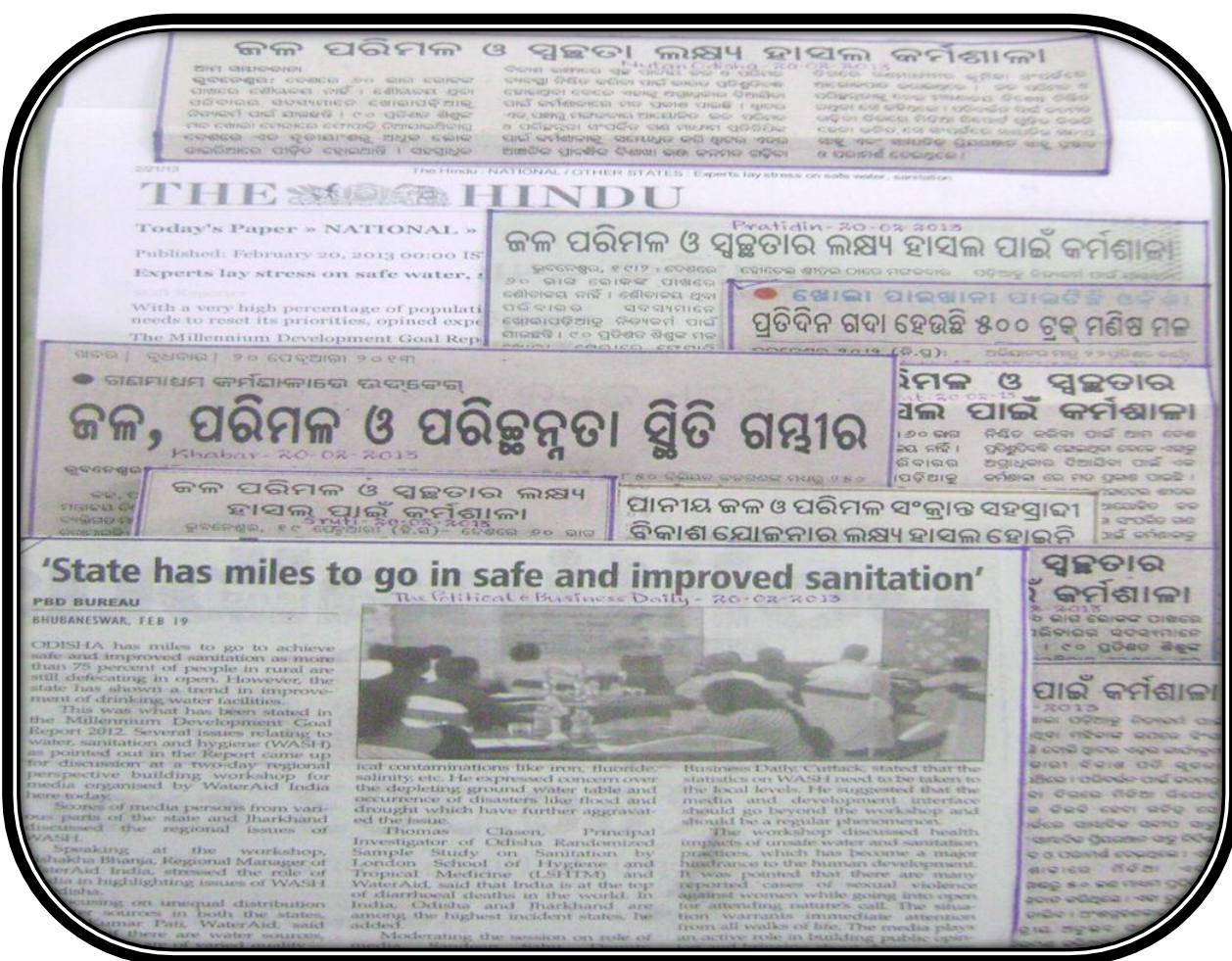


REPORT

Regional Perspective-Building Workshop on Drinking Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) for Media

Dates: 19th & 20th February, 2013

Venue: Hotel Seetal, Bhubaneswar



The media plays an active role in building public opinion and bringing about change. Media-led activism has borne fruit in the recent years in India. In order to improve the WASH situation there is a need for focussed media attention. Simultaneously it is also essential to generate a public discourse, build public interest and pressure for action on issues preventing equitable access to WASH services. In this context, a 'Perspective Building Workshop' for media was organised on 19th & 20th February 2013 at Hotel Seetal, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The objective of the workshop was to have a consultation with the media on the current WASH status in Jharkhand and Odisha (operational states of WaterAid in eastern region) and to develop a road map for media engagement, with a time bound plan.

