



Browsing through the newspapers

The Status of Sanitation in Nepal

Series 4



Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH)
(A Collection of Sanitation Articles)

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Foreword

“The biggest barrier in sanitation is the unwillingness of national and international political leaders to put excreta and its safe disposal on the international development agenda.” The stark reality brought up by the Human Development Report, 2006 also points to an important cause as to why in a developing country like ours sanitation lags far behind. Despite the low status of sanitation portrayed by existing data the fact that an independent budget is not allocated to provide people with access to this service and the government’s impassiveness to mobilise the media sector and civil society are some examples that support this fact.

In spite of of unresponsiveness of the policy makers towards sanitation, noteworthy work is being undertaken in this area through civil society and community efforts. Through the facilitation of NEWAH and various other organisations, community members have actively mobilised themselves to lead their individual communities towards total sanitation. Previously sanitation which was never considered a subject for reporting or writing about in the media world has now started finding an important space. The orientation to journalists on sanitation issues and writing competitions organised for them from time to time initiated a few years back by the Nepal WASH group has allowed production of plenty of materials in the electronic media and in the newspapers supporting to generate more awareness among the general mass.

In this respect the Nepal WASH group conducted a national level media campaign on sanitation from March-May 2006 in which the participation of journalists from all over the country was remarkable. The most encouraging part is the manifold progress and growth observed in the coverage each year. For example the journalists have not only focused themselves to topics such as latrine usage and hand washing but are found to have started raising various other social issues associated to sanitation and incompetence of responsible bodies to move forward.

This booklet named “Browsing through the Newspapers - The Status of Sanitation in Nepal” is the fourth of the series. Though the total write-ups received during the 2006 media campaign are all admirable, they all could not be provided space in this booklet due to practical difficulties. From among them only some representative writings have been selected. Like in the previous years to broaden the readership, the writings have been translated into English. I would like to thank the Nepal WASH group, Sancharika Samuha and Federation of Nepalese Journalists for playing an important role in this media campaign. A special thank also goes to Keshav Bahadur Bista, Anamika Singh and Bharat Adhikari of NEWAH for bringing this booklet into this form. The readers are requested to send in their comments and suggestions for future improvements.

Finally, because sanitation is not only a personal issue but also a social and national issue, let us openly talk and write about it without any hesitation.



Umesh Pandey
Director

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A brick kiln or a torture camp?

Yashoda Timsina, Nepal Weekly

Sixteen year old Bhawana Gharti from Kotgaon 8, Talbang, Rolpa arrived in Harisiddhi, Lalitpur during the winters. Gharti who came to work in a brick kiln was rather lured by Harisiddhi than where she came from and there are several reasons behind this. What compelled her to come such a long way was the greed of earning some money and due to the rising armed conflict in Rolpa. Insecure from both the state and the Maoist army she landed up at the Tata brick kiln in Harisiddhi.

The first problem she faced after reaching her destination was the lack of latrine facility. There were no latrines for about 200 employees in the kiln. About 100 male employees there would urinate standing just anywhere, while the women had to either hold themselves or visit the Harisiddhi river, five minutes walk from the kiln site. Bhawana says, "The boys don't feel ashamed while we have to shy away from them. Many times we have to hold ourselves. Some of them don't even mind being seen by the girls."

After the monsoon is over in November, the dry dust in the air is unbearable so one can well imagine the environment around the brick kiln at this time. About 15 families reside in the Tata kiln on *jhyaulos* (four feet high temporary shacks made out of piles of bricks covered by CGI sheets). With much difficulty one has to bend to enter the shack. Each family has one to six members living there. But none of them have any latrine or drinking water facility. The children have excreted here and there, flies are roaming everywhere. Some children are seen playing around while some are eating at this very place. Anyone visiting this site for the first time will imagine that a dirty village scene is being shot.

According to 40 year old Bhanusari Pun every day a child falls sick over there. Many suffer from diarrhoea and high fever. Stomach aches among young girls is on the rise. It could be because of excessive holding throughout the day, but this is not officially verified.

Because of running the brick kiln, the ground water has dried up and water from the temporary source is not fit for drinking. They go to collect the comparatively safe water from the spring located 20 minutes away. Those who cannot afford to travel so far drink water from the temporary source.

Bhanusari herself has been down with fever for the past seven days. Her husband passed away four years back leaving behind the responsibility of four children between the ages of 10-20 on her shoulders. Unable to rear her children in her old home in Rolpa, Chunwang she moved to Dang. Her eldest daughter of 18 who came to work in a kiln got married to a boy from Ramechaap and moved on. Rest of her children are back in Dang, cared by her neighbours. She says, "Came to Kathmandu from Dang just to make the ends meet, but now it seems I won't be able to work." She also informed that 15 others had already left for home in Rolpa and Dang since December being sick and unable to work anymore.

Dhunsari Biswakarma's case is worse than that of Bhanusari. Dhunsari's husband died two years back after being buried by clay while working in the Tata brick kiln.

She was seven months pregnant when this happened. They already had four, six and eight year old girls. The fourth was also a girl. Pointing to her young one she informs, "Her father desired for a son, but a girl was born. That too he died without seeing her."

