



Panel discussion with the political parties

On

The issue of Sanitation

with the Experts

Venue: ETV Bihar,

Date : 2nd October 2015

Executive Summary:

“Sanitation & Hygiene is a key challenge in India, which has about 60% of world’s one billion open defecators. There are more people defecating in open in rural India than the rest of world combined. From 2011 census, nearly 600 million people in India live without **toilet**.

The major contributor in failure of sanitation coverage is states like Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam which is bottom of the sanitation ladder. As per report of Ministry of Drinking water and sanitation Govt. of India, only 21.41% house hold here in Bihar was having toilet **facility**². Actual figure may vary but sanitation reality continues to be the same. There is acute shortage of community toilets. Even the schools, Anganwadi centres are deprived of these basic civic amenities. Menstrual hygiene is yet to come in mainstream agenda of the state.

System and process within parties become key coordinate to peruse pressing agenda that affects life of majority population. Political parties address issues by administering several instruments like party manifesto, formation of issue based committees and working groups, training to their cadre etc.

The election manifesto of different parties is the formal documentation of the party’s election plank. It spells out the consensus agenda that is said to be acceptable to majority members (mostly manipulated by special interest group) of any party.

The party’s election manifesto circumscribes the scope of the promises that local politicians can make in their campaigns. Unfortunately sanitation is yet to be high priority among local issue and thus elected representative give deaf ear to the issue.

The inclusion and highlighting of desirable elements in manifesto essentially does not translate into action though an important yard stick as of now.

Bihar is one of the most backward states of India in which socio economic crisis, natural calamity, and caste and class intervals has been perennial problem which affected life, health and livelihood of native people. The state is again at the bottom in terms of availability of sanitation infrastructure and its uses. Despite commendable effort during last a decade, still two third of house hold has not accessed needful infrastructure despite last one decade effort of state government. The accumulated deficit is so high that it deserves priority attention and more commitment from political leadership.

One of the important reasons that can be counted are related to poor sanitation coverage is lack of political leadership on the subject & lack of commitment from political parties.

In continuation of the study of political parties it has been seen that the sanitation issue has lesser importance in their agenda. Water has been given prime importance rather than sanitation. In the vidhan sabha near about 17 session has been continued but the questions were raised regarding the sanitation in the legislative house was only 71. After the out come of the study it has been realised that there must be a discussion with the political parties at the state level. Under this aegis it has been suggested to have panel discussion with all the political parties ,INGOs,VISWASH members and the GSF official to have a common thought how to impetus the sanitation drive in the state of Bihar.ETV always played a pivotal role in

spreading the message of sanitation among the community .So it has been suggested to have panel discussion at ETV studio which will help to knock the door of government and forward the message to all the political parties and the community of Bihar.



Consultant sharing the importance of sanitation with the president of RJD Mr.Ram chander Purvey and give importance in their Party manifesto and charter of demand



Meeting with the BJP Spokesperson Mr.Sanjay Tiger at the BJP state office Bihar to give high importance of Sanitation in Bihar.

Viswash believes:-“under democratic governance, political parties play pivotal role to carry forward the agenda of development & change”. Political parties are powerful force that drives change. There level of sensitization results into resolving friendly policies; improved service delivery to citizen. GSF has mandated Bihar to mobilise political parties for causes of sanitation in Bihar which is lagging behind other development indicator like road connectivity, power, school infrastructure, disaster management etc. Present study is an effort to know the level of engagement of political establishment in promotion of rural sanitation and recommend way forward to mobilise more serious engagement to them.

ii. objective of the Panel discussion:

- To explore political structure, political institutions and state stakeholders that influence outreach of sanitation services in Bihar.
- To understand level of their engagement in promotion of sanitation agenda in Bihar
- To understand the situation of sanitation in of Bihar focussed to toilet construction and uses in Bihar.
- To visualize strategy for more impressive participation of political parties to support the sanitation agenda.

iii. The panel discussion was organised at ETV studio. The agenda was circulated to all the Viswash members, GSF, Leading political parties of Bihar, INGOs like Unicef, Plan International, World vision, PSI, BTAST.The discussion was focussed on the inclusion of sanitation issue in their manifesto at high priority level. Charter of demand was shared with all the political parties spokesperson, INGOS representative, team leader of GSF and their

official. The members of VISWASH network, including the media person were also present in the panel discussion.

The chief guests of the panel discussion were as follows:

- a. Mr. Ajay Alok (Spokes person JDU)
- b. Mr. Anand Shekhar (Team Leader GSF)
- c. Mr. Parveen More (UNICEF)
- d. Mr. Vinay Tiwary (GSF CB)
- e. Mr. Ashish Kumar (Plan International)
- f. Mr. Ram Shankar Sharma (Convener- Viswash)
- g. Mr. Kumar Parbodh (ETV State Head)

During the panel discussion first round started with the introduction of the guest and then the agenda was discussed. The core objective of the discussion was to give high priority to the sanitation in their manifesto and what will be the strategy to make the Swachh Bihar within the stipulated time. ETV state head started the discussion by stating that the Bihar is totally engulfed under the environment of political colour and sanitation is one the core issue of the government. The spokesperson from the JDU highlighted that whether you are in power or not, your agenda must go on. He also pointed that Bihar since very beginning keep this thematic issue on high priority basis by citing the example of Bindeswari Pathak 's effort by making community toilet at Gandhi Maidan and it become a role model in whole country but also in outside of the country. He also highlighted about the distribution channel of water in the household .Team leader GSF highlighted about to balance the power relation and also indicated that political will is also required. After 68 years of independence we still lag behind the developed country and continue to talk about sanitation. State convener of Viswash also pointed that there is a great scope of employment for the skilled and unskilled labour because near about millions of toilets still to be constructed in Bihar.

During the discussion few questions were also raised regarding the demand and supply chain. Mr vinay tiwary from GSF has given fundamental suggestion about the construction toilet at the low cost.

Parveen More from UNICEF also emphasised that the there is need of an hour to construct toilet but uses of that is more important.

At the end of the discussion all the panellist has agreed that sanitation is more important in the human life and it should not be looked into as the construction of toilet only but emphasis on uses and the behavioural change which can make a big difference in their economical ,social aspect of life and contribute to the nation in its development.



Discussion with the ETV state chief regarding the importance of sanitation



Meeting with the Ex-Minister rural development on the charter of demand related to water and sanitation issue