

**Building Resilience for Sustaining Development**

**Convention on  
Promoting Household Resilience  
through Sanitation and  
Elimination of Open Defecation**

**Madurai Symposium 2017**

Thamukkam Ground, Madurai  
September 22, 2017

*Supported by*



*Organized by*



DHAN Foundation



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## Current Scenario Open defecation and Sanitation



Sanitation is the hygienic means of promoting health through prevention of human contacts of hazards of wastes which can be physical, biological, microbiological and chemical agents of diseases. Globally, in 2012, 89 per cent of the global population used an improved source of drinking water and 64 per cent used as improved sanitation facility. One hundred and sixteen countries have already met the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) drinking water target and seventy seven have already met the MDG sanitation target. Despite increase in sanitation

coverage, 205 billion people do not have access to improved sanitation facilities. There are still 45 countries where less than half the population has access to an improved sanitation facility. (SOURCE - Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation – 2014 update – WHO & UNICEF). As per the report of UNICEF on Elimination of Open Defecation, only about 22% of the rural families had access to toilets in 2001 in the country. With the efforts put into the Total Sanitation Campaign/Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA) this has gone up to 32.70% as per Census 2011. Further as per NSSO 2012, 40.60% rural households have toilets and around 595 million people, which is nearly half the population of India, defecate in the open. As per the Base line survey 2012, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, in India, 61.22 per cent of households not having toilets, 38.78 per cent households only have toilets. Out of the households having toilets, only 79.42 per cent are functional and 20.58 defunctional. But in the State, it is as high as 45.72 per cent households resort to open defecation against the average 49.84 per cent households at the national level. In rural areas, this proportion is 73.27 per cent which is higher than the rural India average of 67.33 per cent. In Urban areas too Tamil Nadu's share of households practicing open defecation is 16.21 per cent against 12.63 per cent in India. Tamil Nadu which had achieved considerable progress in the household access to sanitation has been ranked among the worst 10 states in India and is the worst performing state in southern India. (Source – Workshop on Open Defecation Free Tamil Nadu – State Planning Commission – 5th July, 2013)

### Prevailing Issues and Challenges related to Open Defecation

As per UNICEF, open defecation is the practice of people defecating in fields, urban parks, rivers and open trenches in close proximity to the living space of others. The behavior may be due to traditional cultural practices or lack of access to toilets or both. It is due to the lack of sanitation and hygiene in general which is a major factor in



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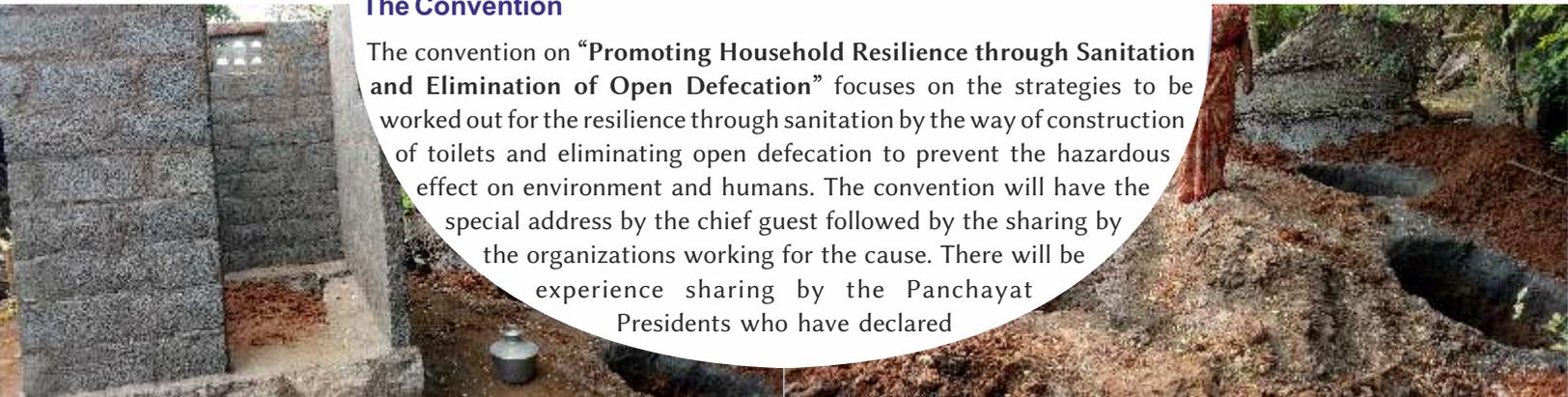
various diseases most notably diarrhea and intestinal worm infections but also typhoid, cholera, hepatitis, polio, trachoma and others. This led to 0.7 million deaths in children under five years old in 2011 and 250 million lost school days. This also leads to malnutrition and stunted growth in children imparting the learning abilities of school going children. Open defecation poses a serious threat to the health of children in India. The practice is the main reason India reports the highest number of diarrheal deaths among children under five in the world. Children weakened by frequent episodes are more vulnerable to malnutrition, stunting and opportunistic infections such as pneumonia. Poor sanitation also cripples national development implicates on workers produce less, live shorter lives, save and interest less and are less able to send their children to school.