According to Dhunsari's friend she must be around 27 but she does not have any idea about her age. The entire family's responsibility falls on her. The kiln authorities provided Rs. 20,000 for the funeral and she says all that was actually spent. However, it was enough to buy a set of clothes for her daughters. Carrying 1,000 bricks from early six to late six in the evening she makes Rs. 90 per day. Two hours in the afternoon goes on cooking and feeding. And not a day goes by without a daughter going sick. Some have sores all over the body, some suffer from diarrhoea while some are totally malnourished. Dhunsari's family members and relatives back home in UI VDC in Rolpa have died in the people's war or in clashes.

Not all the kilns are like the Tata kiln. For instance the R. K. kiln in Imadol is a little disorganised but it has latrine facilities. And the underground water facility to some extent has made life easy for the employees there. The four hundred workers in the kiln manage with four latrines; they take turns to use it. Yet the surrounding environment is polluted due to open defecation and urination. Children are seen playing around. They often suffer from diarrhoea. Out of the three daughters of Bimala Karki of Kavre, two mostly remain in bed. "I leave them and go to work, they play in the dirt and eat whatever they find so they are mostly sick," says Bimala.

R. K. must be the only managed kiln to some extent. Shivashakti kiln in Imadol also has no latrines. About 200 workers defecate and urinate around the kiln. In fact here also the female workers face problems. Radha Basnet of Ramechaap says, "Sometime back when I got sick I vomited on my own clothes finding no place else to do it."

How do they land up in the kilns?

This is about two years back. Bipana Gharti used to study in class six in the community school in Rolpa. One day the Maoists came and told them to join their campaign. With books in hand she went to the campaign and listened to their speech. On the way back she met with the state army. They pulled her clothes, pinched her cheeks, snatched her books and threw it away. They even threatened to shoot her if they found that she had attended such programmes again.

The Maoist's threats were fresh in her mind and on the other hand even a deadlier threat was in front of her. After the incident she headed towards the capital with her sisters. Bipana has a 12 year old brother, mother and father back at home. The fear of being victimised led Bipana's parents to drive all the daughters away from home.

Someone who has earlier worked in a kiln wins the confidence of the owner and returns to the communities with some money, they are called (*naikes*). Back in the community they look for young girls and women who are capable of working in the kiln and leave some money with their guardians and return with the girls. The number of boys in the kiln is very minimal. After coming here to work, no matter how difficult the work is, it is not possible to return home the girls say. On one hand it is difficult to return the money taken earlier and on the other the situation is not favourable to live in the community. And then like *Kamaiyas* (bonded labourers) they are stuck in the kiln for one whole season.

Feeding pigs on faeces lying on the porch

Durga Prasad Sharma, Nepal Samacharpatra

Building latrines in the Nigali settlement situated in Balkot Village Development Committee (VDC) of Parbat district seemed unlikely. In the past there was a practice of feeding the pigs on faeces out in the porch. Presently awareness is being gradually raised among people about the necessity of latrine construction.

Sixty five year old Dalli Magar of Nigali has a very strange experience. When there was no latrine at home she used to defecate nearby the house. And the pigs at home would feed on that open faeces. The farthest she travelled was to the fields or to streams in close proximity. Since the past two years lot of changes has taken place in the community. All the 26 households use a permanent latrine these days. "Previously everyone would say *chi chi* (words of disgust) and now they say wow so clean," Magar informs happily trying to explain the makeover of her community.

Jit Bahadur Rana Magar of the same community also has something similar to say. Initially when there was limited knowledge about water and sanitation in Nigali there was a practice of feeding pigs on faeces lying around but once people started being aware this kind of practice came to an end informed Rana and added, "Its only because people have started realising the importance of health and sanitation, permanent latrines have come up in most of the houses."

Laxmi Bikash Purush Samudayik and Kalika Devi Samudayik Bikash organisations established as part of the VDC level Local Fund Development Programme have lately selected every Monday for cleaning the community, and sanitation activities are regularly carried out on that day. Like in this community when permanent latrines were constructed in all the houses in Balkot, they also declared the VDC as sanitised.

Permanent latrines are emerging not only in the households of Balkot but also in Baskharka located in the North. When there were no latrines here, everyone defecated in the roadside and people had to walk around covering their nose. The Chairperson of the women's group Rajkumari Pun informed that the community women activated themselves to promote latrine construction in each and every household in the community. She also added that out of the 207 permanent latrines that came up within the VDC last year, 160 were built through the activeness of women.

According to the data collected by the District Development Committee (DDC) last year, 45 percent of the households in the DDC have been using permanent latrines, while 75 percent of the households enjoy piped water services. Of the 30 thousand 530 households in the district 12 thousand 982 households use permanent latrines whereas 6,986 households use temporary latrines.

Chandra Bahadur Chhetri the Senior Social Mobiliser for the local development fund in the DDC says, "Since the past three years the district has taken leaps in the field of sanitation." He informed that permanent latrines have been built in all the households in Bhoksingh, Phalamkhani, Banskharka and Banau VDCs and that they have been declared totally sanitised.

