these were safeguarded. There had been instances in which communities had become complicit with the market (as had happened in the water sector in Bolivia) but then, had not been able to cope.”

The SACOSAN India Paper 2013 describes the recent Sanitation Initiatives by Govt of India;

- The Government of India has under the NBA has itself a target to achieve universal sanitation coverage by 2022. As per 12th Five Year plan objective, 50 % of Gram Panchayats (GPs) are to attain Nirmal Gram status by 2017.
- For urban areas, a new programme called the **Total Urban Sanitation Programme (TUSP)** is envisaged as a Centrally Sponsored State Sector programme to remedy the sanitation situation, covering all cities/towns/urban areas including house service connections, collection, conveyance and treatment systems involving both on-site and off-site sanitation systems. The TUSP will be integrated with the provisions of the NUSP for 100% sewage sanitation in cities along with open defecation free status.

World Bank in its 2005 Report on Malnutrition in India, identifies the problem as – “child malnutrition is mostly the result of high levels of **exposure to infection and inappropriate infant and young child feeding and caring practices, and has its origins almost entirely during the first two to three years of life.**” There is no mention of sanitation as a significant factor causing malnutrition.

Recent Sanitation and Health Research by Dean Spears(2012) has found that the height of Indian children

correlates with their and their neighbours’ access to toilets, and that open defecation (OD) accounts for much of the excess stunting in India. Considering that 53% of India’s population defecates in the open in consequence, children are widely exposed to faecally-transmitted infections (FTIs). Does this explain the high stunting rates of 48% children in India?

Another similar study by SHARE research consortium shows a different result. Meta-analysis including 4,627 children identified no evidence of an effect of WASH interventions on weight-for-age. Meta-analysis including 4,622 children identified no evidence of an effect of WASH interventions on weight-for-height. Meta-analysis including 4,627 children identified a borderline statistically significant effect of WASH interventions on height-for-age. These findings were supported by individual participant data analysis including information on 5,375 to 5,386 children from five cluster-randomised controlled trials. None of the studies reported differential impacts relevant to equity issues such as gender, socioeconomic status and religion. The available **evidence is suggestive of a small benefit of WASH interventions (specifically solar disinfection of water, provision of soap, and improvement of water quality)** on length growth in children under five years of age.

The World Bank Report shows a good disaggregated picture of malnutrition in India to strengthen its focus on controlling infection due to inappropriate child feeding and caring practices.

The World Bank Report shows a good disaggregated picture of malnutrition in India to strengthen its focus on controlling infection due to inappropriate child feeding and caring practices. Disaggregation of underweight statistics by socioeconomic and demographic characteristics reveals which groups are most at risk of malnutrition. Most growth retardation occurs by the age of two, and is largely irreversible. Underweight prevalence is higher in rural areas (50 percent) than in urban areas (38 percent); higher among girls (48.9 percent) than among boys (45.5 percent); higher among scheduled castes (53.2 percent) and scheduled tribes (56.2 percent) than among other castes (44.1 percent); and, although underweight is pervasive throughout the wealth distribution, the prevalence of underweight reaches as high as 60 percent in the lowest wealth quintile. Moreover, during the 1990s,



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urban-rural, inter-caste, male-female and inter-quintile inequalities in nutritional status widened.

There is also large inter-state variation in the patterns and trends in underweight. In six states, at least one in two children are underweight, namely Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. The four latter states account for more than 43 percent of all underweight children in India. Moreover, the prevalence in underweight is falling more slowly in the high prevalence states.”

The World Bank Study concludes that – **“While open defecation is widespread in many states of India, undernutrition is concentrated in a relatively small number of districts and villages with a mere 10 percent of villages and districts accounting for 27-28% of all underweight children, and a quarter of districts and villages accounting for more than half of all underweight children.”**

SACOSAN V Kathmandu: India Country Paper Excerpts

The Government of India has under the NBA has itself a target to achieve universal sanitation coverage by 2022. As per 12th Five Year plan objective, 50 % of Gram Panchayats (GPs) are to attain Nirmal Gram status by 2017. The total fund allocated for rural sanitation during 2012-2017 (12th plan period) is Rs. 37,159 crores (around 6.19 billion USD). The following strategies have been adopted to achieve the aforesaid goals:

- Phased approach: In order to focus more centrally on sustainability of outcomes, a phased approach will be adopted where more and more *Nirmal* GPs shall progressively lead to achievement of *Nirmal* blocks, *Nirmal* districts and eventually, to *Nirmal* States.
- Priority for NGP: The pattern of fund release will enable flexibility to the districts to prioritize funding to GPs identified for achievement of *Nirmal* Grams. Thus *Nirmal* Grams with full access and usage of toilets, water availability and systems of waste disposal and drainage shall be the outcome of NBA.
- Convergence with water supply: Facilitate convergence between drinking water and

sanitation projects. The NBA shall give priority to coverage of areas with functional piped water supply systems (PWSS), followed by areas with ongoing PWSS that are nearest to completion. Similarly new PWSS will be taken up in GPs of districts where IHHL coverage has reached higher milestones of coverage in a descending order. In all such new and ongoing PWSS, NBA shall be implemented simultaneously with the planning and execution of PWSS (to ensure that behavioural change for usage of toilets is generated). PWSS shall be planned and executed to saturate entire habitations, so that health and other impacts of safe water and sanitation are clearly discernible.

- Convergence for Schools and Institutional sanitation: Running water availability shall be ensured in all Government school toilets, *Anganwadi* toilets and Community Sanitary Complexes under NRDWP. Child-friendly toilets will be developed in *anganwadi* and schools, along with capacity building of school teachers, ASHA and *anganwadi* workers and ANMs among others on hygiene and sanitation. Sanitation will be made a part of the school curriculum so that safe sanitation practices are ingrained in the minds of children who would be the torch bearers of sanitation in their households and the community.
- Increasing Incentives through Convergence: Encouraging convergence with other rural development programmes like MGNREGA, the government plans to increase increased inflow of funds and incentives for construction of toilets.
- Enhancing Capacity building budgets: Apart from 2% of the district project outlay being earmarked for capacity building in each district, a massive training campaign will be launched in convergence with the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). This will focus on skills such as masonry work, brickmaking, toilet pan making and plumbing. *Nirmiti Kendras* will be set up to develop and manufacture cost-effective construction materials. Existing PCs and RSMs shall be revitalised and entrusted to appropriate SHGs.



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For urban areas, a new programme called the **Total Urban Sanitation Programme (TUSP)** is envisaged as a Centrally Sponsored State Sector programme to remedy the sanitation situation, covering all cities/towns/urban areas including house service connections, collection, conveyance and treatment systems involving both on-site and off-site sanitation systems. The TUSP will be integrated with the provisions of the NUSP for 100% sewage sanitation in cities along with open defecation free status.

The following components and activities are envisaged under the TUSP:

- Providing all urban households with sanitary individual and community toilets.
- Converting insanitary household toilets to sanitary toilets to prevent manual scavenging.
- Providing sewage collection, conveyance and appropriate treatment systems consisting of off-site and on-site systems at the individual /community / town levels as appropriate.
- Promoting proper functioning of network based sewerage systems and ensuring connections of households to them wherever possible.
- Promoting access to households with safe sanitation facilities, community planned and managed toilets (for groups of households who have constraints of space, tenure and economic constraints) for achieving open defecation free cities. Creating facilities for septage management and safe processing and disposal of sludge generated from sewage treatment plants (STPs).
- Promoting recycle and reuse of treated waste water for non-potable applications wherever possible and recycle and reuse of sludge.
- Eliminating manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks by adopting mechanical cleaning methods, to facilitate the eradication of manual scavenging.
- Providing public toilets to satisfy sanitation requirements of floating populations in cities.

India's Undernourished Children: A Call for Reform and Action, World Bank, 2005

Excerpts

Undernutrition, both protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, directly affects many aspects of children's development. In particular, it retards their physical and cognitive growth and increases susceptibility to infection and disease, further increasing the probability of being malnourished. As a result, malnutrition has been estimated to be associated with about half of all child deaths and more than half of child deaths from major diseases, such as malaria (57 percent), diarrhea (61 percent) and pneumonia (52 percent), as well as 45 percent of deaths from measles (45 percent). In India, child malnutrition is responsible for 22 percent of the country's burden of disease.

Undernutrition also affects cognitive and motor development and undermines educational attainment; and, ultimately impacts on productivity at work and at home, with adverse implications for income and economic growth. Micronutrient deficiencies alone may cost India US\$2.5 billion annually.

The prevalence of underweight among children in India is amongst the highest in the world, and nearly double that of Sub-Saharan Africa. Most growth retardation occurs by the age of two, in part because around 30 percent of Indian children are born with low birth weight, and is largely irreversible. In 1998/99, 47 percent of children under three were underweight or severely underweight, and a further 26 percent were mildly underweight such that, in total, underweight afflicted almost three-quarters of Indian children. Levels of malnutrition have declined modestly, with the prevalence of underweight among children under three falling by 11 percent between 1992/93 and 1998/99. However, this lags far behind that achieved by countries with similar economic growth rates.

