

## A village housewife sets an example

In an extremely backward area of Orissa, one woman realized the dangers of open defecation and had the courage to opt for a household toilet. This awareness came to her through a camp organized by Gram Utthan under the FINISH Society programme. Now, others in the village are following her example.

Asma Bibi is 38 years old and she lives with her husband Said Khan, also 38 years and their 2 daughters in Rasulpur village under Mendhapur G.P in Aul Block, Orissa. She lives in a small cottage with her family. She belongs to the Below Poverty Line category. Her husband is a daily laborer and for them it is a hand to mouth existence.



One day an awareness camp for safe sanitation systems was organized in her village under the FINISH Society Programme by Gram-Utthan( GU). Fortunately she was present there and came to know that Gram-Utthan is facilitating the credit support for toilet construction with technical support and technical knowhow about the model and estimate.

She was a member of Kalyani Mahila Mandal managed by Gram-Utthan in Rasulpur Village. Immediately she contacted the credit officer and discussed her problem of having no toilets in her cottage. She stated that she and her family were forced to resort to open defecation which was risky and resulted in loss of dignity. She consulted her husband and made up her mind to apply for a loan from the SHG for constructing a toilet.

In the following month's Kalyani Mahila Mandal meeting she got a loan of Rs.10000 and collected the materials and contacted the local mason for the construction of her toilet. GU technical persons also supervised the construction work with the appropriate model of a leach pit. With the involvement of her husband and children she completed her toilet within four days and the entire family was happy. After one week they began using the toilet and felt very comfortable. According to her husband this loan amount of Rs.10000 is nothing compared to the comfort of having a household toilet. He says the loan can be repaid easily.

Now Asma Bibi and her family do not have to indulge in open defecation. She saves a lot of time and has attained a social status. She is more confident about the health of the family. More importantly, she is setting an example to other villagers. She is grateful to Gram-Utthan for providing the toilet facility and to FINISH society for bringing the programme to their village.

Impact – Through the example set by Asma Bibi other members were also influenced to build household toilets with the support of Gram-Utthan. More loan demands are being generated in the village through the efforts of Asma Bibi.