Thriving on dumps of Bagmati

Ekindra Timilsina, Nepal Samachar Patra

Sangita Devi Baisbaniya of Lawapur, India is resting her bare one year old child on top of plastic piles. The plastics are full of dirt carried away by the Bagmati river and Sangita is sorting them out. Five year old Mukesh is also helping his mother. Flies are roaming all over his body and the plastics are giving out a very foul smell, yet he continues pulling up his nose leak that is about to enter his mouth. Kundan, Sangita's three year old is also lying on the plastic wastes and watching his mother work.

Many months have gone by at the banks of Bagmati for Sangita and her three infants. All day long she leaves her children alongside the Kalimati bridge in Kathmandu, goes into the Bagmati, collects the plastic from the river, puts it in a sack and at the banks sorts them. She is meeting her daily needs selling those plastics.

If she manages to grab clean plastics, 100 rupees can be earned a day otherwise she has to make do with 50-70 rupees a day. Clean plastic sells for rupees 10 per kilo. A year back this was Sangita's husband Santosh's responsibility and she only assisted him. After his death the responsibility fell upon her shoulders. "My husband expired, and to raise my three boys I have to take up this work," she explains.

Jitendra Kumar Pudar of Mujhafapur, India also sells the plastics collected from Bagmati river to raise his family of five (wife and four sons). He leaves his wife and the smallest boy back at a rented room. While him and his three year old Amit spends all day long collecting and sorting plastics in and around the stinking Bagmati. "Have to collect more than 100 rupees worth of stuff a day or else it is not enough to feed the family. Monthly, I pay 800 rupees on rent for the room," he says.

"Earlier we used to cover our nose with cloth to collect the plastics, but now we are used to it, if we don't clean it we get 30 percent less cash," he informs all covered in dirt. "Cannot beg or steal so we have to work to fill our stomachs."

Jitendra guesses that approximately 300 families are involved in this kind of work in the Bagmati and Bishnumati river. Most of them are from India. Very few Nepali families are in this line of work. There are no figures on how many people are engaged in plastic picking. However, plenty of street children can be found involved. Their health status, fooding and living conditions are drastically poor.

Some businessmen in Kathmandu purchase these plastics collected from the most polluted rivers in Kathmandu for 7-20 rupees a kilo and sell off to licensed businessmen in the city who transport it to large markets in Butwal and India.

Knowingly or unknowingly this kind of work a necessity to raise lives of many has to some extent supported the waste management system in Kathmandu.

Increasing garbage and decreasing management

Min Thakuri, Seti Samachar Daily

Get up early in the morning and sweep the dirt into the drains. The courtyard is then clean but the drains and roadside becomes dirtier. Garbage is on the rise within the municipality but everyone is turning a blind eye to its management.

Ramchandra Joshi a local hotelier in Pipalla bazaar in Silgadhi Municipality, Dipayal district is worried due to the rise of garbage in the bazaar. Due to other people habitually throwing wastes around he expresses that it is next to impossible to manage the garbage no matter how hard he tries to keep the drains in front of the hotel and the courtyard clean. He is totally fed up.

The Silgadhi Municipality has not really drawn its attention to the management of garbage within the municipality. When there is no space for garbage in the drains they are thrown around the bazaar and this has intensified the problem. A local businessman Man Bahadur Air complains that instead of managing the garbage and keeping the bazaar clean and beautiful haphazard dumping of wastes has compelled people visiting the bazaar to cover their nose while walking around.

The municipality has not managed even containers for waste management in Silgadhi, the district headquarters of Doti for that matter. That is why the residents here are compelled to throw the wastes anywhere and everywhere. Khema Shahi a student from Doti Campus says, "Though the household frontyard is clean the backyard has become a dumping site. The mismanaged wastes and garbage has ruined the beauty of the city. Despite the daily rise in garbage affecting life in the municipality, it has not been able to draw the attention of concerned bodies."

Effective steps have to be taken by the concerned to manage the garbage and wastes and keep the municipality clean and beautiful. Even the municipality residents need to show concern to deal with this rising problem is a view expressed by a Local Health Worker Shankar Shahi. He says, "The various stakeholder organisations in the district should not limit their programmes to the papers but also need to implement waste management awareness programmes to actually put them into practice. If the conditions of cities are like this, what could be the condition of villages?"

Scarce latrines in the freed *Kamaiya* settlement

Shiva Raj Bhatta, Annapurna Post

There are only ten latrines for almost 300 freed *Kamaiyas* (bonded labourers) belonging to 58 households settled on encroached land belonging to Dhangadhi airport. When it rains they are compelled to take refuge under umbrellas to go and use the latrines.

In 2004, 15 bighas (1 bigha = 72,900 sq. ft.) of airport land located in the North from Nainadevi Chowk of Dhagadhi Bazaar was encroached by 58 freed *Kamaiya* families who received the blue cards but failed to receive any land. Presently, two kathas (1 katha = 3645 sq. ft.) of land fall under each family's possession. "This land is just enough for a house, where do we build a latrine?" says Jagat Ram Chaudhary from the settlement. He informs that the settlement is getting crowded and the individual pit latrines pollute the environment thus common temporary latrines are being used.

Six tube wells have been installed with the support of various organisations for drinking water purpose. According to Raisaki Chaudhary waiting for turns to fill up the water, bathe and wash the clothes takes a long time.

