



## Creating demand for toilets in rural India





## The Challenge

According to a UN study, more than 1 billion<sup>1</sup> people around the world practice open defecation every day. India leads the way, ahead of even neighbouring countries. It is surely not a statistic to be proud of. Open defecation is a serious health problem as it can result in the spread of illnesses such as cholera and diarrhoea. It is also an issue of dignity and safety for women.

500

More than 500 million<sup>2</sup> people in rural India defecate in the open

2.4

The total economic impact estimated at INR 2.4 trillion<sup>3</sup>

1.75

Of this, the health impact alone is INR 1.75 trillion<sup>3</sup>

The obvious first step in preventing open defecation is the construction of toilets, since more than 60% rural households in India don't even have one. Over the years, Government has taken many steps to address this gap, including schemes that provide financial support for toilet construction. Still, it hasn't resulted in a significant increase in rural toilet ownership. That begs the question: How does one create demand for toilets in rural India?

#### References:

1. UN Study: <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/sanitation.shtml>
2. 2011 Census
3. World Bank Study, 2011. Economic impacts of inadequate sanitation in India. <http://www.wsp.org/sites/wsp.org/files/publications/wsp-esi-india.pdf>



## Arghyam's Approach to Demand Generation

### Scalable Model

Any solution to a problem of this magnitude has to address scale. Therefore, we created a solution within the Government framework. Government had reserved 15% of the NBA (Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, now renamed as Swachh Bharat Mission) budget for IEC (Information, Education, Communication) activities for improved sanitation. However, its utilisation was usually far less. According to Government of India figures, about 5.5% of the proposed budget was utilised in 2012-13. We conceived a project that can result in a greater and more effective utilisation of this IEC budget. We entered into an agreement with the RDPR (Rural Development and Panchayat Raj) department of Government of Karnataka for creating and piloting a scalable solution in the Davan-gere district of Karnataka.

### Professional Expertise

Creating demand for any product is a complex problem. However, with a professional approach, demand has been successfully created in rural India for products such as toothpaste and soaps. We partnered with Centre of Gravity, a professional communication firm, to do the same with toilets - to create a well-researched and strategic campaign for demand generation. We also got on board Public Affairs Foundation, an independent third party to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the campaign.

# Project Partners and Roles

Each partner in the project had a clear role assigned.

State Government  
Funding - Execution, Planning  
and Management

District Government  
Human Resources, Advisory,  
Execution and Monitoring

Arghyam  
Conception, Funding - Campaign  
Design and Management

Centre of Gravity  
Campaign Strategy  
and Design

Public Affairs Foundation  
Campaign Monitoring  
and Evaluation

## Developing Campaign Strategy

Centre of Gravity conducted extensive research in Davangere for 4 months to understand the motivations and barriers for toilet construction. Various research methods were used to unearth the human insights.



**Ethnography**



**Concept Testing**



**Household Survey**



**Group Discussions**

## Motivation: Problems women face

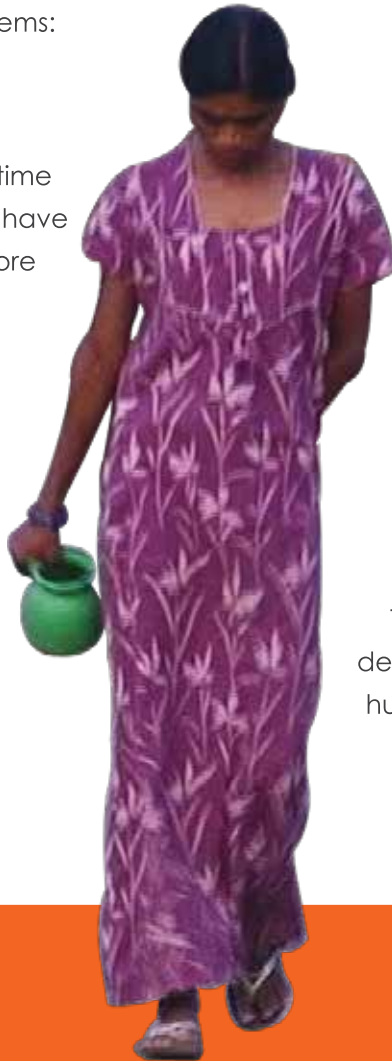
In Davangere, we found different motivations for toilet construction such as the desire to imitate what is 'urban' and to provide 'comfort for the ceiling'. However, lack of open space was the biggest catalyst for toilet construction in villages. Around the village, the green cover is vanishing for various reasons. For women who have to go out for open defecation, this is not good news. They have to walk further and look harder to find a place, resulting in the following problems:

