India’s Total Sanitation Campaign

Andrés Hueso González
PhD candidate
ahuesog@upvnet.upv.es

Group of Studies on Development, Cooperation and Ethics
Universitat Politècnica de València
Index

- Rural Sanitation in India, a case study of failure
- Learning from failure?
- Final reflections
Rural Sanitation in India, a case study of failure
The Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) is said to be: ‘community led’ and ‘people centered’. A “demand driven approach” is to be adopted with increased emphasis on awareness creation and demand generation (...). Subsidy for individual household latrine units has been replaced by [post-construction] incentive to the poorest of the poor households (Government of India, TSC Guideline 2004, p.6)

Complemented with award scheme for 100% clean villages (NGP)
Thus, the TSC is considered a cutting edge sanitation policy, following internationally recognized principles:

- Demand led – awareness raising
- Collective focus
- Community led

Reported progress was impressive:

73% coverage in 2012

But… “there is significant disconnect in terms of intent and action” (WaterAid, 2008). In practice, TSC is

- Supply led – Subsidized construction oriented
- Household focused
- Top-down

Actual progress is poor
31% coverage in 2011 (Census)

Performance in figures

Reported and surveyed rural sanitation coverage VS funds released

Toilet coverage [%]

Funds [Lakh Rupees]


Toilet coverage as reported by DDWS

Toilet coverage according to different surveys (DLHS, NFHS, Census of India)

Cumulative funds released by GoI for TSC [lakh]

Linear (Toilet coverage according to different surveys (DLHS, NFHS, Census of India))

Source: Hueso and Bell, forthcoming
Between 2001 and 2011:

- Only 1 out of 5 toilets reportedly built is actually in place.
- 9% coverage increase, <1% a year.
- 8,000,000 more households without toilets.
- Almost 60% of the open defecators worldwide live in India, and it keeps growing.

Nearly 60 per cent of those practising open defecation live in India.
Beyond

- At maintained coverage increase (?) 100% coverage would arrive in 2088...
- ...and unserved household would keep growing until 2020
- But progress has been 3 points lower than in the previous decade (9% vs 12%)!
Learning from failure?
What can be learnt from this failure?

- Some things stand clear – Intervention
  - Subsidies + little (if any) awareness raising
    → supply led and construction mode
  - NGP award scheme + single and lax verification
    → top-down rushed implementation

- Consequences
  - Half-built latrines or non-built latrines
  - Latrines are seldom used and undermaintained
  - No awareness, no appropriation
What can be learnt from this failure?

- Some things stand clear – Implementation gap
  - (Good) guidelines do not necessarily entail (good) implementation
    - Low political priority
    - Lack of capacity
    - Incoherent institutional arrangements
    - Flawed verification system
    - Misdirected accountability and incentive systems
    - Vested interests (corruption)
What can be learnt from this failure?

- Some things have to be explored

  - What has worked where? Would ‘true’ TSC work?
    - Explore data
    - Analyse success stories
      - Intervention
      - Outcomes and sustainability
      - Policy process
What can be learnt from this failure?

- An example
  - Himachal Pradesh!
    - Subsidy downplayed
    - State level competitive award
    - Gram Panchayat leadership
    - Political will!
  - Punjab!
    - ??
  - BIMAROU???
Government of India’s response

- TSC ‘revamped’ in 2012 → NirmalBharatAbhiyan

  - Few ‘knowns’ taken on board
    - + Increase awareness raising
    - + Better targeted subsidy
    - - Implementation gap untouched (or reinforced)

- Nothing explored
Final reflections
Reflections

- In order to learn **and** change you need to
  - Be open to shortcomings and criticism
  - Have or gain insight on what happens on the ground and on how to improve
  - Have the will and the means to make changes
In the case of the TSC

- Only higher levels are open to shortcomings
- Few evidences from the ground ‘move up’ (and slow). However, independent research is there!
- Politics and power impede making changes
  - Short-term perspective
  - Vested interests
  - Bureaucratic inertia
‘Learning from failure’ is related on how we frame policy

Technical perspective – rational, evidence-based, linear process: design-implementation-evaluation-redesign

Process perspective – complex, co-constructed, iterative process, pervaded by interests and contestation

Process perspective helps highlighting politics and going to the core obstacles
Thank you!
Gràcies!!
धन्यवाद!!

Andrés Hueso González
ahuesog@upvnet.upv.es
References

- HUESO, A. AND BELL, B., forthcoming. *From Policy to Reality: India’s Total Sanitation Campaign*