Day One (19th February 2013)

The two days 'Perspective Building Workshop' for media was started with a warm welcome by **Ms. Bishakha Bhanja**, Regional Manager, WaterAid (ALOE). Sharing the objective of the workshop, she



told that, over the years WaterAid has realised that water and sanitation issues are not mainstreamed as they should be and those have become a less priority issue for the Government and people. She urged the participants to start a discussion on this. Moreover, she added, at many places best practices are observed in Odisha and Jharkhand and there is a need to highlight the best practices and success stories.

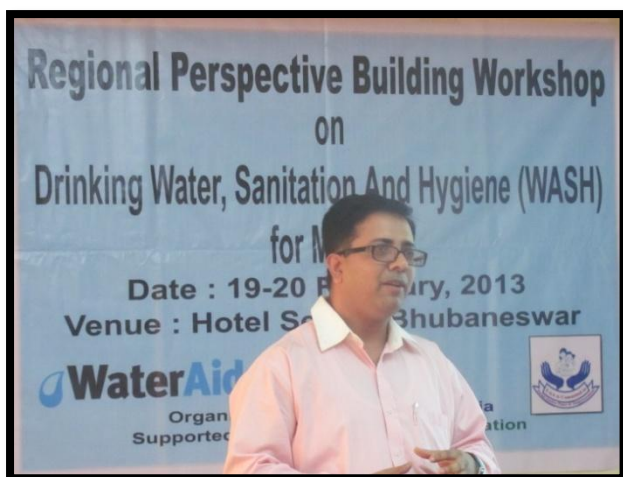
Many newer policies like Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan are now introduced to the centre and the State. In this regard, media needs to assume a more critical role in making the community aware on the policy prescriptions. Ms. Bhanja stressed on the need of a roadmap for the engagement of media and civil society organisations to address the challenges of drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

After that, **Mr. Bikash Kumar Pati**, WaterAid, briefed the participants on agenda of the workshop and presented on the status of water and sanitation in India. He looked critically at the policies available on WASH and pointed out the disparity between various government reports. He shared that new opportunities are available in WASH sector viz. in Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA), the APL families are now included and there is also an increase in the subsidy provided by Government of India for Individual household latrines. Mr. Pati indicated that, though the Millennium Goals Report of 2012 suggests a fall in India's poverty rates and reveals a noticeable increase in access to improved water sources in India, the country still lags far behind on sanitation front. 49.2 percent of Indian households lack toilets and there is a huge disparity between urban and rural scenarios. It is estimated that 153 women are still dying every day without adequate nutrition. Though water is a State subject, water policies of a State mostly follows national policies. Mr. Pati shared the prescriptions of different policies, plans and declarations like National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Millennium Development Goals, Common Minimum Programme, Bharat Nirman Programme, Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan etc. and stressed that various issues of coverage, quality and operation & maintenance of drinking water assets are yet to be addressed in India. Moreover, newer challenges of ground water depletion and impact of natural



disasters like flood are hindering the developments in WASH sector. On the other side, in sanitation the approach is mostly centred on toilets and hygiene is still at the bottom of the priority. The contemporary challenges include bringing the line departments and other stakeholders onto one platform, need of an authentic database, measuring the health outcomes against intervention and introduction of a bottom to top approach in Behaviour Change Communication.

Mr. Sumantra Mukherjee, WaterAid, presented on status of WASH in the State of Jharkhand and addressed the limitations of statistics provided by the State Government on WASH. He indicated the position of Jharkhand against other States in access to drinking water sources like tap water, tube wells and wells and compared data of 2001 and 2011. It was shown that the situation of 2001 and 2011 do not vary much and wells are still one of the major sources of drinking water for the rural and urban population. Mr. Sumantra shared that the facts are alarming as nearly 40.3 percent of wells in rural pockets and 16.7 percent in urban pockets are unsafe and do not yield potable water.