The major issues related to open defecation is the lack of awareness about the importance of sanitation and the implications of open defecation and its hazardous effect on humans and the environment. In addition to tradition and the communication taboo, the practice still exists due to poverty in which many of the people will not prioritize toilets and besides many are living in rented houses without toilets. The major challenge is to motivate people to see a toilet as fundamental to their social standing, status and well being. The existence of gap in the knowledge and practice among people still persists even though they are aware of the high risks to poor sanitation. Construction of toilets is still seen as the government's responsibility rather than the individual's responsibility. So there should be strategies for changing the mindset of the people towards sanitation. There exists certain areas where open defecation cannot be prevented because of no space available in the households.

The continuous efforts of working with the community will definitely end up in a great success in declaring open defecation country. The experience of working with the government system and linking with the Swachh Bharat Mission under the subsidy scheme for the households is another challenge those who are not having space to construct toilets. Another key requirement is to integrate Social and Behaviour Change Communication elements into the system and the community to stimulate demand for toilets irrespective of the incentives from the government. But

### **The Convention**

The convention on “**Promoting Household Resilience through Sanitation and Elimination of Open Defecation**” focuses on the strategies to be worked out for the resilience through sanitation by the way of construction of toilets and eliminating open defecation to prevent the hazardous effect on environment and humans. The convention will have the special address by the chief guest followed by the sharing by the organizations working for the cause. There will be experience sharing by the Panchayat Presidents who have declared



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panchayats as Open Defecation free and also by the beneficiaries who have done the sanitation in the households contributing to Swachh Bharat Mission. The convention will also hold the sub groups for bringing out the strategies for creating a open defecation free environment contributing to the sector. There will be participation of 250 to 300 members from different frontiers to understand the importance of sanitation, appreciate the felt needs of the community and experiencing the efforts taken by them in addressing the issues around them. The convention will bring out the declarations and policy resolutions to end up in the open defecation free country by all the participants.

### Objectives

- Understanding the current scenario of sanitation across the country
- Integrating various stakeholders towards creating open defecation free blocks/districts
- Exploring ways to involve the communities for the best environmental sanitation

### Participants

The convention will be conducted involving the participants from government system, stakeholders, panchayat presidents of ODF panchayats, organizations working for the cause, Architects, beneficiaries, professionals of women and farmers federations, community leaders, secretaries and Civil Engineers working in WASH programme and the health staffs working for sanitation programme. The delegates from the district and the state will be presiding and honor the convention.

### Date & Venue

The convention will be held on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2017 at Thamukkam Ground, Madurai, Tamil Nadu from 10.00 am to 04.00 pm

*For further information, please contact*

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