The freed *Kamaiyas* residing on not just the airport land but on the land belonging to the forest ranger post of Geta Ayurved Corporation, Hasuliya Rural Housing Company and Tikapur airport excrete under the open sky and commonly use the pumps. Thus, the health conditions in these settlements are in a bad state.

There are no specific latrines for 200 families of the freed *Kamaiya* living in Geta Ayurved Corporation land. A single tube well serves the settlement with water. The organisations supporting latrine construction in various *toles* (clusters) and communities say that it is not possible to construct permanent latrines in forcibly occupied government property.

Only in Geta last year due to poor sanitation there was an outspread of diseases like diarrhoea and encephalitis. If steps are not taken to solve the problem of latrines in the airport settlement situated in the middle of the bazaar this year an epidemic is likely to spread here.

No more hiding behind the bushes

Ramesh Kumar Paudel, Chitawan Post Daily

Used to make the children defecate in the porch and sweep off with hay towards the roadside, while the elders visited the banks of Narayani River and behind the bushes. Only a few years back due to open defecating practices the community was very dirty. But the condition of the Sishai community in Dibyanagar VDC, Ward No. 4 in Chitawan, located 13 kilometers West of Narayangadh and near the banks of Narayani river is totally different now.

Anyone visiting the community now praises about its sanitation status. Women's effort is the result of this transformation within a period of five to six years.

"We came out in masses to clean the community," informs Shova Chaudhary the Chairperson of the *Kishori* group. There are 40 households in Sishai a *Tharu* community. The men have established a *Fungi* (spark) group. Married women are associated with the *Grameen Mahila Bikash Samuha*, while the unmarried are linked to the *Kishori* group. Like Shova 27 other girls in the community jointly come out to broom the community thrice a month. Juna Mahato, the group Secretary says that their movement to inform about household and environmental sanitation has made everyone aware. If they see plastics around they collect it in a place and other biodegradable wastes are disposed in a compost pit. Gita explains that if anyone misses the cleaning activity then a fine of rupees five has to be paid, thus, everyone is involved.

The *Kishori* group was established in October 2003. With the growth in awareness haphazard disposal of wastes has reduced. Nevertheless, to keep people alert the campaign continues. Side by side the sweeping campaign they also teach about good hygiene behaviour practices to the community members such as, "After completing work or touching dirt, before eating/feeding you need to wash your hands properly and should keep water vessels and cooking utensils clean."

"In 1998 the mother's group was formed in Sishai and the latrine building campaign started even if it was temporary ones. They started spreading awareness and going against the practice of defecating openly and making children use courtyard and porch to excrete. Adolescent girls also joined and moved the campaign forward in an undeclared manner," says Shova. "Because its women and the girls who face the shame of going out in the open, we were actually motivated to join this campaign," she adds.

"Now all the households in the community have a latrine. Five households that use temporary latrines plan to build a permanent one within a year. Once one two household started constructing others followed," says Dibyashwore Chaudhary a local resident.

According to the national population census 2001, 17 million people in urban and rural areas defecate openly each morning in Nepal. As a result the threat of outbreak of diseases such as cholera, typhoid and trachoma remains. If continuous efforts like in Sishai, Chitawan are made in all the communities in Nepal it would not be difficult to achieve the MDGs target of halving the proportion of worldwide population without water and sanitation by 2015.

Community latrines changed the image of the settlement

Bhoj Raj Joshi, Dhangadhi Post Daily

No need to cover the nose like before in the Dalit settlement in Jali of Dhangadhi Municipality Ward No. 6. The community latrines have totally transformed the face of the community. After NEWAH supported construction of eight community latrines for the 27 households in the settlement this became possible.

Those who defecated by the roadside earlier are now using these very latrines. "When there were no community latrines we had to visit the riverside or the fields," informs Ramlal Sarki a local, "but life is much easier now after latrine construction."

Each household takes turns to clean the latrines they use in the settlement. Gopal Sarki also a local resident says, "After all it is us who use the latrines so who else will come and clean it?" He further states that it has freed people in the settlement from going far off to excrete and all kinds of difficulties.

Man Bahadur Sarki, the Chairperson during project implementation says that due to the problem of latrines NEWAH was requested for a sanitation project. "We are not financially sound to build the latrines on our own," he says and adds, "thus rather than individual household latrines NEWAH supported with community latrines adequate for everyone in the settlement." Due to a possibility of a embarrassing condition arising in the settlement everyone participated in latrine construction process is what Dharmadevi Sarki says. "NEWAH supported with the latrine materials, provided awareness on health and hygiene and we contributed our labour and constructed the latrines," she says. The residents here seem joyful that the image of the settlement has changed due to the community latrines.

Endless jungle visits despite modern latrines at home

Ujjwal Chaulagain, Rajdhani Daily

All the households in the community are of the same pattern and have a similar kind of modern latrines. What is alarming is that the majority of the community members still visit the jungle to defecate. The people of the *Sukumbasi tole* in Nayabasti, Padampokhari VDC have used their latrines as sheds for goats, while some have stored hay or crops inside it.