Compared to 2001, more families now travel more than 500 meters to fetch water. However, the statistics are much questionable. While scheme details in 36.25 percent households were yet to be entered into the IMIS website, the Government of Jharkhand claims to have achieved 96% coverage in rural water supply programme. Mr. Sumantra critically opined that the present norms of coverage do not show a clear picture viz. against the norm of 40 LPCD, there is no monitoring mechanism and mere provision of a source to a given no. of population does not ensure 40 LPCD.

Dysfunction of tube wells is a major determinant of the irrelevance of norms of coverage. The expenditure under National Rural Drinking Water Programme is grossly underutilised and still the Government seeks funds from the external agencies. Sanitation is at a critical juncture in Jharkhand as nearly 92.4 percent households in rural area do not have a toilet. The disparity is also very high among rural and urban areas. In drainage and possession of bathroom, the State shows a poor position against other Indian States. Mr. Sumantra questioned the reliability of data and showed that data by Govt. Website, Census 2011 and HDR 2011 are mostly inconsistent. The distribution of expenditure is also uneven among different districts of the State. Mr. Sumantra expressed his concern over the growing number of slipped back habitations and examined other issues of WASH in Jharkhand. He narrated the following WASH issues in the State:

- Poor progress in Pipe Water Supply System.
- Slow progress in transfer of funds to Village Water and Sanitation Committees.
- Operation and maintenance of the assets by the PRIs.
- Poor fund utilization.
- Data inconsistency.
- Issues of false reported cases in TSC, BPL households who got incentives of Rs 500 to Rs 2200 and whose toilets are not in usable condition?
- Extent of devolution of funds, functions and functionaries to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI).
- Capacity of the frontline workers (Jal Sahiyas) and PRIs and high expectation from them.
- Role of NGOs in the new framework.
- Convergence with MGNREGA and other flagship programmes like SSA
- Non compliance of water security planning at the district level and poor inter-departmental convergence for resource mobilization.
- Problems in supply chain management (water testing kits, sanitary goods, fund flow, spare parts and IEC materials).
- Transparency mechanisms – social audit and its regularization.

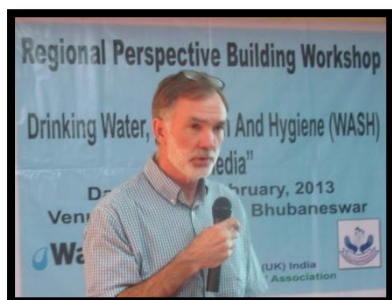
Feedback session

During the feedback session the media participants from Odisha and Jharkhand presented on various local WASH challenges. During the session, experiences were shared whereby the participants narrated the challenges to operation and maintenance of drinking water sources and issues with



obsoleteness of field testing kits for water quality testing. Discussions were also held on the progress of MDG in Jharkhand and progress of activities implemented by WaterAid. Ms. Bhanja stressed on the fact that changing the mindset of people for using household latrines is a priority task for the agencies intervening in WASH sector.

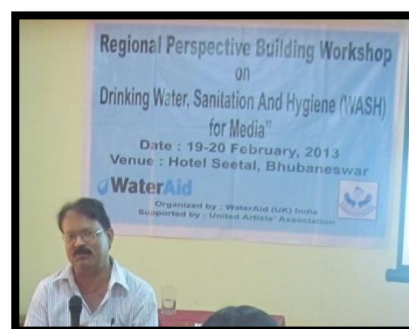
Mr. Thomas Clasen, Principal Investigator of Randomised Sanitation Trial Study in Puri district of Odisha by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicines presented on the progress of WASH in Odisha, the key constraints and researches made so far on the issue. 'Diarrhoea is an Indian phenomenon', Mr. Clasen quoted, furnishing comparative statistics of countries where diarrhoeal



deaths account for three quarters of total deaths. India tops the chart with 535 deaths due to diarrhoea per thousand populations. He shared that, there is a visible increase in people's access to improved sources in India, as far as the statistics is concerned. But several factors also indicate that improved sources may not be safe, accessible and functioning. Sanitation is a precarious issue in India and nearly 60% people defecate in the open. In Odisha, percentage share of households having household latrines with water closet facilities is less as compared to other Indian States. Mr. Clasen observed that

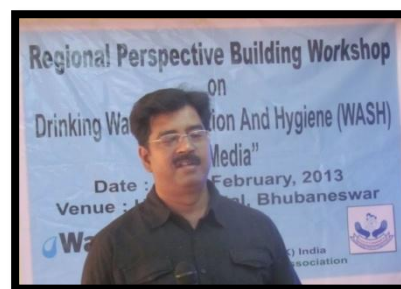
latrine coverage does not denote use of latrine and the incidences of 'slippage' among ODF villages are increasing. Disposal of Children's faeces is also a major issue in Odisha. Pit emptying and zoonotic infections are other challenges. Mr. Clasen shared about the study 'Odisha Sanitation Trial' which is currently being undertaken by LSHTM and is hoped to be completed on October, 2013. He shared the study objectives, design and activities undertaken till now.

