


WEDC
12th Conference: Water and sanitation at mid-Decade: Calcutta 1986
B Pathak
Bihar and the urban sanitation Decade target


Mid-term appraisal of the Decade achievement in this country has indicated that hardly 25% of the urban population were covered with safe sanitary latrines by March 1965. Another survey in the past has recorded that about one-third of the urban households had no latrines and another two-fifths depended on bucket latrines which require scavengers to clean them and transport the excreta on head for disposal. Only a quarter of the urban households is provided with safe sanitary latrines. The goal for the Decade was to cover 80% of the urban population with sanitation by March 1991. Reviewing the progress made in this sector during the Sixth Five Year plan period and the proposals included in the Seventh Five Year plan, a consensus is emerging to search alternative achievable goals. Exercise for setting alternative goals have already begun.

Seeing the plight of the scavengers carrying night soil on their heads, Mahatma Gandhi said much before independence - "I may not be born again, if it so happens, I would like to be born in a family of scavengers so that I may relieve them of inhuman, unhealthy and hateful practice of carrying head load of nightsoil."

Even after three and a half decades of planned development, it has not been possible to eliminate it. A number of Committees and Commissions at various levels have unanimously recommended to eradicate this stigma but the largest number of the scavengers engaged in this hateful job in the world are still found in this country. Even now about four to five millions dry latrines are estimated to be in

use engaging more than 0.25 million scavengers for carrying night soil for disposal. Since 1974 programme of conversion of dry latrines into Sulabh Shauchalaya has been continuing in the State of Bihar. About 0.15 million dry latrines have so far been converted and about 5000 scavengers have been relieved from this demeaning work. They have been retained in their services on some other jobs by the local bodies without loss of their earnings.

In spite of this accomplishment, an assessment indicated that as on 1.4.85, 1,92,000 dry latrines still existed in 162 urban units in the State of Bihar.

It will be the greatest achievement of the U.N. Decade if all the existing dry latrines are converted into Sulabh Shauchalayas thus providing safe and sanitary latrines to more than a million of urban people and relieving about 10,000 scavengers from this demeaning work once and for all.

With these objectives the State Government of Bihar has decided to get all the dry latrines converted into Sulabh Shauchalayas within the Seventh Five Year Plan i.e. by March, 1990. The freed scavengers and their dependents are proposed to be rehabilitated in some gainful employment. Specific programmes in this regard have already been taken up. A sum of Rs. 190 millions has been provided in the State Plan for the period 1985-9.

An exercise done to work out financial requirements indicates that conversion of all the

TABLE - I
ANNUAL PHYSICAL TARGET AND FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT OF CONVERSION OF
DRY LATRINES INTO SULABH SHAUCHALAYA

YEAR	TARGET	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT		PROVISION IN THE STATE SECTORAL PLAN (Rs. in Lakhs)	UNCOVERED GAP (Rs. in lakhs)
		UNIT COST (Rs.)	TOTAL REQUIREMENT (Rs. in lakhs)		
1	2	3	4	5	6
1985-86	33000	1200.00	400.00	300.00	100.00
1986-87	39000	1300.00	507.00	400.00	107.00
1987-88	40000	1400.00	560.00	400.00	160.00
1988-89	40000	1500.00	600.00	400.00	200.00
1989-90	40000	1600.00	640.00	400.00	240.00
Total VI Plan	192000		2707.00 100%	1900.00 70%	807.00 30%