Majority of the people residing here are flood victims and the government made arrangements to settle them here in 1996. The Chuchi foundation a NGO from Taiwan supported construction of 200 pairs of households with a latrine for 400 families here. Lack of awareness about using latrines next to the households, illiteracy and unaccustomed to defecating behind closed doors are the reasons why the local have not brought these latrines into use. After different organisations started raising awareness about sanitation, presently with much difficulty 100 households have started using the latrines.

“How can we make these clean houses so dirty, we do not have a habit of defecating there,” says Harkaman Lama a local. “Instead of using the latrines going to the jungle or the river side is ok for us,” he adds. Most of the people express that they are uninformed about washing their hands with soap/ash and water after latrine use. Despite the growing level of awareness about sanitation in the community, people are still hesitant to use the latrines informs Mina Nepali a local woman.

There is a perception that defecation should take place only in dirty places which is why the clean latrines have not been able to be brought into use, the local people express commonly. To bring more than half of the latrines into use in this settlement the level of awareness among people has to be further raised.

The sweepers are compelled to play with dirt

Kiran Nepal, Butwal Today

It is a regular chore for the sweepers of Tansen Municipality to rise early and head towards the roads with a broom in their hand. They are busily involved in sweeping and other cleaning activities throughout the day. Cleaning the haphazardly dumped wastes in the city is their daily compulsion. The three dozen sweepers working here link poverty to their engagement in this profession.

Dal Bahadur Biswakarma, 30 of Baglung Dhorpatan has selected Tansen Municipality as his work place. Involved in this work to raise a family of five, Biswakarm says that despite this work barely helps to meet his family expenses he has no other option. Same is the misery of Dilmaya Nepali. Unable to gain any support or love from her husband she was compelled to get into this work to meet the hand to mouth of her children.

These days after the municipality residents have started using modern toilet cleaners to clean the latrines these sweepers have been robbed off their daily income. Deepak Bahadur who used to survive on cleaning latrines and bathrooms informs that these kinds of jobs are hard to find these days.

According to the information provided by the Tansen Municipality, 36 people have been hired as sanitation workers. From among them, four are mobilised in managing the unmanaged markets, maintaining the sewage functions etc. as municipality police.

Two trucks are used to dump almost 14 tonnes of garbage that collects within the municipality in an open space a little farther from the bazaar. Enough talks took place at the municipality to organise a dumping site but they never materialised, so the residents of Kailashnagar close to where the wastes are dumped are now in a state of abandoning their settlement. The passengers travelling on the Tansen-Tamghas road portion through Kailashnagar also suffer from this.

Many people are engaged in collecting old plastics, bottles, old rubber slippers and other recyclable waste materials and selling them off in concerned places. Unable to find any job in their own community, people coming here seeking for work are somehow surviving on this kind of work.

Fifty four year old Gyanendra Nepali says that he has been earning 100 rupees a day by collecting recyclable wastes. Nepali who informs about working 25 years in other people's household says that he arrived in Tansen few years back looking for work. He also added that he has been raising his family back in a slum settlement in Kapilbastu through this occupation.

Mohan Prasad Marasini, Executive Officer of Tansen Municipality explains that though 34 ropanis of land (1 ropani = 5476 sq. ft.) has been purchased in Ward No. 12 of the municipality near Sitapokhari for solid waste management purpose, due to scarce budget it will be few more years before the waste can be dumped there. According to him more than 15 million rupees is required to construct the dumping site.

Latrine brought health improvement among Kumroj people

Hari Prasad Pokhrel, Pardarshi Rastriya Daily

The residents of Kumroj VDC, Ward No. 6, Janakpurbasti in Chitawan district were troubled in the past by the haphazard human and animal wastes. But now they have found some relief. They don't need to worry about coming into contact with faeces while working in the fields. Only nine months back those who defecated openly in the roads, fields, and open spaces presently use a latrine at home. Since then this problem does not exist anymore.

Sita Bote of Janakpur seems pretty happy due to greater awareness generated in the community these days. "After the latrines came up, Janakpurbasti's sanitation status has soared high," she says. Earlier despite the fear of being attacked by wild animals people went out in the open. They did not understand the importance of using a latrine then. The local people inform that once everyone started using a latrine it had reduced the rate of illness in the community. Presently all the households drink safe water and give due attention to their personal hygiene and sanitation.

"When there were no latrines, the community was totally polluted, it was difficult to work in the fields, there was equal fear of wild animal attacks and diseases were widespread," informs Sita Chaudhary of Kumroj, "now latrines are being constructed in each and every household of Janakpurbasti. Many have taken loan from the Small Farmers' Cooperative Organisation to construct their latrine, those who cannot afford are constructing temporary latrines on their own."

After the Kumroj women were informed about the importance of latrine and about the local materials and resources required to build one through the *Sahayogi Mahila Bahas Kendra* as part of their Advocacy Programme on Health Rights they went to acquire loan from the Small Farmers' Cooperative. However, the women had to really struggle to achieve this. According to Pratima Chaudhary, facilitator of *Bahas Kendra* the people associated with the cooperative easily got the loan. But those who were not would be able to acquire if only the Chitawan DDC office and the local motivator of DACAU programme, UNICEF vouched for them.

