

Were a Haryanvi girl to marry with the words "I do", she would not without a loo. The state's hygiene pitch is now guided by this simple condition for prospective grooms

Divya A | TNN

Forty five-year-old Santri Rani from Nilokheri, a village in Karnal district, says, "Almost 30 years ago when I got married, my in-laws did not have a toilet in the house, nor did my parents. Most of us were defecating in the open, and it never occurred to anyone that this could be a vital issue." Last month, the panchayat built a toilet in Santri Rani's house. Now, she's determined that when her daughters marry, their new homes have toilets in situ.

Haryana may be that typically Indian state — 70% of its houses have TV sets; only 40% have a toilet. How and why this newfound awareness of toilets, hygiene and a woman's right to privacy? It is the result of the "toilet campaign", which is part the Total Sanitation Campaign launched by the Ministry of Rural Development. In many villages, the walls are adorned with slogans such as "Na byahun beti us ghar mein, jismein na ho shauchalaya" or won't marry my daughter into a household which doesn't have a toilet.

Neerja Shekhar, director of the Women and Child Development department, Haryana, says it has been four years since Haryana embarked on a massive campaign to create awareness



# IT'S NO TOILET, NO BRIDE IN HARYANA

rheoa, typhoid, jaundice and malaria are caused by lack of hygiene. And then, no educated girl these days likes to marry into a house that has no toilet".

Women's rights activist Madhu Kishwar, a fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, says there have been many such localized movements before. "I am glad that women of Haryana have responded positively to this awareness campaign by the government. It is only when caste and biradari panchayats and parents of daughters start taking up this as a priority issue that the situation will improve with regard to sanitation needs of the community, especially women," she says.

Haryana's small step for women must be placed in context. An official of the Union Rural Development ministry says that more than 665 million Indians still defecate in the open. He adds that a few years ago, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh made it mandatory for village representatives to have toilets in their homes. West Bengal, Maharashtra and Bihar followed suit. Chhattisgarh has decreed that elected panchayat representatives install toilets in their homes within a year or face disqualification.

Shekhar says that involving women in the process of sanitation and hygiene could go a long way if India is to meet the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating the practice of defecating in the open by 2010.

Kumari agrees that "the Haryana government seems to have hit the nail on the head." But she cautions in a lighter vein: "The only fear is if the groom's family starts asking for toilet construction money as part of the dowry."

The campaign may be a step in the right direction since many cases of sexual assault occur when women go out alone to defecate

about sanitation with jingles on the radio, advertisements on television, posters and banners. For four years, the campaign sought to convince people. Today, it can be seen to have borne fruit. Much credit goes to the "no toilet, no bride" slogan in rural areas. Shekhar says that "as many as 1.41 million toilets have been built across the state in the recent past. Many poor families now have a toilet in their house, because for households below poverty line, the Centre and the state pool in 80% of the funds".

Ranjana Kumari, director of the Centre for Social Research, an NGO working for women, says the campaign is a step in the right direction because many cases of sexual assault in villages occur when women go out alone to defecate. "While men and children can go any time, women have to do so under cover of darkness. This move may go a long way in preventing many such instances," says Kumari.

Sixteen-year-old Bhanwari says the toilet campaign is like a liberation. She felt embarrassed setting off in the mornings towards the open fields. "I would feel so conscious and ashamed. But just before my brother got married, we got a toilet in the house," she says. In a state infamous for honour killings, a toilet in the house was considered unfortunate and unclean till a few years ago. Bihari Lal from Kondal village in Palwal district says: "My father believed that the toilets should not be in the home as the food is also cooked within the same premises," said. But now, the 46-year-old farmer says he will install a toilet at home very soon. "We are told that diseases like diar-

# जरूरी होते जा रहे हैं स्वयंसेवी संगठन

जोगेन्द्र बिट्ट ॥

पिछले दो-तीन दशकों में स्वयंसेवी संगठनों की भूमिका में बहुत बड़ा बदलाव आया है। ऐसे संगठनों की एक नई पौध विकसित हुई है, जो लगभग सभी क्षेत्रों में - साक्षरता से लेकर भ्रष्टाचार के निदान तक के लिए सक्रिय है - जहाँ सरकारी तंत्र नहीं पहुंच पाया है वहाँ भी और जहाँ तंत्र काम कर रहा है वहाँ भी।