### Inconvenience

Longer distance implies taking more time to find a place to defecate. Women have to wait for the dark cover and therefore can go only in the early morning or evening.

### Fear

Since they are moving away from the familiarity of their village and that too in the darkness, there is a fear of the unknown.



### Shame

Without green cover, chances of them being spotted or teased by male counterparts are higher. They feel ashamed whenever this happens.

### Humiliation

They sometimes are forced to go for open defecation to someone else's field. They feel humiliated when they are shouted at by the land owner.

Because of these problems, most women want toilets at home. Why is this 'want' not translating into 'demand'?

# Women Want, Men Decide

From a demand generation perspective, it is more important to motivate the one who decides to buy a product than the one who needs it. While women feel the need for toilets, it is the men who decide on its construction for the following reasons:



## Big financial decision

For any activity that involves a large financial investment, it is usually the men who take the decision. Toilet construction that costs around Rs. 10,000 is surely one such activity.



## Construction

Construction activities like digging pits, purchase of construction materials and dealing with masons are usually performed by men.



## Interaction with GP

Interacting with the Gram Panchayat (GP) officials, to understand and utilise the scheme, is largely the responsibility of men.

## Emotional Vs Rational Motivation

What can motivate men to construct toilets? Normally, in health campaigns, there is a bias toward the rational message such as 'Smoking can cause cancer' or 'Not washing hands with soap can cause diarrhoea'. However, knowledge doesn't necessarily translate into behaviour. Behavioural changes are often caused by emotional reasons.

Not surprisingly, no one cited health reasons for constructing a toilet at home.

# Amplifying the Motivators

In Indian villages, it is not aspirational for men to openly show love for the women.

Hence, the idea of "responsible father" found greater resonance among the villagers as opposed to a "loving husband".

Responsibility is a very universal and deep biological quality. Women also seek this quality among men. It was brought alive in the campaign through different media.

## Animated film



The film narrates the story of a responsible father who provides for the needs of his daughter, in many ways, including the construction of a toilet at home.

## Posters/Pamphlets



The idea of responsibility was also brought alive through posters, pamphlets, door stickers, slogans and certificates.

