

Let us have faith in his dream

A case study on Vashram Bhai,
a farmer, who lives in Vankvad village.



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Vashram Bhai is a small farmer in Vankvad village. Vankvad is a village located in Ziayana Panchayat, Rajkot District. 124 families live there, all of whom live below the poverty line, and they depend on agriculture and casual labouring for their livelihood. There is no proper road connection to the highway, so they have to walk to reach Ziayana, or take a Zadkha, which is the typical vehicle used for daily transport, but this costs RS10 per trip. So this means that the women and children are facing the daily problem of no transport.

Vashram Bhai has five children, three daughters and two sons. Two of the daughters are married, and the youngest one is in charge of domestic work, but is also likely to get married very soon. The eldest son is studying in Rajkot College, and the younger is disabled, but he works at home, painting and repairing cell phones. Vashram Bhai has four acres of land, growing wheat, bajra and seasonal vegetables, managing to support his family from this income. He constructed a house three years ago, but without any sanitation facilities, as it wasn't felt to be necessary at the time. But he felt embarrassed whenever relations visited, particularly for the women, who had to walk a long distance to defecate in safety and privacy.

"Whenever my daughter and son in law came to my home, I felt very guilty as I wasn't able to provide any privacy for sanitation or bathing, but it wasn't a problem during our daily lives", said Vashram Bhai. As a result, he decided to build a complete ecosan toilet with bathroom at his house; this was a new design, which has made a great impression on all who have access to it. Vashram Bhai built this in close cooperation with SSP-WTN, completing the construction in only three days. Lengthy discussions were held, about the ecosan concept, usage and impact, between WTN and SSP staff, and members of the family. Through this process, the whole family gradually familiarised themselves with the ecosan facility, to the extent that they are now able to explain clearly to others the hygiene benefits. Vashram Bhai is particularly enthusiastic, and also able to explain the benefits the compost will have on crop yields.

He is also one of the village leaders (Aghyavaan) in his community, and a member of the VDC (village development committee), and has been an instigator in promoting development work in the village. From the outset, SSP-WTN decided to support all families in the village, to provide ecosan/bathroom facilities. They provided a secure location for all building materials purchased, and made arrangements for distribution amongst the community. A register has been kept up to date, to monitor and audit the stock of all materials.



"My daughter was frequently unable to take a bath because of lack of privacy, but although we knew the value of sanitation and bathing facilities, we were unable to construct one. Now this has changed, and we have been able to take the opportunity to resolve the problem. Both my son in laws are also very happy about this new facility", said Lailu Bhane, Vashram Bhai's wife. "I am so happy about the great difference the ecosan and bathroom have made to my home. All my children are really enthusiastic about this facility, and it gives me great pleasure to maintain it properly. I'm really keen to see how the compost will help in growing and cultivating vegetables", says Vashram Bhai.

He has encouraged the rest of the village to contribute labour, to build other ecosan facilities, after discussions and decisions made at the Agyavaan meetings. It was decided that all families who benefited would give their labour to help construct their ecosan toilet/bathroom.

His dream is to harvest the compost from his ecosan toilet, and to be able to witness the benefit to his crops. Let us have faith in his dream, and he will definitely succeed after one year!

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