

Research into Use Summary

- 1. Research Project:** *Improving the performance of communal latrines in achieving safe faeces disposal in urban poverty pockets*
- 2. Lead researcher:** *Dr Adam Biran, LSHTM*
- 3. SHARE Partners:** *LSHTM, WaterAid, SDI*
- 4. Research budget:** *£10,508*
- 5. Location:** *India*

Research description:

A major aim of this research is to improve the understanding of the factors that determine where people choose to defecate. The work will also explore what would make communal facilities attractive as defecation places and what would make open defecation intolerable. A study will be designed to assess the patterns of use of communal facilities, and the potential contribution and limitations of communal sanitation provision in ending open defecation in urban poverty pockets. This will be achieved through the design, testing and evaluation of modifications to the physical and/or operating services and conditions of communal facilities in order to encourage greater use.

What is the relevance of the research to national and/or global sector challenges?

Indian cities are experiencing rapid population growth and an expansion of slum areas. For many reasons – including insecurity of tenure, and lack of space and affordability – household sanitation options are limited, coverage is poor and open defecation remains a problem. The provision of public, pay-per-use and community-owned sanitation blocks may offer an effective means to address this situation. Evidence is needed to quantify the potential contribution of public and communal toilets to reducing open defecation and faecal pollution, and to identify design features and management factors that encourage use. This research will address a major concern given the large numbers of urban poor in India. Consequently, its impact will potentially be far-reaching.

Who are the intended users of this research?

The findings will be used to guide the development of a larger research project to increase the use of communal facilities. A report will detail initial research results, focussing on facilitators, barriers, and options for increasing communal facility usage and safe child faecal disposal. It is essential that investors and policy-makers understand communal latrine usage and barriers to usage when building public toilets in urban areas. A summary of the research findings will be made publicly available on the SHARE website and will be disseminated within the SHARE consortium and to a broad range of users.