Disaggregation of underweight statistics by socioeconomic and demographic characteristics reveals which groups are most at risk of malnutrition. Underweight prevalence is higher in rural areas (50 percent) than in urban areas (38 percent); higher among girls (48.9 percent) than among boys (45.5 percent); higher among scheduled castes (53.2 percent) and scheduled tribes (56.2 percent) than among other castes (44.1 percent); and, although underweight is



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pervasive throughout the wealth distribution, the prevalence of underweight reaches as high as 60 percent in the lowest wealth quintile.

Moreover, during the 1990s, urban-rural, inter-caste, male-female and inter-quintile inequalities in nutritional status widened. There is also large inter-state variation in the patterns and trends in underweight. In six states, at least one in two children are underweight, namely Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. The four latter states account for more than 43 percent of all underweight children in India. Moreover, the prevalence in underweight is falling more slowly in the high prevalence states. Finally, the demographic and socioeconomic patterns at the state level do not necessarily mirror those at the national level (e.g. in some states, inequalities in underweight are narrowing and not widening, and in some states boys are more likely to be underweight than girls) and nutrition policy should take cognizance of these variations.

Undernutrition is concentrated in a relatively small number of districts and villages with a mere 10 percent of villages and districts accounting for 27-28 percent of all underweight children, and a quarter of districts and villages accounting for more than half of all underweight children, suggesting that future efforts to combat malnutrition could be targeted to a relatively small number of districts/villages.

Micronutrient deficiencies are also widespread in India. More than 75 percent of preschool children suffer from iron deficiency anemia (IDA) and 57 percent of preschool children have sub-clinical Vitamin A deficiency (VAD). Iodine deficiency is endemic in 85 percent of districts. Progress in reducing the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies in India has been slow - IDA has not declined much, in part due to the high prevalence of hookworm, and reductions in subclinical VAD slowed in the second half of the 1990s, despite earlier gains. As with underweight, the prevalence of different micronutrient deficiencies varies widely across states.

Economic growth alone is unlikely to be sufficient to lower the prevalence of malnutrition substantially – certainly not sufficiently to meet the nutrition MDG of halving the prevalence of underweight children between 1990 and 2015. It is only with a rapid scaling-up of health, nutrition, education and infrastructure interventions that this MDG

can be met. Additional and more effective investments are especially needed in the poorest states.

The nutritional value of toilets: How much international variation in child height can sanitation explain? Dean Spears, 2012

<http://riceinstitute.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/07/Spears-height-and-sanitation-6-2013.pdf>

According to joint UNICEF and WHO (2012) estimates for 2010, 15 percent of people in the world, and 19 percent of people in developing countries, defecate in the open without using any toilet or latrine. The primary contribution of this paper is to document that much of the variation in child height among developing countries can be explained by differences in the prevalence of open defecation. I find quantitatively similar effects of sanitation on child height that are estimated from international heterogeneity across countries; that are identified from changes over time within Indian districts; and that are associated with differences among Indian and African rural localities.

This paper makes several contributions to the literature. First, to my knowledge, it offers the first documentation of a quantitatively important cross-country gradient between sanitation and child human capital. Although the association between income and health has been widely studied within and across developing countries (e.g. Pritchett and Summers, 1996), the importance of sanitation has received much less attention from economists. Moreover, I show that sanitation predicts child height even conditional on income and other dimensions of heterogeneous economic development or infrastructure. Controlling for GDP, the difference between Nigeria's 26 percent open defecation rate and India's 55 percent is associated with an increase in child height approximately equivalent to the effect of quadrupling GDP per capita.

Second, this paper contributes to a resolution of the puzzle of the "Asian enigma" of Indian stunting, which has received much recent discussion in the economics literature. Differences in open defecation are sufficient to statistically explain much or all of the difference in average height between Indian and African children. Third, the paper documents an interaction between sanitation and population density, consistent with a mechanism in which open defecation harms human capital through exposure to



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environmental germs. The number of people defecating in the open per square kilometer linearly explains 65 percent of international variation in child height.

The effect of interventions to improve water quality and supply, provide sanitation and promote handwashing with soap on physical growth in children

<http://summaries.cochrane.org/CD009382/the-effect-of-interventions-to-improve-water-quality-and-supply-provide-sanitation-and-promote-handwashing-with-soap-on-physical-growth-in-children>

Background:

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions are frequently implemented to reduce infectious diseases, and may be linked to improved nutrition outcomes in children.

Objectives:

To evaluate the effect of interventions to improve water quality and supply (adequate quantity to maintain hygiene practices), provide adequate sanitation and promote handwashing with soap, on the nutritional status of children under the age of 18 years and to identify current [research](#) gaps.

Search strategy: We searched 10 English-language (including [MEDLINE](#) and CENTRAL) and three Chinese-language databases for published studies in June 2012. We searched [grey literature](#) databases, conference proceedings and websites, reviewed reference lists and contacted experts and authors.

Selection criteria:

Randomised (including cluster-randomised), quasi-randomised and non-randomised controlled trials, controlled [cohort](#) or cross-sectional studies and historically controlled studies, comparing WASH interventions among children aged under 18 years.

Data collection and analysis: Two [review](#) authors independently sought and extracted [data](#) on childhood anthropometry, biochemical measures of micronutrient status, and adherence, attrition and costs either from published reports or through contact with [study](#)

investigators. We calculated [mean difference](#) ([MD](#)) with 95% [confidence intervals](#) ([CI](#)). We conducted [study](#)-level and individual-level meta-analyses to estimate pooled measures of effect for randomised controlled trials only.

Main results:

Fourteen studies (five cluster-randomised controlled trials and nine non-randomised studies with comparison groups) from 10 low- and middle-income countries including 22,241 children at baseline and nutrition [outcome data](#) for 9,469 children provided relevant information. Study duration ranged from 6 to 60 months and all studies included children under five years of age at the time of the [intervention](#). Studies included WASH interventions either singly or in combination. Measures of child anthropometry were collected in all 14 studies, and nine studies reported at least one of the following anthropometric indices: weight-for-height, weight-for-age or height-for-age. None of the included studies were of high methodological quality as none of the studies masked the nature of the [intervention](#) from participants.

Weight-for-age, weight-for-height and height-for-age z-scores were available for five cluster-randomised controlled trials with a duration of between 9 and 12 months. Meta-[analysis](#) including 4,627 children identified no evidence of an effect of WASH interventions on weight-for-age z-score ([MD](#) 0.05; 95% [CI](#) -0.01 to 0.12). Meta-[analysis](#) including 4,622 children identified no evidence of an effect of WASH interventions on weight-for-height z-score ([MD](#) 0.02; 95% [CI](#) -0.07 to 0.11). Meta-[analysis](#) including 4,627 children identified a borderline [statistically significant](#) effect of WASH interventions on height-for-age z-score ([MD](#) 0.08; 95% [CI](#) 0.00 to 0.16). These findings were supported by individual participant [data analysis](#) including information on 5,375 to 5,386 children from five cluster-randomised controlled trials.

No [study](#) reported adverse events. Adherence to [study](#) interventions was reported in only two studies (both cluster-randomised controlled trials) and ranged from low (< 35%) to high (> 90%). Study attrition was reported in seven studies and ranged from 4% to 16.5%. Intervention cost was reported in one [study](#) in which the total cost of the WASH interventions was USD 15/inhabitant. None of the studies reported differential impacts relevant to equity issues such as gender, socioeconomic status and religion.



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Authors' conclusions:

The available evidence from [meta-analysis](#) of [data](#) from cluster-randomised controlled trials with an [intervention](#) period of 9-12 months is suggestive of a small benefit of WASH interventions (specifically solar disinfection of water, provision of soap, and improvement of water quality) on length growth in children under five years of age. The duration of the [intervention](#) studies was relatively short and none of the included studies is of high methodological quality. Very few studies provided information on [intervention](#) adherence, attrition and costs. There are several ongoing trials in low-income country settings that may provide robust evidence to inform these findings.

Dangour AD, Watson L, Cumming O, Boisson S, Che Y, Velleman Y, Cavill S, Allen E, Uauy R. Interventions to improve water quality and supply, sanitation and hygiene practices, and their effects on the nutritional status of children. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2013, Issue 8. Art. No.: CD009382. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD009382.pub2

Right to Water and Sanitation Handbook Discussion: Equity and Inclusion

The UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque is writing a Handbook to provide practical guidance on how to realise the rights to water and sanitation. Since her appointment in September 2008 she has been working to clarify what the realization of the rights entails, and how States and other stakeholders can implement the most significant aspect of the rights. The mandate she was entrusted with by the United Nations has given her the opportunity to engage with countless State actors, service providers, regulators, NGOs, civil society organisations and, at last but not least people have given her the background knowledge and the necessary authority to develop pragmatic guidance, finding solutions to the challenges and key issues of realizing the rights to water and sanitation.

The Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) is hosting a three-week e-discussion from **28th October to 15th November 2013** to discuss specific aspects of realising the human rights to water and sanitation as discussed in

the Handbook. This will enable RWSN members and other rural water supply stakeholders to share their experiences and challenges with respect to realizing the obligations, responsibilities and commitments defined by the rights to water and sanitation.

