Understanding FSM Behaviour in India: From Exploration to Evaluation

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BBC Media Action India
In four short years...

- Around 92.2 million toilets have been built
- 28 states have been declared ODF
- 4,140 cities declared ODF
- 35 cities declared ODF+
- National NFSSM Policy adopted in 2017
How do you make FSM as important an issue as air pollution for people living in urban India?

Research Questions:

• To understand triggers and barriers around construction of sanitary toilets and regular desludging

• To segment populations based on attitudes and practices

• To understand media access and habits of these segments
Methodology: Formative research

Mixed method approach used to understand knowledge, attitude and capacity gaps among populations

- Men and women
- Aged 30-40 years
- Home owners for at least three years
- Not connected to sewers; with a septic tank or connected to an open drain
  - Those who have desludged at least once
  - Those who have never desludged

Qualitative exploration

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<th>Population</th>
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<td>25</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>02</td>
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<td>FGDs</td>
<td>Home immersion</td>
<td>Ethnographic interviews</td>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
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Methodology: Formative research
Mixed method approach used to understand knowledge, attitude and capacity gaps among populations

- Men and women
- Key decision-makers on FSM practice in the household
- Homeowners who had lived in the house for three years or more
- Not connected to sewers; with a septic tank or connected to an open drain

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Behrampur</th>
<th>Narsapur</th>
<th>Trichy</th>
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<td>587</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>576</td>
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FINDINGS
Three key groups based on FSM attitudes and practices

‘It is okay to wait to clean/empty the septic tank until it is full’

22% PROACTIVE DESLUDGERS

66% REACTIVE DESLUDGERS

11% CONNECTED TO OPEN DRAINS

Base (All HHs): Proactive desludging advocates: 390; Reactive desludging advocates: 1154; Connected to open drain: 196
Proactive desludgers
Concerned, but incomplete knowledge; attitude does not translate to behaviour

Knowledge limited to the visible elements of the FSM value chain

- 66% aware that manual cleaning is prohibited by law
- 84% know that the walls of septic tanks should be concrete
- 47% unaware of where waste was taken the last time their tank was desludged

Concerned about FSM and keeping surroundings clean and healthy

- 68% feel clean surroundings are important for a healthy family
- 60% concerned about where sludge is dumped, even if away from own residence
- 54% claim to desludge at fixed intervals

H owever...

- 35% feel it is ok if someone enters the septic tank to clean or are unsure about the practice
- 47% unaware of where waste was taken the last time their tank was desludged
Proactive desludgers
Concerned, but incomplete knowledge; attitude does not translate to behaviour

Progressive and collective mindset
- 41% agree: We as a society should get together to make sure that all cleaning operators dump the faecal sludge only in designated areas
- 40% agree: This [reactive desludging] is not a good practice and we as a society should organize together and ensure that all the people in our society clean their septic tank regularly and not wait for it to fill up

Conscious and concerned about their environment
- 27% agree: I have never been bothered by the open drains in our surroundings
- 27% agree: A family can remain healthy even if the surroundings are not clean
**Reactive desludgers**
Unconcerned, incomplete knowledge, very low self and collective efficacy

**Low concern and involvement with FSM**
- 75% wait for backflow/blockage or stench or tank overflow
- 72% believe that anyone with more money or space will construct a large septic tank
- 75% don’t know that sludge can be re-used after treatment

**High dependence on authorities, less self-reliant**
- 90% believe it is entirely the government's responsibility to keep the city clean
- 41% believe the Government should make sure that all cleaning operators dump the faecal sludge only in designated areas (vs. 24% of Proactive Desludgers)
Reactive desludgers

Unconcerned, incomplete knowledge, very low self and collective efficacy

Place greater importance to cleanliness inside their own homes than outside it

- 52% agree: I am not concerned with where the faecal sludge is getting dumped as long it is not close to my house
- 39% agree: I have never been bothered by the open drains in our surroundings

Expect the government to play a role in assisting with desired FSM practices

Desludging expenses are considered a burden, an undesired expense

- “It costs money to empty the tank, if I have to spend every few years, it is adding up to my expenses for no reason” - Male, Narsapur
- “The mason suggested we build a large tank so we save money on desludging” - Female, Trichy
Connected to open drains

Aware of health risks from vector borne diseases but not concerned about it

- 91% agree that faecal sludge flowing in open drains spreads diseases (true for all other groups as well)

- But 55% say they have never been bothered by the open drains in their surroundings

- Only 18% agree they will make sure that they will only employ those cleaning operators who dispose of faecal sludge in designated areas
## Connected to open drains

### KEY BARRIERS

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<th>Incapacity</th>
<th>Passing the buck</th>
<th>Unwilling to engage</th>
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<td>For some, financial constraints mean they don’t have the resources they need</td>
<td>Many believe that it is the governments responsibility to maintain cleanliness, and ensure public hygiene</td>
<td>Some find it easier to connect with drains, and not have to deal with desludging; are encouraged by herd mentality and facilitated by the mason</td>
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Avoid the problem and pass the buck

Perceived risk with open drains doesn’t transform into concern

• 90% believe that faecal sludge flowing into open drains spreads diseases
• Only 53% are bothered by the open drains in their surroundings

Large tanks = problem avoidance for a longer time

• 78% believe a septic tank should be as large as possible
• 71% believe that anyone with more money or space will construct a large septic tank

Majority believe in reactive desludging

• 66% believe it is okay to wait until the septic tank is full before emptying it
• 53% believe a septic tank should be cleaned when the toilet is blocked or there is backflow

Most depend on government for construction and cleaning of septic tanks

• 80% believe the government should construct septic tanks in all households
• 78% believe emptying septic tanks is the responsibility of the municipality

Total HHs: 1740
Recommendations for communication

TO GRAB ATTENTION

• Make FSM a basic concern for the family

• Heighten risk perception around the unseen

• Build urgency to take action by making the threat personal
Recommendations for communication

TO BUILD POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

• Increase awareness about correct FSM practices across the value chain

• Instil a sense of personal responsibility – the role of the individual household

• Build a lens of social disapproval of incorrect practices – the role of the collective community
Navrangi Re!
Atpate Logon Ki Chatpati Duniya