पिछले कुछ वर्षों से समुदाय आधारित सरकारी कार्यक्रमों में गैरसरकारी संगठनों की भूमिका अत्यधिक महत्वपूर्ण हो गई है। सरकार अपनी अनेक योजनाओं को लोगों तक पहुंचाने के लिए भी ऐसी गैरसरकारी संस्थाओं पर निर्भर है और इसके लिए केंद्र और राज्यों की सरकारें अपनी नीतियों में भी परिवर्तन कर रही हैं। विदेशी अनुदान से चलाई जाने वाली योजनाओं में तो अब दान देने वाली संस्थाएं या देश यह शर्त रखने लगे हैं कि सरकारें उस परियोजना के क्रियान्वयन में गैरसरकारी संस्थाओं की भूमिका सुनिश्चित करेंगी।

उत्तराखंड में स्वजल परियोजना विश्व की सबसे सफल समुदाय आधारित पेयजल योजनाओं में से एक है, जिसके बाद केंद्र सरकार ने स्वजल धारा नाम से देशव्यापी योजना शुरू की। इस सफलता के पीछे स्वयंसेवी संस्थाओं की बड़ी भूमिका थी। पर जब नए मुख्यमंत्री बी. सी. खंडूरी ने सत्ता संभाली तो उन्हें इस योजना में स्वयंसेवी संस्थाओं की भूमिका निरर्थक लगी। खंडूरी ने उन्हें दरकिनार कर दिया। पर साल बीतते उस परियोजना को आर्थिक मदद देने वाली विदेशी संस्थाओं ने ऐतराज उठाना शुरू कर दिया और अंततः प्रदेश सरकार को स्वयंसेवी संस्थाओं को दोबारा बुलाना पड़ा।

यह एक ताजा उदाहरण है, जिससे सरकारी एवं गैरसरकारी संस्थाओं की कार्यशैली के फर्क को समझा जा सकता है। दरअसल इसके मूल में सरकारी तंत्र को ब्रिटिश राज से विरासत में मिले संस्कार हैं, जो सरकारी मुलाजिमों को आम आदमी से जुड़ने से रोकते हैं। ये संस्कार पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी आगे बढ़े हैं और सरकार के हर महकमे में आज भी मौजूद हैं। जो चोला सरकारी अधिकारी ने ओढ़ा है, वही चपरासी ने भी ओढ़ा है - तो आम आदमी से कौन बात करे।

**सरकारी कर्मचारी अपने परंपरागत संस्कार के कारण समाज से संवाद नहीं करते लेकिन स्वयंसेवी संस्थाएं लोगों के बीच जाकर काम करती हैं। इसी कारण आज उनकी भूमिका महत्वपूर्ण होती जा रही है।**

सरकारी नौकरी में आते ही हमारी मानसिकता बदल जाती है। हर सरकारी नौकरी की चाहत रखने वाले युवक का सपना होता है कि नौकरी मिलने के बाद उसे एक कुर्सी व मेज मिले। वे अपने ऑफिस की चारदीवारी में बैठ कर हुकम चलाना चाहते हैं। यही आज का स्टेटस सिंबल है और हर पढ़े-लिखे युवक-युवतियों का सपना। बाहर कोई नहीं निकलना चाहता, जो बाहर भी निकलते हैं तो सिर्फ वोट की राजनीति के लिए।

इसके उलट स्वयंसेवी आंदोलन से जुड़े लोग इन कार्यक्रमों के बारे में समुदाय के बीच जाकर चर्चा करते

हैं। उनकी शंकाओं का निराकरण व अपनी भ्रांतियों को दूर करने का कार्य भी समुदाय के बीच जाकर होता है। आपसी विश्वास का माहौल बनाने में लगातार समय देना होता है। जो स्वयंसेवी संस्थाएं तो करती हैं, पर सरकारी बाबू नहीं करते।