The e-discussion asks 'what are the roles and responsibilities of the various actors in realizing the rights to water and sanitation' and will enable participants to reflect on discussions to-date, share experiences and thoughts on the commitments demanded by the rights from the perspective of Governments and NGOs. This is an opportunity to propose what needs to be done by themselves and others to ensure universal access to sustainable water and sanitation services, and to close the current gap in access between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'.

The e-discussion will focus on three areas – non-discrimination – how stakeholders can ensure inclusion of disadvantaged individuals and groups; sustainability – how stakeholders engage for long-term and affordable access to services; and the specific roles and responsibilities that the discussants have to realise the rights to water and sanitation.

Summary of Discussion on Equity and Inclusion

Please note: This is a short summary of the discussion on discrimination in week one. A broader summary will also be available of each of the contributions for those interested in understanding the more detailed discussions.

The discussion on equality and non-discrimination in week one was extremely rich in debate and experience. 25 contributors posted 36 responses to the questions posed, opening a discussion that went beyond the specific questions, to consider more broadly social transformation and the challenge to existing power structures.

Clearly ensuring access for disadvantaged, marginalized or vulnerable individuals and groups has been a central concern for all the contributors, and there were well thought-out responses as to who is excluded. Mohammed Al-Afgani and Archana Patkar both offered analysis of different types of exclusion, whether situational or context-specific, e.g. people living in geographical regions that are hard to reach, or that are not considered in programming, such as informal settlements, and those who are



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discriminated against because of who they are – e.g. women, children, people from specific social or religious groups, or persons living with disabilities. Further, Mohammed Al-Afgani also commented that we should consider equality in access to water and sanitation as well as equality in access to decision-making processes, which can be the root of discrimination. The contributors largely concurred with this analysis, naming pastoralists, refugees, people living in dry regions, those living in urban slums in the first category, and many mentioning women and girls, persons living with illnesses such as HIV / AIDS, or elderly people.

Jane Wilbur of WaterAid pointed out that discrimination is also often layered with power inequalities existing vertically and horizontally – women, for example, of an otherwise mainstream group may not have access to services. It is therefore necessary to look more closely at the situation at hand to understand barriers and how to overcome them. Depinder Kapur of the India WASH Forum built on this to comment that inequality and exclusion are never static and manifest themselves in different ways according to the context.

Mr. Omar Nunez working for AHJASA in Honduras pointed out that the question should rather be how those who are discriminated against can engage in the discussions, to identify their own problems, and propose solutions. Government agencies and NGOs lack the necessary knowledge to be effective in identifying and addressing discrimination.

Finally on question one, it was pointed out that 'access' alone is insufficient as a measure, and considerations such as quality, affordability and acceptability also need to be taken into account.

In answering the second question on how different actors identify discrimination, Harmhel dalla Torre of Cuculmeca, Nicaragua pointed out that local government generally does not have information on exclusion. Others also picked up on the lack of adequate statistical data on exclusion, but carry out their own research through talking to a range of different actors to identify and then verify exclusion. Archana Patkar explained that it is necessary always to answer the question 'who is left out and why' – and that there will be exclusion in all circumstances. In many cases, those who are excluded will be invisible – either to planners because the habitations don't exist on a map, or to the wider community – as those mentioned in

an example from Pamela White of the Finnish Consulting Group where menstruating women are not allowed to use the toilet. This information is obviously not picked up in data on household access to sanitation.

The third question – what have you done to ensure that those who are likely to be disadvantaged are included – provoked a more intense debate. In essence, it was agreed by most that reaching the most disadvantaged, whether disadvantaged for geographical reasons, or for social /economic reasons, generally requires social transformation, which goes beyond water and sanitation service provision to a more fundamental change in attitudes and practices.

Many contributors, including Concepcion Mendoza of Nicaragua and Adane Bekele of Afghanistan, emphasized the need to work together with government actors to sensitise and inform of the specific problems of delivering services to disadvantaged individuals and groups, and build the capacity of local government and other actors to address these issues effectively.

Marta Litwinczik of the Ministry for Cities in Brazil explained the role of the programme 'Brazil without Poverty', which focuses on improving a family's income, people's access to public services and providing them with work. A single database tracks and monitors the conditions/progress of the families. Federal investments are directed to the poorest and most water scarce regions. One of the major challenges is sensitisation to the needs and rights of disadvantaged individuals and groups.

Ned Breslin of Water for People introduced their programme, 'Everyone Forever'. The simple aim of this approach is for the mayor of a municipality to commit to ensuring universal access to water and sanitation services – and asking the mayor then to identify the individual within the community that could represent the 'everyone' – the person that is most disadvantaged, or who is least likely to have the resources to gain access to service provision. When this person has access, the project can be seen to be successful. Ned stressed the simplicity of this approach, using universality as a proxy for inclusion. Other contributors were uncomfortable with this approach, arguing that 'universality' can hide inequalities. Julie Gwiszcz of the US argued that the best social movements also recognize exclusion within their broader aims for social change, and proactively work with the most



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excluded individuals and groups to develop solutions that benefit the excluded as well as the mainstream.

Depinder Kapur also noted that often the 'disadvantaged' are almost a majority of the population, as in many cities in South Asia, including those where Perween Rahman worked through the Orangi Pilot Project, and those working in Delhi with the Jagori project. Sometimes it is necessary to address the broader social injustices before focusing on the more localized. Again, this may be context-specific.

More than one contributor stressed the opportunities in using access to water and sanitation for broader social change – in bringing groups, individuals and entire settlements, whether refugee camps or slums into the mainstream, to ensure access to water and sanitation services as well as other services, such as health and education.

This discussion also touched on how to scale up the extremely detailed and focused work of empowering individuals to speak up and have their voices heard to a regional or national level. Pamela White of Finnish Consultancy Group explained their work with local government on planning and coordination, and on capacity building and awareness-raising, and this is allowing them to work on a larger scale to address specific discriminatory practices prevalent in Nepal.

Other discussions included the purpose of the Handbook, and what the Handbook should aim to achieve. Depinder Kapur was concerned that the Handbook goes beyond case studies to address broader issues, including taking a more political stance to support social change.

Vinod Raina: Excerpts from his presentation in Right to Water and Sanitation Meet 2009

Expressing admiration that Mr. Shantanu Consul, Secretary, Government of India, had chosen to be present at this preliminary meeting to decide on the feasibility of the right to water and sanitation as a constitutionally enforceable right, Dr. Vinod Raina said it was very heartening, and very much in contrast to the response of government officials during the campaign on the right to education.

In seeking to secure a right, the effort was to establish state obligation and state responsibility; to move away from the welfare mode, on which most state schemes designed, to the entitlement mode. The first issue was whether to secure a separate legal framework for the right. According to Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy, all children below the age of 14 were to be provided with free and compulsory education within ten years from the commencement of the Constitution. (This was the only Directive Principle in the Constitution to specify a time frame). However, after 62 years, half the children in India, or about 10 crore children, were still to complete eight years of schooling. Had it not been for the judgement of the Supreme Court in 1993 in the case of Unnikrishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh that taking Article 21 and Directive Principle 45 together, the right to education exists, and the state can claim resource constraints for not implementing this Directive Principle only for children above the age of 14, the state would still not have been nudged into action.

The question then was whether to secure a separate legal framework for the right to education – whether it was valuable to keep a holistic Right to Life, or to fragment and “departmentalise” it by getting a separate right to education. The decision to go ahead with the campaign for a separate right to education was based on the observation that the right to life itself is not taken very seriously by the state. The issue of whether to keep the right to life holistic is more true for water, as the right to life gives citizens the right to water. It would be interesting to consider what would be the outcome of a public interest litigation (PIL) on whether the right to life includes the right to water. He noted that the state had responded to the Unnikrishnan judgement by saying that it would make a law for the purpose – provide education to children between the ages of six and 14 “in such manner as the state, by law, may determine.” There were two negative consequences of this action by the state. First, whereas the Supreme Court judgment enjoined the provision of education below the age of 14, the state's pronouncement “knocked out”

the early childhood education component, education for children up to six years of age. Second, by saying that it would make the law, it set aside the judgment, or, effectively, kept Article 21 in abeyance with respect to the right to education from 1993 till 2002 when the 86th Constitutional Amendment was passed. It was important



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therefore to be alert to such strategies of the state, which may reduce or delay entitlements given by the court.

Challenges Ahead Assigning responsibility

The need for and success in achieving universal literacy through “free and compulsory” education has been established and recognised all over the world, said Dr Raina, predicting that a critical aspect in the fight towards the right to education – negotiations between the triad of the state, the market and the community – would prove an even greater challenge in the battle to secure the right to water and sanitation. He referred to countries where the state had not been instrumental in providing universal free education (unlike Britain, which had done so in 1870, inspiring many nations to follow suit), noting that in such cases it was imperative but difficult to ensure that each member of the triad took up their share of the responsibility.

Enforcing the Act

The next critical challenge, he noted, drawing from his experience with the Right to Education Bill was enforcement. Initially, the state in the first draft Bill had interpreted “compulsory” as applicable to parents, he said. Parents were thus responsible for ensuring their wards attended at school, or were liable for punishment. However, campaigners pointed out that bringing in this provision might well imply a punishment for poverty in a country where the vast majority of the parents were uneducated and poor; more parents would end up in jail than children in schools.