## Skit/Songs



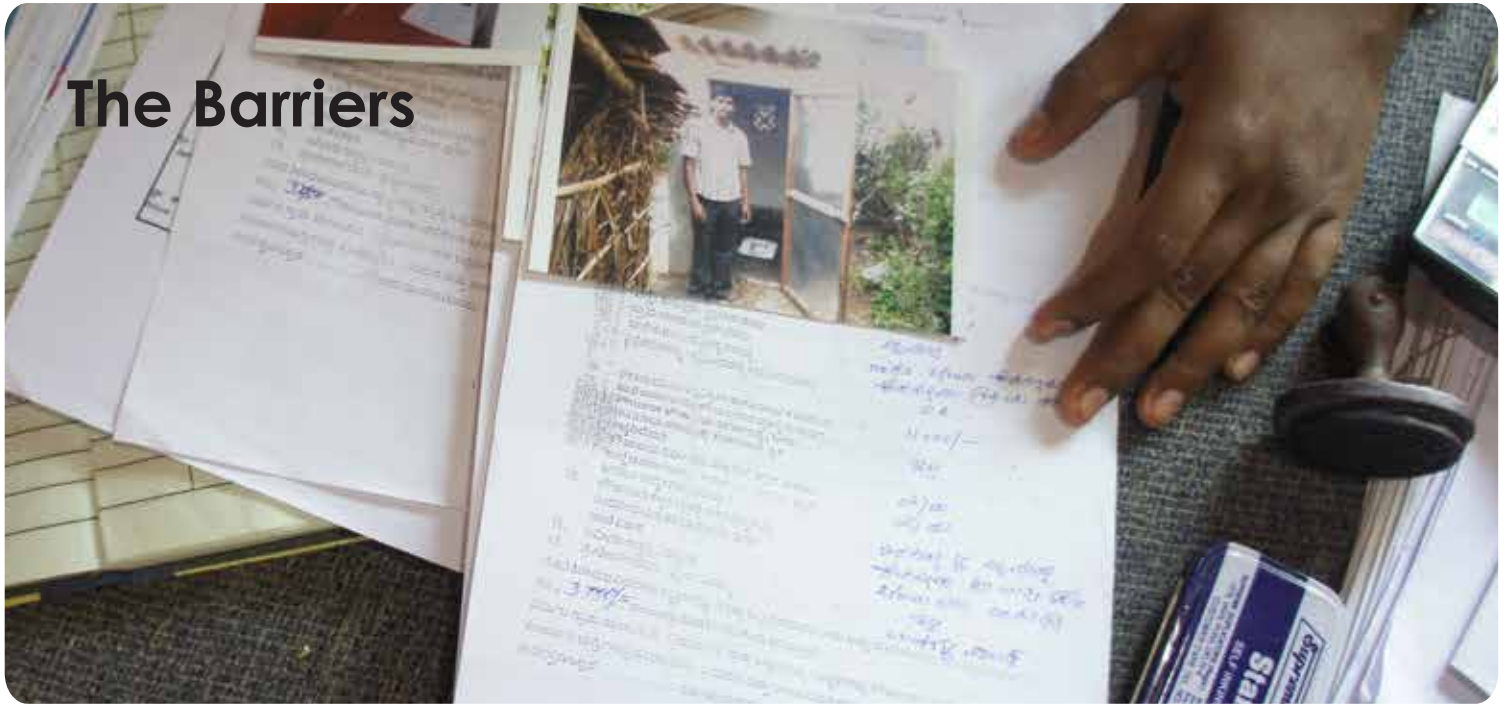
Challenged by his wife, a man decides to spend a day living the life of a woman. His travails created greater empathy among men for women.

## Testimonial Films



Testimonials of those who have built toilets from the same village/district were shown to inspire others.

# The Barriers



Even if one were to be motivated to construct toilets, there is still the financial barrier. With very little disposable income and many financial priorities, a toilet is often postponed for a “good year”. While the scheme addresses the financial constraints, following issues with its execution make it difficult for most villagers to access it.

## Awareness & Eligibility

There were still significant proportions of the village population unaware of the scheme or the exact incentive amount.

Access to the scheme was limited as the eligibility criteria was not clear.

## Complexity

The scheme was rather complex from the beneficiary point of view because of the many steps in the process and the documentation involved in it. Within the Government, there was no common understanding of the scheme.

## Payment Delays & Low Credibility

Incentives were not paid on time and one often had to pay a bribe to receive the payment.

The village is a small, intimate community where news travels fast. Everyone gets to know about the delayed payments very quickly and the many toilets abandoned at the pit stage are a constant reminder of the scheme's inefficiencies.



