

## Prioritization to optimization: An institutional transformation

A key finding of benchmarking study for WASH in KGBVs under Project Prajwala was lack of ownership among stakeholders, leading to poor maintenance of available WASH facilities. Project Prajwala is a joint initiative of National Stock Exchange Foundation and Rajasthan Elementary Education Council, being implemented by Centre for Environment Education (CEE) as knowledge and implementation partner and UNICEF as technical partner. Addressing the gap, visualization exercise were undertaken with teachers to build their capacity during teacher training workshop. In an interactive session for sharing views of participant for model school with a focus of WASH in schools, teachers came up with a wish list of facilities for model school ranging from infrastructural need of more classroom, facilities of library and computer education, technical instrumentation like solar panels to requirement of more staff for classroom transactions.

A photo journey of WASH in KGBVs was carried out showing current scenario of available WASH infrastructure in KGBVs. These photos included all areas like kitchen, sanitation block, solid waste management, waste water discharge, sewerage, dormitory, etc. with dilapidated condition of WASH infrastructure and the inadequate WASH practices reflecting lack of attention of school management. Teachers could retrospect their own school during the photo journey and the visualization gap in their ideal school plan without need of basic WASH infrastructure and its upkeep. The same photojourney in its next part showcased some best practices from KGBVs which were simple and economically viable. A radical shift

was seen in the draft plan which they prepared in other sessions with priority to WASH and strengthening institutional mechanisms for participatory management for fostering behaviour change institutional mechanisms for participatory management for fostering behaviour change.

Handholding visits served a step ahead in this direction. Application of learning of workshop with actions taken on draft plan in schools was witnessed by field staff. Thematic sessions via school visit helped to improve understanding, working out solutions for O&M issues, discussion and sharing of ideas for improving WASH scenario. Teachers further realized that the need of the hour is to rebuild WASH components along with fulfilling new infrastructural requirements. Utilization of the O&M grant is one of the ways to meet out the expenses to retrofit and optimize WASH infrastructure, so as to support adequate WASH practices in their campus.

This institutional transformation has led school management to undertake retrofitting of existing infrastructure and augmentation at their own through their school grants after capacity building via project activities for prioritising WASH in school development plan. Networking was done by schools for in cash and in kind support from other linked departments like Municipal Corporations, MGNREGA, Panchayati Raj Institutions and individual donors. These efforts for developing child friendly and gender sensitive WASH facilities includes availability and management of drinking water, retrofitting of sanitation block, repair of kitchen, cloth washing station, facilities for improving personal hygiene like in dormitory, handwashing facilities, menstrual hygiene management, solid- liquid waste management, overall cleanliness of building and campus. Among 72 schools of phase 1, for ensuring availability and management of drinking water, activities undertaken includes installation and repair of RO in 18 schools, construction of dedicated drinking water station in 5 schools, construction and repair of RWHS/ recharge pit in 5 schools, installation of new overhead tank in 5 schools. Repair of the sanitation block was taken at utmost priority in all 72 schools. The retrofitting work included adequate sloping, painting, putting tiles, repair of door, fixing of door hooks, repair of sewerage and septic tank, repair and installing new wash basin, repair and new geyser in 23 schools. For proper MHM, repair of incinerator was done in 16 schools. 10 schools has made dedicated compost pit while one school has installed biogas plant. For improving hygiene in schools, repair and construction of group hand washing unit was done in 18 schools, repair of dish washing facility in 6 schools, installing utensil stand in 16 schools. Shoe stand was procured in 37 schools, flooring done in courtyard in 4 schools, developing kitchen garden in 26 schools and paint of building in 11 schools. This is just a beginning and more actions will continue in these schools and rest 128 schools of phase 2, leading to sustainability of initiative and improved scenario of WASH in schools.