These advocates were effectively able to shift the traditional parental obligation to the state, and the Act today states holds the State responsible, if a child between the ages of six and 14 is not in school.

Application: Who should provide the services required?

He then tackled a third tricky aspect: should the State or private parties provide services associated with realizing the right? And how should the community be involved? The first confrontation with regard to the Right to Education, was whether service provision would be through the state apparatus, with the perception that this would be cumbersome, bureaucratic and outdated; or

whether service provision should be promoted through private parties, with the perception that these were “more efficient”, with the state providing vouchers (which could be encashed by parents as fees if the parents chose private schools instead of government schools). While the 11th Plan was in favour of a voucher system, the campaign held firmly to the concept of a “common neighbourhood school”, i.e., children should have the right to attend any school within one to three kilometers of their homes, and education must be free. This would imply that there could be no fee-charging schools till the eighth standard, which would be an important political issue with an inevitable confrontation with the market. Another challenge was that the Right to Education Bill should only cover government schools, that the private schools had no obligation at all. What was ultimately negotiated was that private schools could not charge capitation fees in any form, could not undertake screening through interviews of parents, and had to provide free education to 25 per cent of the children from the neighbourhood coming from deprived sections. The government would reimburse the costs of educating this 25 per cent, but according to its own estimates, not according to the fees being charged. The implications of how this would be implemented will have to be seen.

In the case of the Right to Water, the issue of access to water sources and service provision through State, private parties or some combination of the two was likely to be a much bigger battle, with many more stakeholders, and several viewpoints to be negotiated, and , issues affecting the triad of state, market and community in much more complex ways, he said.

Some Potentially Contentious Issues

How establishing the Right to Water as a law would affect customary community rights to water. This law would imply that one could collect water, especially for personal and domestic use, wherever it was available and possible. How will communities negotiate these rights once they are granted, in case the ownership of the resource is private? What implications would negotiated international instruments have for realizing and enforcing the Right to Water? Using an example to elaborate this issue, Dr. Raina pointed out that the private company Sun Belt Incorporated was selling water from British Columbia in Canada to Saudi Arabia, until the citizens of British Columbia went to court and insisted that their water was not to be used for trading. Sun Belt Inc. was using a



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clause from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which holds that “water in its natural state is a tradeable commodity.” While no such clauses are part of any international instrument to which India is currently a signatory, environmental lawyers believe that the NAFTA clause will increasingly be used by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). We need to be vigilant for any such eventuality.

How much water and for what purposes

In the case of the Right to Education, determining usage as a matter of right fell within the pre-existing ambit of the Directive Principles: education till the age of 14 was to be free. In the case of water, matters would be much more complicated, Dr. Raina said. There was a risk of being urban-minded, suggesting that only water for personal and domestic use need be considered as a right. However, for rural areas, provision of water for domestic animals and for irrigation is as much of a priority as for personal and domestic use; this would especially impact subsistence livelihood, thus the Right to Livelihood, and therefore, to life. Only focusing on drinking water may not help.

Costing Issues

Free education is largely defined in terms of “no fees.” However, fees are often only a part of the costs involved in educating a child. As a result of pressure and negotiations by the campaigners, the current law holds that the state shall provide for any financial expenditure (and fees) that prevents a child from going to school. Potentially, the present definition can be stretched to cover, say, transportation costs. In the case of water, establishing entitlement levels and purposes will be difficult, and thereafter, decisions will have to be made about what will be for free. How much will be provided at cost? How will the costing be done?

Monitoring Issues

Securing/winning a justiciable Right is one aspect, monitoring the delivery of the right is quite another. Monitoring in any dispersed system is difficult, and this is one of the weakest links in the Right to Education Bill. For instance, according to the terms of the new Law, children of migrant labour from Chattisgarh seeking admission in a school in Punjab cannot be denied admission on account of not having a transfer certificate.

However it is going to be difficult to actually ensure that the head teacher of a school in a small town does not

deny a child admission on this account. Similar issues related to enforcing the right will apply in the case of the Right to Water and Sanitation as well, he said. Dr. Raina ended his presentation by cautioning the group working on the Right to Water and Sanitation to expect confrontation on a number of issues.

Vinod Raina: A Dreamer and a Fighter

Educationist and champion of the Right to Education Act, Vinod Raina, who passed away recently, engaged tirelessly with the state even as he worked at the grass-roots level to take education to the most marginalised. While doing this, he helped to evolve child-friendly and activity-based methods of teaching science and set up the Eklavya Foundation to implement the innovations, field-tested at the micro level, on a larger scale.

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Vinod Raina passed away on 12 September this year after a prolonged fight with cancer, leaving behind a large and varied legacy of work and a legion of comrades he had inspired and groomed. Vinod was a dreamer and a fighter, and his legacy has aspects of bold imagination, deep controversies and structural solutions, firm, nebulous and contested at the same time. This is an attempt to recall some of these and remember a great friend and comrade who was as human as any of us.

Vinod Raina grew up in Srinagar and was a proud Kashmiri. He often recalled the respect with which the communities in the Valley handled their diversity and the bonding brought about by the landscape, architecture, cuisine, language, music and shared popular religious legacies. He carried the scars of Kashmir deep within – the violence unleashed by the state, the attack on Kashmiriyat by acts of militancy and the exile of the Pandits from the Valley.

He studied science at Delhi University during the heady 1960s. This was the time when disillusionment started creeping in on the first post-Independence generation. Like many of his peers Vinod also headed to Bihar to join the Naxalite movement, witnessed the untimely death of



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many comrades and came back with a reinforced commitment to social change and a search for more broad-based methods of change. He turned to Physics and completed his PhD under Pramod Shrivastava. He also developed an expertise in computer programming, a new field in those times. This brought him into contact with many social scientists like Sukhamoy Chakravarty and Sumit Sarkar which helped him to engage with the social context of science and its use.

Kishore Bharati headed by Anil Sadgopal and Friends Rural Centre headed by Sudarshan Kapoor had initiated in 1972 a middle school science teaching programme in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh. The Delhi University's science department was quick to respond to their request for support by sending enthusiastic teachers and students to Hoshangabad, Vinod among them. The Hoshangabad Science Teaching Programme (HSTP) derived its strength from multiple questionings and engagements – from the nature of science to the position of the teacher and students in the classroom. It opened the possibility of democratisation of each of these issues and many more.

Vinod became an integral part of the core team that conceptualised this programme, developed systems for its implementation at the level of an entire district and put them in place on the ground. A large number of teachers remember his classes in teacher training and the monthly meetings in which he effortlessly linked local social issues with the science being taught and led the teachers to reflect on deeper philosophical issues relating to epistemology and methods of science. These were also the years during which he formed lasting friendships and relationships. He married Anita Rampal, a fellow "Hoshangi" who later went on to teach at Delhi University.

Vinod spearheaded the group which set up the Eklavya Foundation in 1982 to carry forward the HSTP. It was meant as an organisation which would strive to implement on a larger scale the innovations that were field tested at the micro level. Above all, it dreamt of building a partnership between the government sector which had the power and reach but was bogged down by rigidity, red tape, and hierarchies on the one side with the voluntary sector which was innovative, flexible and could relate equally with all levels of the school system but lacked the ability to scale its work, on the other.

Little scholarly attention has been paid to the organisational systems of the voluntary agencies that began to sprout in the 1970s and 1980s. Vinod and his colleagues who founded Eklavya were eager to set up a system which would be different in many ways: it would not be a "single leader" organisation and instead would be led by a council consisting of active members; the employees of the society would also participate in running the institution; it would be spread over several districts with multiple centres each of which would function with a degree of autonomy. Vinod strove hard to make the fiercely democratic organisation also accountable and professional.

He also played a key role in initiating a large number of Eklavya programmes like Prashika and the Social Science programme and also its publication programme, especially *Chakmak* the children's magazine and *Srote* a science feature service for Hindi newspapers. He also had to steer the organisation with its vision of partnering with government under very trying situations like the Bhopal gas disaster and later the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA).

As the 1980s drew to a close, it was quite apparent that the state was not in a position to internalise the innovative programmes. This led to renewed debates about the nature of voluntary agency-government partnership and the future of innovative programmes. Vinod came up with the idea of creating a national network of like-minded groups, broadcasting the innovative elements of the HSTP among them and in the process creating critical numbers that could impact the mainstream systems. His expansive enthusiasm was not shared by the rest of the Eklavya group, which preferred a path that emphasised quality and intensive work. Over the next decade or so this distance was to grow and Vinod would eventually cease to be a full time worker of Eklavya even though he continued to take active interest in its affairs and participate in crucial deliberations.

Watershed Events

The Bhopal gas disaster of 1984 was a watershed in many ways. It marked the end of the early enthusiasm for industrialisation and the green revolution and raised questions about even the "peaceful use of science". It demonstrated the close collaboration between the state



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and multinationals in violating industrial safety and the rights of the affected people and the emergence of a new kind of “peoples’ movement”, not affiliated to any political party. It threw up a challenge before organisations like Eklavya that were keen to participate in this movement and at the same time not throw away the space within the government school system. Vinod, more than most others, was instrumental in working out this role for Eklavya. This meant engaging in scientific studies, providing logistical support to many organisations active on the field, taking the debates centred around the gas disaster to its field area and at the same time not engaging in open confrontation with the state.

