Where there is unity, there is victory

Vanai Gram Panchayat (GP) is located in Rajsamand Block around 25 km from Rajsamand district. The GP has a total population of 3688 with 6 government schools and 5 Anganwadi centers. The main occupation of the villagers is agriculture and labour work in marble industries. Some of the villagers go to Mumbai, Gujarat and Indore in search of job which is mostly labour work.

Due to insufficient land for agriculture, lack of literacy and poor financial conditions, around 55 percent of population live in below poverty line. Being a small village with similar socio-economic conditions, the villagers live in harmony and celebrate all festivals together. In times of crisis, villagers come together and show unity at GP level to solve any forth coming calamity.

The CSR vertical of JK Tyre Industries was implementing the Swachh Bharat Mission scheme in Vanai by facilitating toilet construction. For which a baseline was conducted in Vanai GP, and it was found that out of 1020 households only 375 households have toilets. When the Sarpanch Mr. Bhairulal Gurjar came to know about the programme, he became very excited and expressed gratitude to the JK Tyre team. He played a key role in sensitizing and convincing people to attend community meetings with the JK Tyre team. Ward Panch, Deputy Sarpanch, Local leaders, Anganwadi workers, Principals of Government Schools and the villagers participated in all the consecutive meetings. Initially there were discussions on roles and responsibility of the Government to construct toilets and keep the villages clean.

JK Tyre knew that they will need a local agency to talk to people and make them aware about the need and necessity of toilets. They also wanted to create behavior change towards ownership for sanitation and health so, they partnered with FINISH Society to support 350 households for facilitating toilet construction and promoting safe sanitation practices. FINISH conducted Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) to create awareness about toilets and the result was positive.

Sarpanch asked all the Ward Panch to arrange for such meetings in all the 9 wards and 4 villages. The participants were taken to the places of open defecation and were told how the open feces through air borne flies enter into their houses and contaminate the food and water. This leads to diseases like diarrhea, intesinal worm infections, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis, polio, trachoma, and others. Some of the villagers did not agree and revolted attending such meetings. Then Sarpanch called all those people and insisted them to cooperate in this programme as this will help them all in future. His appeal made a lot of impact, villagers were fond of their Sarpanch and they could not disobey his orders. So, they all accepted and started constructing toilets in their houses.
Morning followup committee was formed by 10 heroic volunteers: Bhanwarlal Gurjar, Sohanlal Gurjar, Narayanlal Gurjar, Shankarlal Gurjar, Jagdish Daroga, Sohanlal Gholi, Ladulal Salvi, Harilal Salvi, Badrilal Bhil, Mohanlal Regar. The students of all six government schools participated in Swachhata rally which created mass awareness on sanitation and hygiene across the villages.

After the successive ward level meetings, Panchayat level meeting was organized where Sarpanch addressed the entire village saying that Panchayat will take up no other work till toilets are constructed in all the houses and their GP is declared ODF. He mentioned that Panchayat will not support villagers who will not construct toilet in their house. This meeting further added thrust to the programme and in less than a years’ time the GP was declared ODF.

Sarpanch is thankful to JK Tyre and FINISH team to change the destiny of his GP. Now, the villages look clean and beautiful. He expressed gratitude to JK Tyre Industries for not just helping them in toilet construction but also for providing water supply facilities like water tank, wash basin, and other sanitary wares including pipes to all the households. On the occasion of 70th Republic Day, Sarpanch recognized and awarded volunteers, follow-up committee members, and local leaders who played important role in community mobilization for Swachh Bharat Mission.

I am not disabled, I am differently abled

Mahedra Gurjar is an 18 year old young man studying in class 9 in a government school in Vanai village of Banai Gram Panchayat in Rajsamand district, Rajasthan. He can’t walk properly because of his disability. Since childhood he has been a victim to humor and disgrace.

In a small village like Vanai, such news spreads like fire, soon everyone in the village knew about Mahendra’s disability and people started treating him the way we always treat handicapped. He was asked not to go to school, he was isolated from social gatherings and festivals. Nobody ever listened to him, nobody made friends with him and nobody took him seriously; not even his own family members.

Meanwhile, JK Tyre with FINISH Society initiated to facilitate toilet construction in Vanai village. The team started visiting the village and conducted community meetings with Sarpanch, PRI members, villagers, local bodies and local leaders. People started constructing toilets after getting sensitized and after understanding the necessity of toilets and bathrooms in their house.

Mahendran used to attend these meetings stealthily and was very excited to see the development this programme was making in his village. Sarpanch was also providing complete support to the JK Tyre and local leaders helped a lot to insist villagers for constructing toilets. Mahendran was wondering when his father was going to construct one in his house.
He knew that if he asks for a toilet, nobody will listen to him in fact he may get scolded from his parents too. So, he decided to keep quiet. Slowly the entire village constructed toilets and the Gram Panchayat was planning to declare the village ODF. Hearing this Mahendra became very impatient and thought to open his mouth and talk to his parents for getting a toilet constructed in his house too.

One fine day, Mahendra gathered courage and told his father Nathulal Gurjar that theirs is the only house without toilet. He also informed him that if we are left out now and if the Sarpanch declares his village ODF, the programme may not support them in getting the toilet constructed later. For the first time his father listened to him and decided to construct a toilet for the convenience of entire family.

Finally, Gurjar family constructed a toilet for themselves and Mahendra is glad about showing courage and prudence that gained him his lost pride and acceptance in his family. This proves that Mahendra is not disabled but he is differently abled.