Mr. Sandeep Sahu, BBC moderated a session on role of media in advocating for development issues in general and WASH issues in particular. Speaking from the perspective of current trends in media advocacy, he shared that research based articles are need of the hour. Many times the statistics are provided in print and electronic media and resulted in assembly questions on the issue. But the statistics also should be brought to the local levels. He urged the media participants for long term association with the issue and constant follow up. He opined that there should be more media sensitization workshops and between the workshops the media persons can be followed up on progress of WASH advocacy. During the session, media persons shared their problems in reporting WASH and other development issues. Issues of sanitation in double crop areas, ground water depletion and water conservation were shared with local examples. It was discussed that when the issue is a burning one, like incidence of diarrhoea outbreak as an epidemic, then media covers the issue. But in other times also there is a need to follow the WASH issues. There is also a need to build an interface between the civil society organisations and media. Examples are cited whereby issues are taken up by the journalist, but constraints were faced in publishing the same. **Mr. Sahu opined that the editorial houses and senior media persons also should be sensitized on the issue.** Sometimes expectations are high from the media houses, but there are also limitations. Mr. Sahu opined that the size of the reports should be tailored to fit the requirements of media without compromising the message. Mr. Priyaranjan Sahu from Hindustan Times shared that modern interface like Facebook etc. can also be used to communicate the messages. Ms. Bhanja shared that WaterAid India has a good database on access to safe water and sanitation and the organisation can share the data with media persons. After lunch the media persons made an exposure visit on WASH issues to Brahmeshwarpur and Nuagaon villages near Pipili, Puri. The visit was facilitated by Mr. Mangaraj, UAA.



Day Two (20th February 2013)

The second day of workshop started with a recap of previous day's discussions and experience sharing on the field visit. **Mr. Soumyaranjan Mohanty**, WaterAid India, highlighted the importance of the day i.e. World Social Justice Day and shared that it is a good day as WASH challenges are closely related with social justice. He informed the participants that the previous day's workshop report is covered by more than ten English and Odia dailies and narrated a media report for the recap of previous day's discussions.



Media participants from Jharkhand shared the experience of last day's field visit to Brahmeswarpur and Nuagaon villages. They narrated that the community in the villages was much aware on WASH issues and the leaders were passionate for the cause. In the villages, which are also study villages for the 'sanitation trial', sanitation coverage was 100 percent and the latrines were constructed keeping in mind the economic capacity of the beneficiary. Though land was available for open defecation, villagers have constructed latrines with contribution from households. Before five years, the villagers used to practise open defecation and diseases like diarrhoea were regular visitors to them. Now the situation is changing and achievements are perceived through many examples. The villagers revealed that the guests, who were previously embarrassed to visit their relatives in villages, now are coming with their families. Mr. Soumya shared that the community institutions which were formed to spread the sanitation drive have now taken a step further and engaged in livelihood promotion activities. This is not only yielding economic gain, but also helping the women achieving higher political status in their villages. He stressed that once a person is habituated to use a latrine to defecate, he/she seldom deviates. So it is important that the children are targeted in any intervention on WASH. Mr. Soumya triggered discussion on the type of stories which can be generated from the field visit.

Mr. Bighneswar Sahu, Journalist from Odisha, requested the media friends to take the WASH issues on a campaign mode and indicated some issues which can be taken up. He shared that, in practice, latrine construction should be a priority action in allotting benefits under Indira Awas Yojana and campaign should be launched to construct community latrines in villages where land availability is a major issue. During discussions, Mr. Soumya shared that there are places where WaterAid has introduced latrines as per special needs of community viz. latrines for disable persons. 'Odisha has achieved only 22 percent in sanitation coverage in 20 years and we can't afford to move at this pace,' Mr. Soumya was quoted while saying.