Vinod and Anil Sadgopal parted ways as the Bhopal gas victims’ movement developed. Vinod was opposed to Sadgopal’s vision of a politicised movement which targeted the state as much as the multinational. He was closer to the view taken by the Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP) which wanted to target the multinational corporation specifically. He actively collaborated with the KSSP and especially M P Parameswaran in organising a nationwide “jatha” or mobilisation around it in 1987. This eventually led to the formation of the All India People’s Science Network (AIPSN).

Even as he was working towards the AIPSN, Vinod kept up with his work with grass-roots organisations like the Bhopal Group for Information and Action and the Campaign against Indira Sagar which subsequently became the NBA. Vinod was convinced that it was important to address issues not only like resettlement but also that of large dams that were counterproductive and did not really deliver on the promise of cheap power and irrigation. He was a key organiser of the Harsud Rally in 1989 and remained associated with the NBA for a long time. The issue of displacement for so-called development engaged Vinod since then and he collaborated with a number of Asian scholars and edited the book, *The Dispossessed: Victims of Development in Asia*, ARENA Press, 1992.

How to Teach Science

One important outcome of the coming together of the people’s science groups in 1985 was the initiation of a number of programmes to popularise child-friendly and activity-based methods of teaching science and other

subjects. These were undertaken by member organisations across the country. The enthusiasm it generated within the people’s science groups inspired the leadership of AIPSN to channelise it to a more ambitious intervention in mass education. The grand success of the Ernakulam campaign for total literacy in 1989 led to a countrywide programme spearheaded by the newly formed Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS). Vinod was part of this process and collaborated closely with M P Parameswaran and other literacy enthusiasts. He also served as a member of the National Literacy Mission. This is the kind of work in which Vinod was completely in his element – interacting with grass-roots activists in remote locations of the country, identifying issues and taking them up at the highest levels of government and working on nitty-gritty details to sort them out.

Vinod always attributed the nationwide revival of interest in universalising primary education to the mass campaigns undertaken during the literacy movement. As more and more people were persuaded to acquire and sustain literacy, they also questioned the sorry state of schools which, in effect, reproduced illiteracy on a larger scale. It also brought more and more children into the school system and forced it to come to terms with it. Many states sought to handle this upsurge by diluting the government school system by resorting to recruitment of para teachers and setting up para schools (the so-called “Education Guarantee Schools” or EGS of Madhya Pradesh). Vinod was very critical of this and despite his closeness to those who initiated these in the government, he chose to publicly criticise these measures.

He was deeply disconcerted by the twin phenomenon of decline of quality in the government school system and the pernicious spread of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) sponsored schools in many parts of the country, especially the Hindi belt. He felt that it was imperative to counter this by setting up community supported schools under the BGVS. This led to the controversial decision to set up Gyan Vigyan Shalas (GVS) in many parts of the country. Some of the state units disagreed with this decision as it seemed to put the burden of schooling on parents and seemed to be a step in the direction of privatisation. Nevertheless several thousand GVSs were started and Vinod got busy organising the details of this work.



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The Right to Education Act

Rethinking on crucial issues, especially relating to the possibility of bringing about change by bending the will of the state drew Vinod towards the “rights approach”. He may have been enthused by the success of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, especially the judicial activism associated with it. The Unnikrishnan judgment declaring the right to education to be an integral part of the fundamental right to life forced the government to amend the Constitution to ensure that it could define the right. It mandated the central government to enact a law on the right to education. Vinod saw this as an opportunity to engage with the state and establish a legal framework to govern elementary education.

He spent the last decade of his life doing this even as he continued to fight cancer. This entailed engaging with a wide spectrum of ideological positions on education, with the babus of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), with an intransigent Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission which held the purse strings tight, with the law ministry and so on. This meant many compromises, and some significant victories. Vinod was convinced that once the law was in place and it made right to education justiciable, judicial activism would ensure further consolidation of the right. That is why he regarded the bringing in of quality issues within the law as a significant achievement. The law defined the parameters of quality as spelt out by National Curriculum Framework 2005, and he was hopeful that this would ensure the space for judicial intervention in situations like the communalisation of curriculum as attempted by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government. He considered it an achievement that finally after 60 years of Independence all children were entitled to go to full time formal schools which would have minimum facilities as defined by the Act.

Given the fact that nearly three-fourth of the schools in the country do not fulfil these norms, even the minimalist definition means an enormous investment by the state, which it is still unashamedly reluctant to do so. Vinod did not consider very significant the provisions relating to compulsory intake of 25% students from disadvantaged background by private schools though this has been much hyped and contested in courts. He was of the opinion that this would affect only a fraction of students and would do

more good to the elitist schools by forcing them to be more inclusive rather than to the underprivileged sections.

Once the Act was passed Vinod was busy working on the rules and regulations and also in persuading the state governments to enact necessary laws and ensuring that they were in consonance with the spirit of the Act. This meant a lot of travelling to state capitals and holding meetings with officials and ministers. It also meant engaging with critics of the Act, a large number of them his old colleagues and comrades. Bitter critics like Anil Sadgopal, argued that the Act diluted the right as interpreted in the Unnikrishnan judgment which did not set the age limit, etc, and also talked of equality in education. The Act went back on many of these elements and also acknowledged the role of private educational institutions, and in this way was an abdication of the state's responsibility, undermining equity in education. Other critics questioned the primacy given to formal schooling and straitjacketing all schools. Vinod almost single-handedly defended the Act even while acknowledging its weaknesses and the need to form vigilante groups to ensure its implementation. His main defence was that given the unbridled social inequality, it was utopian to dream of equal education but what was necessary was to ensure that the children from the most disadvantaged background who hitherto remained out of schools, would come to schools and get education of some quality.

Vinod Raina was gifted with clarity of thought and forceful articulation which he used with good effect in his dialogues. He was caring and very considerate at a personal level, and would go a long way to accommodate contrary viewpoints, but could work with steely resolve and brush aside criticism that barred his way. This often cost him a lot as many of his close comrades and colleagues parted ways with him. He bore with this and remained committed to the causes he was convinced of. Needless to say both, his friends (comrades) and critics will miss his clarity of vision, his commitment and his humanity



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Womens Campaign for Land :They didn't back down

PAMELA PHILIPOSE

A spirited crusade by Musahar women for land that is rightfully theirs in Uttar Pradesh's Kolhua village yields success. The land they struggled for: Musahar women of Kolhua village share the fruits of solidarity. Photo: Pamela Philipose/WFS

Kolhua village, in Kasia block of Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district, falls in a region where Lord Buddha is believed to have delivered his last sermon. Villages here can be mapped by their caste composition.

The neighbourhoods of the poorest, who are also the most likely to belong to the lowest castes, are always on the periphery. Kolhua, too, is no exception. The hutments of the Musahar community lie on its very outskirts.

The term 'Musahars', or 'those who feed on rats', carries within itself the stigma that marks the lives of those who belong to this community. The thatched dwellings they call home are small, dark spaces walled by bamboo and clay. The only facility they have within that enclosed space is a couple of clay chulhas, which emit a pall of smoke that always hangs heavily in the air within and is ingested by every occupant, from newborns to the asthmatic elderly.

But despite the squalid conditions of their lives, this Musahar neighbourhood has achieved something truly special. They have conducted a self-driven struggle for land spearheaded largely by women. The appearance of these women — each with her pallu firmly over her head — belies the fire that burns within them. They have exhibited a fierce determination to access the modicum of government entitlements that exist in their name.

As Musahar women, they have experienced repression and know poverty like the back of their hands. Says Rampatiya Devi, "We live huddled in our small huts with our animals and our children." As she says this, Rampatiya's face does not reflect the tensions of her life. There is a certain air of calm determination about her — an attitude that served her well during the unique campaign that she and other Musahar women launched to get 36 decimals of banjar land.

One decimal of land is one-hundredth of an acre; and banjar land is excess land that has remained uncultivated

for a continuous period of not less than four years and which the state, usually the gram panchayat, can allocate to marginalised communities.

But how did the Musahars of Kolhua, with their low literacy levels and lack of contacts in high places, get to know that there was such land in their neighbourhood? What is more, how did they figure out that Musahars, as an extremely backward community, were entitled to it?

This is where the organisation, Musahar Vikas Pahal (MVP) sangathan, comes into the picture. Set up by ActionAid in 2004, it has been campaigning for Musahar rights in eastern U.P. over the years. Rampatiya Devi explains, "As part of the MVP, we would sit and discuss our rights and ways to empower ourselves. In one of our meetings, we learnt that as a landless community, we also had right to this land. So we decided to do something about it."

The first move they made was to go to the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and ask him for the land. This was in early 2012. They came back from the meeting elated because he assured them that he would issue an order stating that the excess banjar land should be transferred to the Musahars of Kolhua. He asked them to return in eight days. When they went back to the SDM's office within the stipulated time, they were told that the particular piece of land they were asking for had been allotted for a school. What he did not tell them was that the local Bhumihars were dead set against the Musahar community being given the land.