# Reducing the Barriers

## Creating awareness of scheme and eligibility



Eligible households were given an invite that assured them of their eligibility



Names of the eligible households were also put up in a wall-painting at a prominent place in the village

## Making the scheme simple and easy to access



The scheme was communicated in a simple six-step process



Swachchata Doots helped the beneficiaries walk through the process

## Overcoming payment delays and restoring credibility



'Jaldi' Promise: Rs. 9200 incentive to be paid within 20 days of construction



'Jaldi' Promise made by the Chief Executive Officer (District) and the ZP (Zilla Panchayat) President

# 'Jaldi' Campaign Roll-out

The 'Jaldi' campaign was inaugurated on 26th January, 2014. The campaign was rolled out to 25 GPs and covered 119 villages across all 6 taluks of Davangere in one month.

## Campaign Impact: Key Parameters

### Reach

**93%**

across 25 GPs and 119 villages

### Took Action

**37.6%**

such as approaching the GP or filling up the application form.

### Toilets Completed

**31.5%**

in the intervention villages in the four-month period

**9.5%**

in the control villages in the same four-month period

Target Households - 15037

Return on investment: Variable (campaign execution) cost/toilet:

### INR 900/Toilet

for the current campaign based on the current endline numbers

### INR 500/Toilet

for an optimized campaign, which is within the allocated budget under Swachh Bharat Mission.

### INR 600/Toilet

at the revised 5% of Rs.12,000/toilet provision for IEC under the Swachh Bharat Mission.

## Independent Evaluation

Public Affairs Foundation [PAF], Bangalore evaluated the campaign on toilet coverage and measured the impact of the Behaviour Change Communication campaign on toilet construction behaviour. They conducted a baseline in December 2013 prior to execution of campaign and an endline survey post-campaign in May 2014. Both studies consisted of detailed household surveys, focus group discussions and interviews with Gram Panchayat officials. The surveys were conducted across 25 GPs in the intervention area and 20 randomly selected GPs in the control area.

# Reflections and Recommendations

## A. Creating Demand

With focused, coherent messaging, it is possible to create a surge in demand for toilets in rural India. Two core universal messages that have emerged from the campaign are:

**Responsibility as an emotional motivator for men** - the motivation to provide for the family needs is a more powerful motivator for men (who are the decision makers) vis-a-vis health, which is a rational, less effective motivation.

### **Easy Access to Scheme**

Providing information regarding the scheme (incentive amount, eligibility and process) to every household and allowing easy access to the scheme can empower more people to utilise the scheme.

## B. Improving Supply Efficiencies

Demand creation required efficient supply processes. Two process improvements that can dramatically improve the campaign outcomes are:

### **Timely Payments**

Making a time-bound and specific promise on payment of incentive (for instance, 20 days) and ensuring its delivery as promised, can help in subsequent waves of conversions.

### **Accurate, Dynamic Data**

Creating a reliable way to collect baseline, progress and end-line data on a real-time basis can help in effective planning, review and evaluation.

## C. Research Based Campaign Development

The Davangere Campaign was based on extensive research with beneficiaries to understand their motivations and barriers for toilet construction. Insights from the research proved crucial in developing relevant, coherent and impactful messages.

From our experience, such a research-led communication would be invaluable for achieving the Swachh Bharat Mission objectives.



## Join Us

A complex, large scale problem like open defecation requires the coming together of many individuals and institutions. We are looking at Governments, NGOs, Funders, Academic Institutions, Corporates and interested individuals to develop this campaign further and scale it to different geographies in India. For further details, please get in touch with us.

Join us in this mission towards an open defecation free India!

## Contact

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Funding - Execution, Planning  
and Management



[www.karnataka.gov.in](http://www.karnataka.gov.in)

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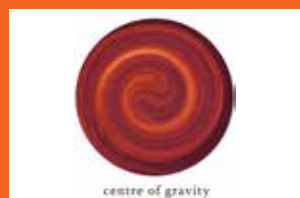
[www.davanagere.nic.in](http://www.davanagere.nic.in)

Conception, Funding - Campaign  
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[www.arghyam.org](http://www.arghyam.org)

Campaign Strategy  
and Design



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and Evaluation



[www.pafglobal.org](http://www.pafglobal.org)