

THE ONE DROP FOUNDATION

# COMBINING ART & WASH SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE WASH INFRASTRUCTURE IN SHEOHAR

Like many regions in India, the district of Sheohar faces numerous challenges related to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). Water contamination and open defecation have made illness common in many villages, and at the district level, almost 14% of children under the age of five were reported as experiencing diarrhea in the two weeks preceding the National Family Health Survey (2015-16). Against this backdrop, the One Drop Foundation collaborated with Water For People to address WASH concerns and to improve living and health conditions for community members in the district. Over the project period (September 2018 – June 2022), Project Sheohar-II reached almost 260,000 people in the district through improved WASH services in communities and behaviour change campaigns.

## IMPROVED SANITATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN SHEOHAR

The project's aim was to promote the development of high-quality drinking water and sanitation services that would be accessible to everyone in the Sheohar district and sustained by local communities, businesses, and governments. Over the project's implementation, Water For People India supported the completion of sanitation infrastructure in 43 schools, reaching 18,183 people. All schools selected for the construction of toilet facilities were in government-owned buildings.

In addition to the construction of suitable, functional, and child-, gender-, and special needs- friendly toilet blocks in schools, messages related to appropriate toilet usage and handwashing at five critical times have been displayed through wall paintings in each of the schools. Separate blocks of toilets and urinals have been constructed for boys and girls. The girls' toilet blocks consist of two toilets, two urinals and one changing room with a waste incinerator. Similarly, the boys' toilet block includes two toilets and three urinals. One toilet block includes accessibility features for people living with disabilities.

In addition to school-based facilities, households constructed 5377 individual latrines through household sanitation loans and 4800 toilets were constructed through the facilitation of sanitation marts, farmers groups, SABC, and other awareness generation activities in Sheohar. Toilet complexes were constructed in 2 public health facilities also as part of the project.



## SOCIAL ART FOR BEHAVIOUR CHANGE – PERFORMING ARTS, FOLKLORE AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES TO ENCOURAGE TOILET USE IN SHEOHAR

The impact of an artistic performance is amplified when it is rooted in local culture and tradition. Building upon centuries of folklore and storytelling traditions, the Sheohar-II project collaborated with local artists to develop a pilot on traditional storytelling. Drawing inspiration from the 450-year-old story of Natua Dayal, these artists created an interactive storytelling performance centered on the behaviour of toilet use among men. This priority group (men or male heads of households) was also involved in the process of selecting the folklore and developing the performance, which generated spaces for meaningful exchanges between artists and community members. The pilot showed promising results related to willingness to adopt the behaviour of toilet use by the priority group.

Also, as part of the project, more than 500 shows were performed by local artists to promote key behaviours including toilet use. True to the spirit of SABC, community participation and involvement was at the core of every performance.

All the artists performing at the multidisciplinary and thematic shows were organized and formally registered as theatre groups, which aided them in seeking other engagements and formalizing their membership and operations. Owing to their involvement in SABC interventions in Sheohar 2, several theatre groups were later engaged by the state government and development agencies to continue their work in other projects in the region.

Community Led Approaches to Sanitation (CLAS) was an additional pillar of Behaviour Change in the project that reached out at the community as well as the individual level. It was piloted in Sheohar in 5 selected panchayats (administrative units), to support the government efforts to achieve the status of 'Open Defecation Free'. 220 CLAS activities were completed in more than 207 villages of the district and reached more than 44000 people. Under CLAS activity, Pre-triggering, Triggering, Community meeting, morning and evening follow-up and inter-personal communication (IPC) of household members were done. In parallel, interactive games were developed to maintain healthy WASH-related behaviours beyond the project period. *Ludo*—a popular board game in India—was adapted for the digital space to encourage and maintain the behaviour of toilet use among players.

## ESTABLISHED SANITATION MARTS OR POINTS OF PURCHASE & ENSURED ACCESS TO SANITATION LOANS IN SHEOHAR

Under the project, 15 points of purchase were established and kept operational in the project areas, making it easier for people to access the materials required for the construction of toilets. The project also improved the access to credit for sanitation purposes through a microfinance institution. Through these initiatives, over 23,000 people have gained access to basic sanitation services.

To learn more: <https://www.onedrop.org/en/news/the-sheohar-2-project-fostering-lasting-change-through-water-and-art/>.



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