Kushi Devi, who was involved in all the action, says, "We already had two schools within a km radius of this village so we told the SDM that we did not want another school." The women then decided to petition Uttar Pradesh Minister for Home Guards, Brahma Shankar Tripathi, who has a home in Kolhua. His first response when he saw them was of surprise. "He said he didn't know that there were Musahars in Kolhua," recalls Chand Bali, adding, "If the minister himself had no knowledge about our existence, you can only imagine how helpless we constantly feel when upper castes target us."

In fact, even as the Musahar representatives were talking to the minister, members of the upper castes from their village got wind of their demand and also reached the venue. But the Musahars held their ground and argued



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that this land was theirs by right because they were the most marginalised in the village. The minister finally agreed to explore the possibility of giving them the excess land after earmarking a portion of it for the school.

Days passed and nothing happened. The Musahar women were shunted from office to office. Every time they went, they were told to come back a week later. Each time they visited a government office they had to hire a trolley after shelling out Rs 300, money they could ill afford, besides having to give up on the day's wages.

But one thing that the Musahar women had managed to convey to the local administration was their absolute fixity of purpose. During the Holi celebrations of 2012, they chose the patch of banjar land they wanted as the spot on which to erect the Holika dahan . Seeing this, the upper castes tried to intimidate the women into removing the structure by sending a lathi-wielding mob. The police also turned up sensing trouble, but the Musahars stood firm and refused to remove the effigy.

When the SDM saw their confidence and realised that they were extremely serious, he said he would sanction a plot for them that adjoined a forest patch, about two km away. Again the women stood firm. They posed a straight question to the administration: why would they give up claims of land in their neighbourhood and go so far away? They were also clear that once they got the land, it would be jointly owned by the men and women of the community.

Finally, the District Magistrate himself intervened and issued the order that 36 decimals of banjar land in the Musahar neighbourhood be transferred to the community. The transfer was instituted not through individual pattas but as a combined holding in the name of the community.

The move led to great rejoicing among the Musahars of Kolhua, and it was the women who celebrated the most. As Rampatiya Devi quietly remarks, "This is our land and we fought for it, all the way from the village to the district level. We have fought for it, even by going hungry. It will be under our safekeeping and we will cultivate it jointly." Jowar (sorghum), cultivated by the women, has now been harvested from that land.

Says local activist, Vibhuti Chouhan, who helped to mobilise the Musahar women of Kolhua, "I told them my

job was to show the way, their job was to walk on the road. Today, the Bhumihars here are livid because the Musahars have dared to ask for land. This is the first example of the community in this region organising themselves for land and getting it. They took all the decisions themselves and it was the women who led the way."

(Women's Feature Service)

Landed communities in Haryana thwarting women's rights to inheritance

She wins her share of land from brother but loses her family

CHANDER SUTA DOGRA

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/she-wins-her-share-of-land-from-brother-but-loses-her-family/article5259208.ece>

Hawa Singh is an 80-year-old, rheumy patriarch with a failing voice that one has to strain to hear. But mention his two daughters and their two year old legal battle with him to claim their share of the ancestral property and fire flashes in his eyes and the voice acquires strength. "There is no question of giving ancestral land to my daughters. I have transferred it in the name of my brother's grandson so that it remains with our family." Hawa Singh has the support of the khap panchayat of his village Dhakla, and for good measure has also broken ties with the two girls who are no longer welcome in the village. "They have brought shame on the family and lowered my prestige in front of the whole village" he sighs.

In vast swathes of Haryana, particularly where a real estate boom has kicked in, landed patriarchal communities are employing every trick in the book to deprive women of the right to inherit ancestral property.

The urgency to contain the growing trend of women demanding their share has grown after the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005 that strengthened the rights of Hindu women to inherit property, giving them equal rights with men.

Some months ago, when Hawa Singh's daughter Mamata ploughed the field on which she had staked claim, some 100 men from the village gathered to thwart her. In July, the khap panchayat met to dissuade him from even giving her some money in return for withdrawing the legal case that she has filed saying, "If we do not unite behind you, it will embolden more girls to follow her example."



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To have a daughter who is claiming her share of property has come to be seen as a slur on the family name in the Haryana countryside. A close second to her eloping with a man of her choice. That both trends are anathema for the infamous khap panchayats is also because there is a link between the two. A girl who defies society to choose her own husband is more likely to have the confidence to claim her share of inheritance too.

Confidence, because the consequences of waging a war against your family (it is almost always a legal fight) is that the girl usually has to face a ban on visiting her parental village and severance of family ties. Devi of Pollar in Kaithal district did just that and though she has won her share of two acres land from her brother, her biggest sorrow is the break in ties that ensued. "Even my mother refuses to talk to me now, because she is supporting my brother. The law is on my side, but my family feels that I have done something wrong. Have I?"

In villages which are dominated by khap panchayats it is particularly hard for girls to take the step. The social stigma of "going against the brothers and depriving them of land" is so strong that it deters even the very needy women. Saroj Rani is the widowed daughter of a prominent panchayat man. Says she, "My in-laws have not given me my husband's share of their property, so I asked my brothers if I could sell off my inheritance to raise money. Just the mention of it enraged them so much that I haven't had the courage to go ahead. I will also be socially ostracised by the village." Her father has since transferred the property in the name of his grandsons to pre-empt any move from her or her sister to claim their right. Indeed more and more family patriarchs are transferring their land to their sons or grandsons during their lifetimes with the sole intent of preventing their daughters from claiming their share.

How do they justify these actions? Says Om Prakash Dhankar, leader of the Dhankar khap, "This law is unfair as it is upsetting the social balance of our society. It is blind to the fact that the girl also gets a share from her husband's side so it is not fair that she gets two shares." What makes matters worse is that most often the girl, usually under pressure from her husband, sells the land in her parental village and invests the money elsewhere. The loss of ancestral land to others equals loss of pride and is unacceptable in landed communities."

Another popular ploy adopted to prevent girls from staking a claim is to persuade them to sign a release deed of their property in favour of their brothers. The deed is a registered document that does not attract stamp duty and men generally shower their sisters with lavish gifts after the signing.

Says Rao Uday Bhan a senior lawyers in the Jhajjar district courts, "Even though a release deed is not valid for ancestral land which has to be divided equally between the legal heirs, yet more than 90% of farmers take this route nowadays." He says that civil litigation relating to inheritance rights of women has grown a whopping 500% in the last few years. Other lawyers inform that where a woman has staked her claim, the family resists partitioning the land and such disputed lands, particularly in districts that fall in the National Capital Region, attract land sharks. "We have seen that whenever a woman tries to sell her disputed inheritance she has to settle for much less than the market price."

It is eight years since women got complete inheritance rights equal to their brothers and other male members. But as more of them muster courage and overcome social stigma to claim their share of lands and properties, voices have begun to rise against the Act itself. Says Mr.Dhankar, "The demand to reverse this amendment has come up time and again in our khap panchayats and we will be taking it up with the government. When our customs do not support such laws, it is better to change the law itself." Quite clearly amending archaic laws is only the first step in empowering women. Changing mindsets is a longer struggle.

Khap panchayats oppose marriage in same gotra to control landholdings

Richard Mahapatra, CSE.

It was a season of sons-in-law in Haryana. In October, the Congress-ruled state government scrambled to clean its records in the face of alleged undue favours to Robert Vadra, son-in-law of the party president Sonia Gandhi. That month, khap panchayats, or the traditional caste panchayats notorious for their diktats in the name of honouring social customs, also grabbed headlines. They wanted to regulate the selection of sons-in-law as per their archaic beliefs. On October 29, leaders of 29 khaps



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met in Rohtak and demanded banning same-gotra, same-village marriages under the Hindu Marriage Act.

These seemingly unrelated developments have common roots—land. That Haryana's land has turned rare earth is no news. But its repercussion on society is what the world is discovering now. Vadra, though not a resident son-in-law, reportedly made windfall gains from land deals in the state. Analysts say khaps now do not want their resident sons-in-law to take away the newfound gold. Their obvious targets are daughters and laws that allow them legal share in ancestral property.

Khaps largely exercise their authority over the Jat community of big landholders around Delhi, including some districts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Traditionally, in these areas marriage is not allowed within the gotra, which loosely means a sub-caste or clan. But khaps extend this prohibition to all inhabitants of a village and its adjacent villages, including individuals from different gotras. According to khaps, they are deemed siblings due to proximity of residence and are bound by bhaichara or brotherhood. Strangely, their diktats apply only to women.

They do not oppose men marrying in same gotras or other castes. Perhaps they cannot afford to do it. In Haryana's six districts—Jhajjar, Rohtak, Jind, Panipat, Gurgaon and Sonapat—where khaps are active, sex ratio is the lowest in the country: there are 850-870 females per 1,000 males. Such is the scarcity of eligible brides in the state that men now “buy” brides from faraway Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Nepal. According to sociologist Ravinder Kaur, 37 per cent of eligible men remain bachelor in the state.