T A B L E - II

STATEMENT SHOWING YEARWISE BREAKUP OF TRAINING OF FREED SCAVENGERS

Year	Target of conversion of dry latrines (NOS)	No. of Freed Scavengers (NOS)	Training cost per scavenger (Rs)	Total cost of Training of Freed scavengers (Rs. in lakhs)	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6
1985-86	33000	1650	5400.00	89.10	
1986-87	39000	1950	5400.00	105.30	
1987-88	40000	2000	5400.00	108.00	
1988-89	40000	2000	5400.00	108.00	
1989-90	40000	2000	5400.00	108.00	
TOTAL	192000	9600		518.40	

existing 1,92,000 dry latrines into Sulabh Shauchalayas by March 1990 will require Rs. 270.7 millions. Provision in the State Plan for the Seventh Five Year Plan on this programme has been Rs. 190 millions, which is about 70% of the total requirement. The remaining 30% i.e. Rs. 80.7 millions is expected to be made available by the Ministry of Welfare, Government of India as grant or through HUDCO as loan. The annual target, financial requirement, State Plan provision and expected grants from the Government of India have been shown in Table I.

Servicing of dry latrines has been continuing to be a traditional profession. Scavengers, who are engaged in this work, will of course be retained in their services till their age of superannuation but there will not be any scope of employment for their sons and daughters once dry latrines are eliminated. Accordingly they need to be moved to some other vocations. Because of weak social and educational base this group need special attention for making them suitable to compete with others for jobs or to seek self employment. Since they have their moorings in urban setup, they are generally not interested to move to rural areas.

For imparting practical training to the sons and daughters of the freed scavengers, a project has been launched and it is under implementation. About 600 boys and girls belonging to this community are being given training in the following trades:-

- (1) Typing
- (2) Tailoring
- (3) Motor Mechanic
- (4) Driving
- (5) Leather works

- (6) General Mechanic
- (7) Cane work
- (8) Carpentry

The training is being imparted by the Research & Rehabilitation wing of the Sulabh International, Patna with 100% financial support from the Government of India.

The duration of the course is about one year. During training, each trainee gets a stipend of Rs. 300.00 per month for meeting hostel expenses. After training, some will get jobs like others if and when there are vacancies. The others will be encouraged to earn wages by being self-employed.

They will be given loan from the Bank under various ongoing programmes. The annual approximate number of the trainees and the cost involved during the Seventh Five Year Plan period has been worked out which is shown in Table II.

Ministry of Welfare, Government of India has been bearing the 100% cost on this subhead as an outright grant to the State Government.

The total cost of this programme conversion and training in Bihar during the Seventh Five Year Plan period comes to Rs. 322.45 millions. Achievement of the goal by the end of the Seventh Five Year Plan will need an assistance of Rs. 80.70 millions which is only a quarter of the total requirement. The annual breakup is being furnished in Table III.

T A B L E - III

STATEMENT SHOWING FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT, PLAN PROVISION AND ASSISTANCE/LOAN REQUIRED FOR CONVERSION OF DRY LATRINES INTO SULABH SHAUCHALAYA AND TRAINING OF FREED SCAVENGERS

(Rupees in lakhs)

Year	CONVERSION PROGRAMME				TRAINING PROGRAMME			TOTAL OF THE TWO PROGRAMMES			Assistance/ Loan require (4)
	Total financial requirements	Provision in the State plan	Expected Central assistance/ Loan	Total Financial requirement	Assistance from the Central Govt.	Total financial Requirements (2 + 5)	Provision in the State Plan (3)	Provision in the Central Plan(6)			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
1985-86	400.00	300.00	100.00	89.10	89.10	489.10	300.00	89.10	100.00		
1986-87	507.00	400.00	107.00	105.30	105.30	612.30	400.00	105.30	107.00		
1987-88	560.00	400.00	160.00	108.00	108.00	668.00	400.00	108.00	160.00		
1988-89	600.00	400.00	200.00	108.00	108.00	708.00	400.00	108.00	200.00		
1989-90	640.00	400.00	240.00	108.00	108.00	748.00	400.00	108.00	240.00		
TOTAL	72707.00	1900.00	807.00	518.40	518.40	3225.40	1900.00	518.40	807.00		
Percentage	100%	70%	30%	100%	100%	100%	58.90%	16.07%	25.03%		

*** Grant Expected from Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India/ Loan from HUDCO.