Following the discussion, a video clip was shown to the participants on menstrual hygiene. The video clip depicted the taboo associated with menstrual hygiene and community initiatives taken to promote production and use of sanitary latrines.



Ms. Jasmin Ahirwar, WaterAid India, presented on the feedbacks from other media advocacy consultations held in different parts of the country by WaterAid and stressed on the need of maintaining constant relationship with the media. She told the participants that WaterAid regards media as a partner to the intervention in WASH sector and not merely instrumental to publicity of activities. Describing the goal of media partnership, she shared that the aim is to reach and aware the community, influence political

commitment and accountability in WASH and mainstream WASH reportage in media. Ms. Jasmine outlined the following aims of media partnership:

- Awareness of media on WASH issues
- Promote effective communication on WASH issues
- Support the ongoing advocacy initiatives, influencing policy and thereby making WASH as Right of people
- Sharing knowledge and strengthening partnerships
- Collective targeting of political decisions- to improve governance etc.
- Sharing stories of change and best practices
- Periodic printing and broadcasting for excluded and marginalised communities



In light of the above aims and objectives, Ms. Jasmine presented the following activities suggested through various previous interactions with media:

- Formation of friends of WASH media group as a joint initiative of WaterAid India and media
- Campaign on WASH through media advocacy
- Perspective building workshop
- Regular sharing with media on data, best practices, policy decisions etc.
- To have a campaign around any national or international day like World Water Day, World Toilet Day etc.
- Organising exposure visit of media
- Organising local media workshops
- Working with existing media networks like Press Clubs etc.
- Engage with the senior media persons and persons with editorial responsibilities
- Promote WASH through creative programming viz. Public Service Announcement, making documentaries, community debates, talk shows etc.
- Building 'Sambaad Doots' as point persons in organisation for regular engagement with the media
- Sharpening the writing and communication skills of Sambaad Doot
- Media fellowships
- Involvement in WASH Asia Media Group
- Annual and half yearly review meetings
- Compilation of WASH reportage

Ms. Jasmine briefed about the South Asia level WASH media group and shared the inputs by media persons from different South Asian countries. She showed a scrapbook on WASH related news published by WaterAid and encouraged the participants if similar activities can be undertaken in Indian context. She asked the participants to put their views on the following:

- What should be the strategy to include the broadcasting media?
- How dialogue can be made with the media persons with editorial responsibilities?
- How the media persons can help in capacity building of Sambaad Doots?
- How to approach media networks like press clubs etc.?



Mr. Bikash Kumar Pati informed the participants that on 19th March 2013, the Regional Campaign on Right to Sanitation will be launched by South Asian countries. The same platform can serve as the basis of a campaign. Answering the above queries, Mr. Sandeep Sahu shared that various news channels have slots for coverage of development issues. WASH can be introduced as a theme to such slots. He opined that first-hand knowledge on programmes in channels should be acquired and then the channels can be approached. Moreover, the FM channels can also be used as a platform as they can be accessed from anywhere through mobile phones etc. Mr. Sahu suggested that another programme for senior media persons can be conducted to sensitize the media persons with editorial responsibilities. He informed that many newspapers have a separate edition or column for the children and children are major target beneficiaries in any WASH intervention. He encouraged the participants to explore possibilities wherein WASH based editions and columns can be introduced. Ms Jasmine shared experience whereby agencies which have built cadres of school children as child reporters offered their services to support the cause. The media participants explained that constant engagement with the WASH issues is a mutual responsibility with media at one hand and civil society organisation on the other. Mr. Soumya shared that WaterAid is also involved with other networks like India Sanitation portal, Forum on Right to Education etc. and such platforms can be used to flag off the WASH issues by media. Mr. Sumantra suggested on creation of a group email id where information can be shared and asked for participant's opinion on its effectiveness. The suggestion was accepted by the participants. It was discussed that the good practices and other information should be shared with media by implementing agencies. Adding to this there is also a need to build the capacity of the media persons on report writing. Mr. Sandeep Sahu agreed to support for capacity building of the media persons. It was decided to start with the suggested points and it was hoped that during continuance of activities under media partnership, new ideas and strategies will ensue.

The workshop ended with a vote of thanks by Mr. Mangaraj Panda, UAA.