Analysts say such woman-centric codes on marriage are to control the family's ownership over land (see 'Khap panchayat's codes...'). Khap members have an instilled fear that in case of marriage by choice, the girl or her husband would stake claim in ancestral property. By declaring girls and boys of the same village and adjacent villages as siblings, they lessen the possibility of young individuals getting into matrimonial alliance. Experience shows, in an arranged marriage, girls do not demand share in parental property. Moreover, if a girl is married several villages away, the possibility of her exercising inheritance rights becomes remote. They also oppose marriage between majority and minority gotras as the

majority gotra administers a village and owns most of the land.

Khap panchayat's codes on marriage: Not in same gotra:

By banning same gotra marriage in a village, khaps ensure that married women do not exercise their inheritance rights on parental property. Not in bhaichara: Khaps then extend the diktat to several adjacent villages by declaring boys and girls from those villages siblings and ruling out marriage alliance among them. Not between majority and minority gotras: By not allowing girls from majority gotra to marry into a minority gotra, the diktat protects land of majority gotras who own maximum land in a village.

According to a study by the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, the status of women in the family is worsening with changing economic structure, reforms and mode of production. This is more so in the National Capital Region (NCR) where the impact of economic reforms was first felt. Explains Perianayagam Arokiasamy, who did the study, “Usually larger landholdings are associated with less autonomy for women.”

Women rights activist Jagmati Sangwan says khaps create false impression that they are opposed to same-gotra marriage because it is incestuous. They actually oppose the woman's right to choose a life partner. A study commissioned by the National Commission of Women found that 72 per cent of the khap-dictated honour killings were related to inter-caste marriages, while those related to same-gotra marriages were only three per cent. “As couples are selectively targeted, it is clear that the real motive of khap panchayats is to control women's sexuality to ensure that property remains within the patriarchal caste domain,” Sangwan adds.

Small wonder khaps have lately been vocal about the two pieces of legislation that allow a woman to marry as per her choice and secure her rights over ancestral property: the Hindu Marriage Act and the Hindu Succession Act. The marriage law does not recognise the gotra or caste system and thus does not prohibit marriage within the gotra or in other caste. The Hindu Succession Act, amended in 2005, gives daughters equal rights in the ancestral property along with sons. It also gives her the right to seek partition of the dwelling house she inherits.



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The previous law gave daughters an equal right only in self-acquired property of her father and a partial right in ancestral property. It restricted her right in a dwelling house, in which the joint family lived. The amendment in 2005 also deleted a section, which exempted Land Reforms Act, Land Ceiling Act and laws relating to devolution of tenancies in agricultural land, from the Hindu Succession Act. These state laws favoured male lineal descendants over wives and daughters.

Down To Earth spoke to a dozen khap panchayat members in Haryana about the Hindu Succession Act. None was willing to speak on record, but said the debate on sharing landholdings with married daughters has gained momentum since the amendment in 2005. The first such meeting took place in Rohtak in July 2005, which was attended by 21 khap panchayats. "The law allows daughters to have rights over property of their parents, in-laws and also retain individual property. Why does one need to give so many rights to women?" asks Meher Singh Jhakar, general secretary of Jhakar Khap, which exercises its authority over 36 villages in Jhajjar district in Haryana. "The new generation has new expectations that confront the traditional ways. If constitution of the UK can accept conventions as key provisions why can't the khap principles be accepted here?"

Obsession with land

Jats, the way we see them now, as big landholders, are the creation of centuries of fight over land (see 'Nomads to landlords'). They opposed the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 over and over again and used political leadership to prevent fragmentation of their land.

In 1967, within months of its formation as a new state, Haryana passed a resolution, requesting the Centre to amend the Act. Punjab followed suit. The Centre did not oblige. In 1979, the Haryana Assembly passed a bill, amending the Act unilaterally, and sent it for the President's approval. The President did not give his assent. Ten years later in 1989, renowned farmers' leader from Haryana, Chaudhary Devi Lal, proposed an amendment to the Act during his tenure as the deputy prime minister. The demand was dropped following protests.

Haryana and five other states, including Punjab and Rajasthan, which have active khaps, denied equal

inheritance rights for women in parental property, especially in agricultural land, until the 205 amendment to the Succession Act.

Going by media reports, khap panchayats did not issue militant diktats against women until 2005. This is the time the NCR witnessed a boom in property rate and became the country's largest residential market.

Currently, it has more housing units than the combined tally of Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Hyderabad. But since their opposition to the succession law did not work out, khap panchayats now focus on the Hindu Marriage Act to bring in provisions to stop same-gotra marriage to retain land within the family boundary.

Nomads to landlords

Nomads to landlords Once a nomadic pastoral community, Jats settled in Jhajjar, Rohtak, Jind, Panipat, Gurgaon and Sonapat districts of Haryana in the early 13th century. Then the land was barren. The Mamluk, Khilji, Tughlaq, Sayyid and Lodi dynasties that ruled Delhi during the period introduced rahat, or Persian wheel system of irrigation, in the area.

This fuelled green revolution and transformed Jat pastoralists into agricultural peasants. Agriculture in the region became more lucrative after Muhammad Bin Tughlaq constructed the Western Yamuna Canal. With this newfound prosperity, Jats organised themselves into a powerful clan, seeding the khap panchayat concept.

Soon they became the rulers' revenue collectors and colonised more land. It is said that Akbar elevated some khap members to the status of ministers to integrate the Jat community into his empire.

Eco Femme – A Cloth Pad for True Empowerment

<http://menstrupedia.com/blog/>

Every year, over 45 billion pads are dumped in landfills, only in the United States and Canada (we don't have India numbers, but it is safe to assume they are similar). The plastic in a pad takes 500 years to degrade (as opposed to biodegrade, which it doesn't!) By using plastic laden



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feminine hygiene products, each year we add the equivalent of 180 billion plastic bags to our waste stream.

On the other hand, menstruation is not cool. The taboo associated with monthly periods in India causes the greatest harm to the health, livelihood and dignity of women. Horror stories still abound of women using all kinds of unsanitary materials – from ash to husk, mud, dried leaves, even sharing cloth pads – in the villages, and health infections that arise due to this.

Ecofemme kills both problems with one cloth pad – calling itself a women's empowerment project. Rising from rural India and reaching the world, it promotes menstrual practices that are healthy, dignified, affordable and eco positive. Kathy Walkling from the organization tells The Alternative more about Ecofemme.

How did it all start?

“When I moved to India to live in Auroville 15 years ago, one of the first things that I found myself having to contend with was how to dispose off my sanitary waste. In the west, there is at least the appearance that these products go “away” when tossed into a bin, but in India it was obvious this was an illusion. I felt like a fugitive lurking around in the dark, looking for a place where I could dig a hole – usually in baked earth- to bury used pads. Throwing them in a bin for others to handle or burning them with their plastic liners was even more unthinkable! How DO local women here manage? I wondered.”

“While visiting family in Australia, I came across a washable (i.e. re-usable) cloth sanitary napkin. It was made of colourful soft flannel cotton for absorbency and was worn like a disposable pad with wings that fasten under panties. I bought my first washable pad, and from the first day of use , became a convert. It was actually comfortable to wear, and, in an odd way, felt quite wholesome— in handling these pads, I felt a little more connected to my body and this earthy cycle. But what really clinched it was that I could actually make a difference through this small personal choice to re-use and not add more waste to a already choking planet.”

Cloth washable menstrual pads are simple to stitch and can be done so by any rural woman with a sewing machine and basic tailoring skills.

Tell us about the Auroville Action project, to provide rural women a safe, eco-friendly solution for periods.

Starting from the question of how local Indian women manage, our Eco Femme team, formed in 2009, began to research rural women's experiences of menstruation. It was a revelation to learn the extent to which Indian women experienced hardships each month, all rooted in a lack of basic knowledge about their monthly cycle and lifestyle restrictions which left them feeling impure and socially ostracized.

We learned about the products they used and found out that disposable sanitary pads were rapidly replacing the traditional practice of using cloth because of the belief that they offered a more hygienic, modern and convenient way to manage menstruation.

We learned of a national Government scheme that was about to start giving heavily subsidized disposable pads to girls to improve menstrual hygiene. We did the math and realised just what this meant—up to 360 million disposable pads, all containing plastic, being dumped or burned each month!

Eco Femme went on to design a range of cloth washable pads with Indian women (both rural and urban) users in mind. These products have become an entry point for us to make a positive difference. We have a core team of 2, and an extended team made of women tailors, partners, ambassadors, volunteers and more.

How big is your team that executes on this vision?

There are 2 women members in the core team –Jessamijn Miedema and myself. We take the overall responsibility for the day to day management of EcoFemme and also set the direction it will take—including everything from communications and relationship building with customers, product R&D, sourcing raw materials and ensuring production flows, accounts, media interface, and project planning and development. There is an extended team, which includes:

- Women tailors: 15 women who are members of the Auroville Village Action's self help groups have undertaken advanced tailoring training and stitch Eco Femme cloth pads.
- The Auroville Village Action Group and its director Anbu Sironmani have been partners from the beginning; they advise us on educational content



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and conduct educational training programs on menstrual hygiene management.