पिछले कुछ वर्षों में समुदाय को सरकारी योजनाओं से जोड़ने के अनेक अच्छे उदाहरण गैरसरकारी संस्थाओं ने प्रस्तुत किए हैं, जिनमें ग्रीनिंग इंडिया, राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण स्वास्थ्य मिशन और स्वजल बिल्कुल ताजा उदाहरण हैं। हाल में नैनीताल में कूड़े के प्रबंधन के लिए एक प्रयास शुरू किया गया है, जिसमें लोक चेतना मंच नाम की संस्था ने घर-घर जाकर लोगों को घरों के कूड़े से नैनी झील व पर्यावरण को हो रहे खतरों के बारे में बताया तथा कूड़े के उचित प्रबंधन के तरीकों पर विचार-विमर्श किया। उसके बाद से घरों से ही जैविक व अजैविक कूड़ा इकट्ठा करने का काम शुरू हो गया। इसके लिए स्थानीय लोग पैसा भी देने लगे हैं। इस योजना के लिए पिछले चार वर्षों से सरकारी स्तर पर भी प्रयास किए जा रहे थे, पर वह परवान नहीं चढ़ी। इसके बाद जुलाई 2008 में एक गैरसरकारी संस्था के माध्यम से 'मिशन बटर फ्लाई' के नाम से यह शुरुआत की गई। और अब तो होटलों, दुकानों, स्कूलों तथा अन्य संस्थानों में भी इस सफलतापूर्वक लागू किया जाने लगा है।

इससे भी सरकारी और स्वयंसेवी संस्थाओं के कार्यशैली का फर्क समझा जा सकता है। पर यह कहना सही नहीं होगा कि जो इस समय गैरसरकारी संस्थाएं कर रही हैं, वह सरकारी संस्थाएं नहीं कर सकतीं। परंतु इसके लिए विरासत में मिले संस्कार छोड़ने होंगे और समुदाय के साथ संवाद का माहौल बनाना पड़ेगा।

## Most victims did not receive medical attention

Holi was celebrated in Sondh over Wednesday and Thursday. On the second day, the village boys gathered at a place, splashing one another with water colours stored in buckets.

"Someone splashed a bucket of colour on my face. I closed my eyes. I have not been able to open them again," Tasveer (21) said. "There was irritation in both eyes. In a few minutes, it got worse. My head also began to ache. My eyes were burning. It was unbearable."

Tasveer, who has partly lost his sight, could not appear for an entrance test he was slated to take in Nagpur. "I can't read or write," he said, wearing black spectacles.

Maan Singh complained of similar symptoms. "There was a burning sensation in my eyes. The doctor has advised me to use an eye drop and black glasses for a few days," he said.

Tasveer and Maan were among scores of boys who were shifted to nearby hospitals on Saturday in the hope that they will regain their eyesight fully.

Four boys were, however, not as lucky. "I cannot see anything and the doctor has told me I may need a surgery," Bhagat Singh said, his eyes bandaged. He has completely lost his eyesight.

The others who have lost their eyesight are Mukesh, Sahdev and Sonu. Doctors at the Palwal Civil Hospital are monitoring their condition.

Aditya Chaudhary, the chief medical officer (CMO) at Palwal Hospital, said such an incident

had taken place in the village for the first time. He was worried about the condition of the four boys. "Their eyes have been damaged seriously and nothing can be said at this stage," Chaudhary said.

The CMO has referred the four boys to a speciality hospital.

Villagers complained the boys could not get immediate medical attention as the place lacks a good hospital. "The only government hospital is at Palwal, which is 5 km away. On Thursday, there was chaos in the hospital. The private hospitals were no good. A chemist gave me an expired

eye drop," Naresh Kumar said.

Doctors suspect harmful chemicals or crushed glass had been mixed with the colours. "We have informed the police and a sample of the colour has

## Govt promises to foot treatment costs

been sent to a laboratory for testing," Chaudhary said.

Villagers said the colour was bought from Palwal by the panchayat. The villagers reportedly

first informed the panchayat about the tragedy and then the police. "A panchayat will be held soon and things will be decided there. Generally, we don't complain to the police," said Ved Prakash, another victim wearing black glasses.

A makeshift medical camp has been set up in the village's government school to look after the victims. On Saturday, senior officials, including the deputy commissioner (DC) and the local legislator, visited the village. "C.R. Rana (the DC) assured us the government will foot the medical expenses," said Sunil, another victim.

In a similar incident, up to 8-children had taken ill in Than on March 12 after playing with toxic Holi colour. The children in Thane district's Ambarnath were rushed to hospital after they complained of nausea, vomiting, suffocation and irritation.

The police said the children were from Bhaskar Nagar, Balag Nagar and Naveen Bhandi Pad in Ambarnath west. After playing Holi, they came home, had food and went to sleep. When they woke up in the evening they started vomiting and complained of nausea.

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