After learning about this provision the community women approached the DACAU local motivator. But the motivator refused so the women went and lobbied in front of the Small Farmer' Cooperative office. Then only the loan was sanctioned. After receiving 1,326 rupees from the cooperative the women from the *Bahas Kendra* actively mobilised themselves to construct the latrines. They are actively involved to return the loan on time. It was acquired for a period of six months at the annual interest rate of five percent.

"Before the *Bahas Kendra* was started there were only 10 latrines amongst the 104 households in the community. There were televisions in each household but there were no latrines," informs the facilitator of the advocacy programme Shanti Rijal, "but now seeing women who feared to speak up so organised and who have made the latrine building campaign so successful makes me feel proud."

'One latrine per household' campaign in Thimi

Prakash Suwal, Rajdhani Daily

Madhyapur Thimi looks very lively after latrine construction in each and every household. The local residents here are happy and amazed at the present status of this community where just three years back faeces and urine could be observed everywhere along the roadside.

The residents of this aesthetic and cultural city Thimi who were used to defecating openly now feel ashamed remembering their past.

"This has been possible due to the rise in awareness among all," says Sri Ram Shrestha a local resident.

Considering the diminished image and the environmental pollution of the city leading to adverse impact on the general health of the people, the Madhyapur Thimi Municipality started this campaign to compulsorily construct latrines in each and every household in the municipality. This campaign started in 2002 with the support of various donors like GTZ-UDLE, Lumanti, WaterAid and World Vision International Nepal.

According to Tulasi Bhakta Takko the Community Development Division Chief of Madhyapur Thimi Municipality, the latrine building campaign initiated at that time by identifying and giving special priority to the economically poor, *dalits* and marginalised communities through local users committee, women and mother's group still continues.

The municipality had provided Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 4,000 to households with and without sewage facilities respectively for latrine construction.

The municipality has till present constructed latrines in about 400 households with the support of donors to give the municipality a clean and beautiful identity. More than 0.8 million rupees has been spent on this campaign. According to Takko there still is a need to construct latrines in more than 200 households.

The population of Madhyapur Thimi Municipality which spreads across 11 square kilometre area is about 54 thousand people. This municipality which is divided into 19 wards has more than 9,000 households living there. Majority of population here are farmers and daily 14 tonnes of wastes are produced of which five tonnes is only collected explains the municipality authority.

Takko informs that this kind of campaign to build 'one latrine per household' should be replicated in other communities as well.

Hundred fifty thousand kilos of faeces daily in the open

Rajesh Jha, Aaja Ko Batabaran

Don't be surprised that the one who teaches others about using a latrine and sanitation in the community does not have a latrine at home. This is the case of Deepnarayan a resident of Aurahi VDC in Saptari district and a teacher by profession.

There are nominal numbers of latrines in Aurahi. Therefore majority of the people here defecate in the fields, under the open sky. Only five latrines exist in this VDC with a total of 914 households and about 5,000 people.

Latrines have not been constructed in the VDC because of poor economic conditions of the people. The principal reason is the lack of public awareness on health, hygiene and sanitation. On the other hand some people have not constructed latrines despite understanding the importance says Rural Health Worker, Jaya Krishna Yadav and adds that in spite of informing people time and again they do not pay much attention.

"The fields are there to defecate, why spend unnecessarily to build a latrine?" questions Badri Narayan Yadav a local, "we do not have enough to feed because there is no income, how is latrine construction possible?"

It's more difficult for women without a latrine at home. Talking about rising early to defecate to hide from being seen by others, Jhameli Devi Mandal of Aurahi 3 says, "Soon after daybreak the workers reach the fields, that's why we have to go out before light." Talking about the compulsion to defecate in the open due to no latrine at home, she adds, "What to do, though we feel ashamed, we cannot do without defecating."

Even the sub health post of Aurahi has no latrine. Though building one was decided, the indifference of the VDC secretary made it impossible according to Jaya Krishna Yadav. A survey has reported that not more than five latrines are found in majority of VDCs like Nargho, Gobargadha, Banaula, Pansera, Ramnagar, Rautahat, Dib, Deuribharuwa, Rampura, Malhaniya, Belhi, Banauli, including Aurahi in Saptari district.

According to a survey conducted by Drinking Water and Sanitation Division Office (DWSO), Rajbiraj, in about 0.1 million households in Saptari approximately 8,500 latrines can be found. Out of these excluding the 3,800 latrines in Rajbiraj Municipality alone, in the remaining 114 VDCs the number of latrines comes out to be only 4,664 according to calculations, which on an average happens to be 41 latrines per VDC.

In Saptari the highest number of latrine can be found in Fatehpur VDC with 542 latrines, followed by 307, 119, 116 in Kanchanpur, Kalyanpur, Bakdhuwa respectively according to the DWSO. As per this data about 0.5 million people defecate openly in Saptari. On the basis of an estimation, if an individual defecates 300 grams of faeces daily on an average, everyday 150 thousand kilos of faeces collects in the district.

Defecating haphazardly has an adverse impact on human health, with mostly children found to be affected. Due to lack of access to appropriate sanitation and safe drinking water, children are found to suffer from diseases like diarrhoea, pneumonia, skin diseases, eyes and ears infections.

