

## Case Study Madhya Pradesh

January 2023

### MOBILIZING SELF-HELP GROUP (SHGs) FOR IMPLEMENTING FAECAL SLUDGE AND SEPTAGE MANAGEMENT (FSSM) IN PITHAMPURA, MADHYA PRADESH

“*Vishwas Dilwana Itna Aasan Nahi hai*” (It’s not easy to make them believe) - Rashmi Rajput. A simple line depicting the main challenge faced by volunteers and mobilizers while reaching out to communities for facilitating practices related to desludging and emptying of pits. Rashmi Rajput, a Self-Help Group (SHG) member for two years and a member of the Mohalla Sabha in Pithampur. An active community member, she was triggered to ensure that she and her community lived in a clean environment when UNICEF initiated the FSSM interventions in her Urban Local Body (ULB).



*Rashmi Rajput, SHG member and Mohalla Samiti member*

UNICEF-supported FSSM Project intervention in Madhya Pradesh aims to support Urban Development Authority in Budni and Pithampur ULBs to create awareness and demand for FSSM and improve existing services to meet that demand. As urbanization has increased, sustainable sanitation measures across cities have come under immense pressure, requiring all households not connected to sewer systems to have proper on-site FSM processes. These include containment (i.e. toilet with technically correct septic tank), collection (regular emptying of septic tank), transportation (of sludge safely to a treatment plant), treatment and reuse. The project’s overall goal was to support the Urban Development and Housing Department (UDHD) at the State level to strengthen the overall value chain for FSSM, learning lessons from piloting in these two ULBs ranging from improved planning, management, and technological interventions for FSSM services. Integral to the initiative was the planning and execution of the FSSM social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) interventions which were developed by UNICEF, WASH MP team and implemented by Pithampur Municipality with support from WaterAid.

#### **Brief profile of Pithampur**

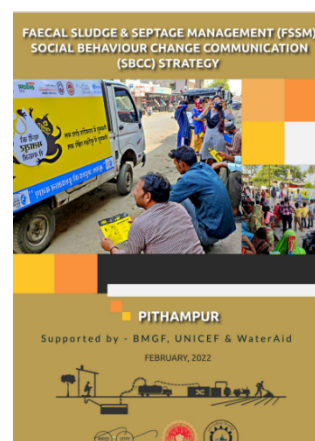
Pithampur, located in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, falls within the suburban limits of the Indore metropolitan region. The town serves as the industrial hub for Indore, primarily inhabited by migrant workers. A baseline study conducted for this FSSM initiative revealed that 831 households in Pithampur had access to operational toilets. However, the town of Pithampur faced severe challenges of indiscriminate disposal of partially treated wastewater into drains and water bodies which resulted in polluting the environment. Dried sludge (partially treated) could be seen out in the open. The lack of proper toilet technology adopted resulted in large excreta containment units, which conflicted with the norms of IS 2470.

“The residents of the town owned a toilet but maintaining it was not a priority. The households did not possess any knowledge about wastewater contamination and were not accepting sewer line connections”, said Rashmi Rajput. The limited support provided by the Nagarpalika, led to skepticism amongst the community which was evident when the implementing team approached the communities for undertaking the timely emptying of the septic tanks. However, the situation witnessed a positive change over a period of time with the engagement and mobilization of women from the ULB. They emerged as champions and leaders in promoting safe sanitation, providing correct information and influencing households to adopt correct practices.

This change was largely due to the effective Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy developed and implemented in the ULB. A methodological approach was adopted for devising a localized behaviour change communication strategy for Pithampura, based on evidence generated from the field.

### Situation analysis for FSSM in Pithampura

Following a structured approach to developing an SBCC strategy, the team initiated a desk review for a quick sanitation situation assessment for the town of Pithampur. Following this, In-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with HHs, commercial centres and institutional building managers, Public and community toilet caretakers and desludging operators. These interviews and FGDs helped in gathering evidence on knowledge, attitudes, and practices, on FSSM at Pithampur. FGDs and consultations helped collaborate the baseline findings to understand perceptions of the target audience and practices on FSSM, like- the quality and quantity of faecal sludge generated, collection methodologies, transportation methods, treatment technologies and efficacy of the overall FSSM services in Pithampur. It also helped identify the key behaviours that needed to be prioritized for different stakeholders, and channels of communication that could be used to reach them.



FSSM SBCC Strategy for Pithampur

### Brief Highlights on the findings of the situation analysis

Stakeholders	Current practices	Barriers
<b>Household-level</b>		
HH- individuals & families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HHs facing containment tank overflow issues</li> <li>• Regular desludging missing</li> <li>• Unable to undertake desludging due to narrow lanes and approach</li> <li>• BPL HHs not willing to pay desludging fees of Rs 1000, despite facing containment overflow issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of retrofitting of the toilets.</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge –                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communities unaware of the importance of desludging, and how faecal sludge is contaminating the water bodies.</li> <li>2. Unaware of the health and sanitation benefits of desludging the</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