- Volunteers: we have a floating team of volunteers who manage outreach and other programs for us
- Ambassadors: we have a growing network of international and Indian ambassadors who share about the project and help us develop sales outlets.

How would you describe your business today, in terms of size and revenues?

We are a small social enterprise. We have a small paid core team and the women tailors who get paid per piece. Otherwise we have a lot of student and volunteer support. Last year—our first trading year—saw a turnover of approximately 8 lakhs.

How do you measure your impact?

We see the difference we have made through the following:

Livelihood: Economic independence is a key to women's empowerment—to be able to generate their own income and thus have independent purchasing power does change women's lives. Cloth washable menstrual pads are simple to stitch and can be done so by any rural woman with a sewing machine and basic tailoring skills.

Education: We are conditioned to believe that menstruation is something to be kept secret, to be ashamed of and to hide—even that menstrual blood is 'dirty'. But why, when periods are the stuff of life? Eco Femme has designed a number of educational modules for different target groups which provide a safe space to learn about the menstrual cycle and its part in reproductive health. These modules also go deeper, inquiring into restrictive cultural taboos and examining how this thinking is kept alive. We work with NGOs, schools and colleges to deliver educational programs for women throughout India, we have reached out to over 1000 women all over the country so far.

Waste reduction: For each woman who switches from using disposable sanitary napkins to cloth re-usable, there is a significant impact on the environment. A single woman would use approximately 120 disposable sanitary napkins a year. Our products last for 5 years, and ideally, a set of 6 cloth pads will be sufficient for a cycle (and can be re-used for 5 years). Therefore for 6 washable pads,

the waste from approximately 594 disposable pads has been reduced.

How has customer response been? What kind of customers come in today?

We spend a significant amount of time explaining the product and its attributes to women—this is a new product on the market, and, as it concern intimate health, women need to be reassured about how to use and properly care for cloth pads, so as to ensure good health. We have seen a slow response in India from women – mostly, only women who are environmentally aware are drawn to use these products. Women are also reluctant to spend the time needed to wash the cloth pads, although some overcome this obstacle when they understand the amount of non biodegradable waste conventional products create. The international response has been better as there is already a growing awareness about the health and environmental impact of sanitary products in the west.

Where do you go from here?

We work on a few fronts: We plan to expand our education and outreach work. We hope, in this way, to spread the use of cloth pads, and especially to reach girls who are not getting access to any products.

We are planning to develop a premium organic range and develop market expansion internationally. We are working on videos that can help transmit our core message about sanitary health and waste. We are also working on building an ambassador network for a grassroots peer-to-peer ambassadors project to spread the word. This is for both urban and rural women.

What have been your personal takeaways and lessons on this journey?

I've learnt that social enterprise is a complex journey and that it requires patience and perseverance. We are not just trying to sell a product. We are trying to raise awareness and spread a message and change is slow. I have also seen the power of working together with others who share common value, and I think we really need to leverage these networking opportunities.

(Carried forward on page # 24)



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WASH in Schools Traffic Lights Paper: Progress chase matrix, Kathmandu Sacosan V; UNICEF

	Key WASH in Schools Indicators		Afghanistan	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	
1	WASH coverage. Separate toilet facilities for girls and boys	% age coverage	57	37	75	52	93	65	57	95	
2	WASH in Schools coverage (Drinking Water)	%age coverage	57	37	70	35	93	80	57	95	
3	Schools with functional toilets	% age coverage	45	79	73	93	100	77	65	85	
4	Coverage of schools with handwashing with soap facilities.	%age coverage	8	Data NA	Data NA	Data NA	Data NA	Data NA	Data NA	Data NA	
	Key priority action										Total
1	Practice good hygiene - institutionalise handwashing with soap before food, in schools										7
	Establish EMIS as the common, reliable, database and WASH in Schools access, functionality and use monitored regularly.										12
3	Establish operation and maintenance mechanisms for WASH in Schools										8
4	Raise the profile of WinS and mobilize partners to create a social movement										6
5	Establish menstrual hygiene management mechanisms										6
	Total		7	5	5	5		6	5	6	

	Action Implemented and maintained
	Some action taken
	No action taken



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(Carried forward from page # 22)

How much do consumers value the sustainability aspect of your offerings as opposed to others?

In the west, it is quite clear that customers really like our Pad for Pad program, which means they contribute financially towards a cloth pad for a girl in rural India. This is an aspect of social sustainability that is really appreciated. Most customers are also attracted to the environmental benefits of using our products as the primary motivation for purchasing and using the product.

What have been the most effective ways to reach out to and engage consumers?

I think we are still discovering this, but, basically, it seems to be word of mouth – peer-to-peer communication. We have never done formal advertising. We write to companies in the west who sell alternative menstrual products and this is building customers. In India, media attention has been helpful. Facebook has too. We want to start a blog very soon.

What have been your biggest challenges in this field?

Time! There is always so much to do, not enough money to pay professionals, so we end up doing it all, often under time pressure and probably not as well as professionals could manage it. We have worked with professionals and that was also not always easy— we sometimes felt misguided as they did not really understand the ground realities of our work. We also get flooded with advice –so many people want to help us, and yet it is sometimes difficult to make sense of what is the right focus for us.

In general, the whole subject of menstrual hygiene has big players – multinationals that promote a particular message of convenience over the message of what is inside the products and their environmental impact. It sometimes feels like a David and Goliath story. We are small compared to the multinationals and don't have the capital to play the field on that level.

Author: Shreya Pareek

Shreya Pareek is a development journalist and staff writer at The Alternative.

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About India WASH Forum

India WASH Forum is a registered Indian Trust since 2008 with Trustees from all over India. It is a coalition of Indian organizations and individuals working on water, sanitation and hygiene. The coalition evolved out of WSSCC support to national WASH sector advocacy.

In order to undertake credible independent WASH advocacy work in India, the national coalition got registered as an Indian charity in 2008 and has undertaken a number of significant research and advocacy work that includes:

Knowledge Networking and Advocacy initiatives undertaken by India WASH Forum;

- Gender and Sanitation South Asia Workshop with National Foundation of India in Delhi; 2005
- Review of Swajaldhara and TSC Programme Guidelines; 2007
- Input to the Technical Expert Group set up to review the National Drinking Water Mission(RGNDWM); 2007
- Civil Society Input, Urban Sanitation Policy 2009
- Review of TSC in 4 states of India 2009
- Organisation of SACOSAN 3 in Delhi. CSO session and a CSO Statement of Action, 2009
- National Right to Water and Sanitation Workshop 2009 with participation from the Ministry and CSOs
- Start up of the GSF programme in India



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- Launch workshop 2009 with stakeholders in Delhi, 2009
- Developing and finalising the Country Programme Proposal, 2010
- Leading the PCM of GSF, as an institutional host and Chair and Convener.
- Providing oversight for programme review.
- Member Govt of India 12th Five Year Plan Working Group on Drinking Water and Sanitation 2010. Recommendations on behaviour change priorities and staffing for national sanitation programme.
- Recommendations for Urban and Rural Water and Sanitation inputs: national consultations on drinking water and sanitation by Planning Commission Govt of India and Arghyam 2010
- National Pro poor Urban Water and Sanitation Consultation, 2010
- National report and a South Asia Report for SACOSAN 3 : Peoples Voices – a National Study project, Reports for India and South Asia, 2011
- Formal Input to the National Water Policy 2012, with a focus on drinking water and sanitation
- Report to the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation: UNDP international consultation – Greening of Rural Water Supply Programme and Guidelines, 2012
- FANSA-IWF Review of national commitments and progress since Sacosan 4, and preparation for World Water Forum 2012
- School Sanitation Baseline Research by GIZ for Tirupati and Mysore, 2012

A unique feature of IWF is its non-hierarchical set up. Most of the Trustees of India WASH Forum are represented in their individual capacity and do not represent the organisations they are associated with. The agenda and activities that India WASH Forum are determined at the initiative of the Trustees and support from organisations and individuals.

Since 2010, India WASH Forum is actively engaged in the Global Sanitation Fund(GSF) and currently hosts Programme Coordination Mechanism(PCM), of the **GSF in India**. The role of the PCM is to provide a governance oversight to the GSF Programme in India. The Programme is being implemented by an Executing Agency called Natural Resources Management

Consultancy(NRMC) that makes NGO sub grants in the two states of Jharkhand and Assam. The Programme is managed directly from WSSCC Geneva and with the support of the PCM and an Auditor(called the Country Programme Monitor) that is KPMG for India.

The mandate/charter of India WASH Forum is Hygiene and Health outcomes from sanitation and water sector;

- **Promoting knowledge generation** through research and documentation which is linked to and supported grassroots action in the water-sanitation-hygiene sectors. Special emphasis is given to **sector-specific and cross-cutting thematic learnings**.
- **Supporting field-based NGOs and networks in their technical and programmatic work**. The IWF would also consistently highlight gender and pro-poor considerations, and provide a national platform for interest groups working in the sector to come together.
- **Undertaking policy advocacy and influence work** through
 - Monitoring and evaluations
 - Media advocacy and campaigns, and
 - Fact finding missions
- **Undertaking lobbying and networking to promote common objectives** in the sector.

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