Responsibility of civilians for waste management

Aruna Kafle, Darshan Daily

An evening in June, the black clouds in the sky seem to pour any second. Narrow and very busy lanes, everyone hustling and bustling to reach their destination and the unmanaged drains on either side of the lane without an outlet or fully covered. This is a scene of Bhanu road in Biratnagar Sub Metropolis - 14, with small and big houses and few shacks on both sides of the lane. There are three tube wells in a row near the drains and next to the shacks. A little further is a dog sleeping on a pile of dirt. In front is a boy excreting. The bottles and plastics have blocked the drains totally.

Imagine when it rains what will be the state here? This is a reality of the lanes inside the Biratnagar bazaar. Lack of appropriate drain and waste management system is the reason for inviting such a state.

Despite constant government and non government efforts to generate sanitation awareness, the expected development has not taken place. The reason being that the various bodies implementing sanitation programmes do not monitor their work. For example last year with the aim of managing wastes and keeping the city clean the 'Environmental Administration and Management Improvement Project' supported by Village City Partnership Programme and Nepal-Finland Government had invited various organisation representatives to participate in a environment promotion and management training, where 375 *tole* representatives had participated. One year later also there was no monitoring of whether the participants had utilised the skills attained.

Lack of specific dumping sites to manage city wastes, no improvement in the use of roads as latrines and no well managed sewage systems hinder promotion of sanitation. The mothers groups' efforts to take various sanitation campaigns forward are discouraging too. Since March 2005 the *Sumnima* and *Godavari* mother's group of Biratnagar -15 initiated unified road and drainage cleaning from cluster to cluster every Saturday for five months. They had started this to set an example that once people saw them they would automatically stop dumping wastes everywhere. "But instead people started dumping more wastes taking for granted that they would come and sweep it off," informs Januka Badtaula a member of the mother's group.

Waste management is not impossible

The more the household wastes are minimised the less it will create problems. For this the wastes need to be sorted into bio degradable, recyclable, non degradable and toxic wastes and collected in four different containers.

If organic wastes can be used as manures in the kitchen garden/garden and jute/cloth bags instead of plastic bags then it will greatly support to manage the wastes.

Income can be generated by selling off recyclable wastes such as iron, plastics and paper to the collectors and support in environment protection. Likewise, harmful and unsafe wastes need to be disposed off properly or by throwing in garbage pits and burying them.

Latrine building campaign throughout the VDC

Dinesh Ghimire, Gorkhapatra Daily

There have been lot of improvements since the *Tamakoshi Sewa Samiti* (committee), Manthali started latrine construction campaign in the *dalit* (so called lower caste groups) and indigenous communities in all the 55 VDCs comprising of 42 thousand households in Ramechaap district to bring an end to the practice of covering the nose as soon as entering the community.

As soon as it was dark people lined up on the roadside, edge of the fields and by the streams to defecate in areas where there were no latrines. To end this the committee started providing pan and pipes for those who built latrines and since then a latrine construction crusade began. The committee has distributed materials for about nine thousand latrines so far and other costs are borne by the concerned.

According to the committee, people travel one and half days' distance from the district headquarters to collect the pan and pipes from them. There is a rise in the demand for materials from all over the district. Mahesh Ghimire the overseer of the committee says, "Only this year two thousand pans and pipes were distributed. We will provide to as many latrines that come up within the district; our campaign is focused on promoting latrine construction in each and every household."

The campaign coordinator of the committee Govinda Prasad Ghimire says that this work was initiated taking into consideration the cases of women falling victim to abuse and rape while going out to defecate in secluded places, falling prey to animal attacks, and adolescent girls skipping classes during their menstruation period due to no access to latrines in the school.

The committee has not sought any support from any donor organisation to distribute the latrine materials. They have been providing through their own internal sources and income. The committee will not provide latrines just when anyone asks for it. Those who hand in an application should have finished all the construction work and have just the pan and pipe instalment work left. After the superstructure and safety tank work finishes, on the basis of a technical report they provide pan and pipe worth rupees one thousand for one latrine. Like the committee other NGOs like *Grameen Swasthya Bikash Pariyojana* and *Samudayik Bikash Samaj* support communities that construct latrines. These organisations provide rod, cement, sheets and tiles but only to the residents of the VDCs that fall under their working area and people with sound economic background do not get that support.

Pipaldanda a model of sanitation

Rajdhani Reporter

Only till last year known to be the dirtiest community, Pipaldanda in Palpa is now a model community. Dumping garbage is prohibited except in specific places. Not only do people have to pay a fine for throwing wastes in public places but they also have to ask for forgiveness during a mass gathering held once a month.

This remote community comprising totally a Magar settlement, presently is declared a model community. At the community entry point itself a board has been hung saying "Dumping Prohibited Area." More message boards saying the same in various places inside the community. In a tree in the middle of the community a notice is hung warning that if dirt is found in public places then people will be fined.

Not only that the youth group formed in the community are mobilised to keep a watch. If someone is caught a first warning is given to not to throw litter anymore, then the second time 50 rupees is fined and the third time more than 100 rupees is fined and a system of asking for forgiveness has been established.