		<p>containment tanks every three years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desludging machine unable to access homes for pit-emptying due to narrow lanes and streets.</li> <li>• Cost of desludging</li> </ul>
HHs with private sewage lines in some private colony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unaware of where the faecal sludge is being discharged.</li> <li>• No or limited knowledge about location of containment unit and its maintenance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge -</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Blueprint of the sewer lines and tanks of the society not available</li> </ol>
<b>Service providers</b>		
Masons	<p>Undertaking faculty construction of septic tanks-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Constructing big tanks</li> <li>2. Do not maintain 30 meters distance from boreholes and hand pumps.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge</li> <li>• Lack of space</li> </ul>
Desludging operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not following safety rules not followed</li> <li>• Not using safety gear not used.</li> <li>• HHs reported that MC desludging operator did not completely desludging the septic tank.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPE Kits are not available with them.</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge of procedures</li> <li>• The size of the containment tanks is big and more trips for desludging means more fees</li> </ul>
Motivators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHGs of more than 350 women formed under National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) not engaging in discussions on desludging or emptying pits.</li> <li>• Mohalla Samitis in different wards not supporting the cause.</li> <li>• Teachers and students in schools and colleges are unaware of the issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge on the issues of irregular desludging or unsafe discharge of faecal sludge.</li> <li>• No communication material was developed for raising awareness</li> <li>• Missing capacities to effectively use the communication material</li> </ul>

<p>Policy makers / govt / institutional</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of priority for desludging of septic tanks.</li> <li>• No activities are planned to increase demand for desludging the septic tanks, once every 3 years.</li> </ul>	<p>A separate record of individual HHs applying for desludging is not maintained. IEC Agency staff is not trained to conduct IEC/BCC or SBCC activities in a planned and effective way.</p>
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The situation analysis directed to the possibility of engaging SHG members, mohalla samiti members and students as motivators at HH level, and trade associations as motivators for mobilizing commercial establishments. Along with identifying key motivators, a channel analysis was undertaken which identified the key audiences and multiple channels through which various audiences could be mobilized including print media, Mid media, Interpersonal communication (IPC), Interactive community theatre, Audio-video materials, social media. Competitions and awareness generation rallies and capacity building initiatives for SHG members, Mohalla samiti members, MC members, FSTP staff etc., were undertaken to develop their soft skills. Based on these findings, a comprehensive SBCC strategy was developed to guide interventions and communication materials developed to implement the strategy.

### Behaviour change communication model for mobilizing communities

A two-fold communication strategy developed focused on mass mobilization through Malasur Campaign and targeted inter-personal communication (IPC) with households and key stakeholders. To facilitate Interpersonal Communication various stakeholders such as SHGs, service providers, ULB staff were trained to provide key messages and initiate dialogue within the community.

The key objectives of the SBCC strategy were-

1. Increase HHs' knowledge on desludging septic tanks once in 3 years and water contamination issues.
2. Increase awareness of water containment and health connection among the HHs.
3. Increase the number of HHs desludging their septic tan

A mascot was designed for the National level 'Malasur' campaign on FSSM was adapted for Pithampura and rolled out. IEC materials like brochures, posters, leaflets, and wall writings were developed and rolled out in 6 wards. Localized jingles, interactive community theatres, folk media, student rallies and social media campaigns provided 360-degree coverage.



Malasur brochure for Pithampura

## Mobilizing SHGs for implementing FSSM at Pithampura

A participatory approach was adopted for mobilising and engaging communities. SHG members were engaged first, following which they took onus and demanded the need for practicing safe FSSM. Though implementation of the same at the ULB level has been a challenging task yet, women like Rashmi



*Triggering of communities through the Malasaur campaign*

Rajput have emerged as champions. Taking the responsibility of making her ULB clean and safe, she was amongst the first few who tried to mobilize the community for undertaking desludging and safe disposal of black water. Despite facing resistance at the initial stages of community mobilization, where people were not ready to listen to the members of the Mohalla Samitis and further refused to pay for the desludging charges for maintaining the tanks, she continued with her work. The constant nudging by the Mohalla Samiti clubbed with a localized and effective SBCC strategy proved highly effective and efficient.

### Results and outcomes

The Mohalla Samiti formed under the project are now actively engaged in generating awareness about the maintenance of toilets, routine cleaning of septic tanks, hand washing with soap, and segregation of waste. Another crucial outcome is the resolution passed by the ULB of an additional 20% discount to be provided in case of group demands of 10 or more households raised by the Mohalla Samiti's, SHG or any other community groups.



*Glimpse of Mohalla Samiti meeting*

This has also led to a significant increase in demand for desludging services. The Mohalla Samitis were able to convince communities to uptake responsibility and accountability for desludging and emptying their tanks.

Issues like lack of political will at the local level for prioritizing desludging and emptying of tanks persist, however, improved capacities through capacity building of volunteers and women motivators have helped in creating awareness and generating better vigilance of the situation at the ULB level. Despite being at the early stage of implementation, the project has witnessed a bottom-up approach, resulting in higher levels of accountability and ownership at the grassroots level. Through constant support from the technical unit of WaterAid and Nagarpalika, the communities have been effectively mobilized, where women like Rashmi have played a pivotal role in implementing FSSM and creating demand for desludging and emptying tanks.

## **Advocacy with the state government based on the pilot for scaling up of Mohalla Samiti in other ULBs**

Post- mobilization of the SHGs and Mohalla Samiti, a state-level workshop was organized in December 2022, to disseminate the learnings from the interventions undertaken in Pithampura and Budhni for implementing City-Wide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS). The workshop was attended by key officials responsible for implementing FSSM and undertaking CWIS. Following this, it was agreed to scale up Mohalla Samiti's engagement in other ULBs for scaling up CWIS, across the State.

### **References:**

Feacal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) in Madhya Pradesh: Key Intervention and update from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and UNICEF partnership, March 2021-October 2022 (Published by UNICEF)

Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Strategy Note: Feacal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) in Pithampur, Feb 2022 (Published by UNICEF)

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