Since the community based primary health care programme was started by Nepal Red Cross Society, Palpa these kind of changes has taken place in the community. Presently human resources capable of delivering primary health care services from within the community has been groomed. Now 22 primary health care volunteers are ready and they have been delivering the services free of cost, according to Yashpal Shakya the Vice-Chairperson of the Palpa Red Cross Branch.

"Till sometime back we knew nothing but now we feel we are in a position of doctors," says Bishnukumari Sijali who has taken the primary health care training. Sijali, 26 is now considered a doctor by the people in the community. She is also the coordinator of the group formed in the community and it was through her effort this programme begun. As a result the local people have received lot of facilities.

Impressed with her work, last year she was awarded the best Health Care Volunteer award during the National Primary Health Care day. Since then she has already transferred her skills to many. The women's group formed through her initiation has brought a revolution in the sanitation and cultural aspects in the community.

The community people regularly collect money to manage the primary health care fund. The fund is used to purchase necessary materials for primary health care, electrolytes and other very essential medicines. To give continuity to the sanitation and primary health care programme a cultural group has also been formed, which regularly organises cultural programmes to raise funds. The people in this area say, "Now we will initiate the sanitation and primary health care campaigns in various other neighbouring communities."

Women's activeness in waste management

Kul Mani Gyawali, Nepal Samachar Patra

A single visit to the market brings home four to five plastics a day. If this rate continues, what will be the environmental condition of the *tole*? As long as the wastes and plastics are not managed the pollution it creates can have an overall impact on agriculture, health and the environment.

Keeping this fact in mind few women from the wards in Siddharthanagar Municipality have mobilised themselves in plastic and other waste management. These active and aware women's campaign is starting to become exemplary, reducing the burden of the municipality on waste management.

The campaign initiated by the women since 1998 was linked to the Health and Sanitation Awareness Group by the municipality four years later and training was provided. Since then there has been a growth in the impact of this. For this purpose 13 women's group has been formed in Ward No. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13. Six hundred women have joined in this campaign through these groups.

"We are conducting programmes like household campaigns, trainings and discussions to raise awareness about controlling wastes and minimum use of plastics," says Madhavi Sharma, Chairperson of the group in Ward No. 8, Annapurna *tole*. She states that since women were taught to make compost, waste production has reduced.

Due to women's activeness there is no problem of waste management in the *toles* where groups has been formed and plastics have been controlled says Shekhar Nath Panthi, the Chief of the Waste Management Unit in the municipality. He believes that if women's group can be formed in each ward and *tole* in the municipality, its burden can be reduced to a large extent.

Initially the municipality through the local administration and with the support of Urban Development and German Technical Support programme provided training to the group members on minimising the wastes at source, sorting them and making the organic wastes into compost at home. Three model women's groups have started distributing cloth bags and iron rods for plastic bag collection and drums to make compost out of organic wastes to reduce plastic bag usage says Panthi. The women's group sit once for a monthly meeting and discuss on the waste management problems of the neighbourhood says Sharma the Chairperson of the group. A fund is maintained by collecting the money regularly from the members.

The municipality is facing difficulties in managing the wastes produced in Siddharthanagar. Fourteen tonnes of waste collects daily in the municipality and only 60 percent is only collected and disposed off properly according to the municipality. Due to lack of adequate resources and dumping sites, waste management has not been possible according to Panthi. Of the total wastes, 75 percent is organic, 5 percent paper, 5 percent plastics, 3 percent cloth, 3 percent metal, 2 percent glass/ceramic, 2 percent rubber and 5 percent unusable wastes. If the organic and usable wastes can be recycled then waste management will not be a problem.

VDC declared open defecation free through own effort

Krishna Adhikari, Satya Patra

Residents of Bageshwari VDC, Ward No. 5, 6 of Khajura area of Banke district who started with a 'one household, one latrine' campaign have now declared their community 'open defecation free'. The local people of Bageswhari formed a total sanitation committee and through their own efforts were successful to promote construction of latrines in 52 households of the community giving a facelift to its sanitation status.

Organising a programme in April the committee initiated a system of fining Rs. 51 for those defecating openly and awarding Rs. 25 to the one who reported about it. During the occasion the local people organised rallies on hygiene and sanitation and at the same time the local child club members presented sanitation related plays and songs.

Kedar Giri of the committee informs that the campaign was initiated to transform the community into safe, clean and green community. Though all the households in the community are temporary and since all of them have a latrine now, he informed that public latrines would be constructed at the community junctions and further added, "From now onwards no one in our community will have to observe open faeces."

Uttam Raj Ghimire the Chairperson of the Khajura drinking water and sanitation centre informing that sanitation is the identify of an individual, family and society, explained that a campaign to declare the entire Bageshwari VDC as open defecation free would be launched.

Kumar Silwal the Regional Manager of Nepalgunj office of Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH) an organisation active in the drinking water and sanitation sector expressed that the local residents started this campaign on their own adding a new dimension to sanitation. He informed that NEWAH had awarded Rs. 10,000 to the Bageshwari total sanitation committee as an encouragement and the people had been successful to break the tradition of expecting external support to build latrines at home.

According to the analysis of data by NEWAH, still 49 percent of people in Banke are found to defecate openly. Jaya Bahadur Karki the chief of the District Health Office of Banke explains that open defecation has been having an adverse impact on the health of the general people.