

## **RURAL JHARKHAND DECLARED ODF, WEST BENGAL COMMITS TO BECOME ODF BY DECEMBER 2018**

Relevant for: Health, Education & Human Resources | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation

### **Rural Jharkhand declared ODF, West Bengal commits to become ODF by December 2018**

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A regional review meeting of the Eastern States was held in Kolkata, West Bengal, today. The workshop comprised discussions on sustaining Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM), and rural water supply. Teams from West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisha joined the review. Key aspects of sustainability such as geo-tagging, verification of ODF villages, conversion of dysfunctional toilets, IEC expenditure, Swachhagrahi engagement were reviewed.

In his opening address, the Hon'ble Minister of Public Health Engineering, Government of West Bengal, Shri Subrata Mukherjee, emphasised on the importance of sustaining safe sanitation practices and shared the State's commitment towards achieving open defecation free status. West Bengal currently has a rural sanitation coverage of 97% and is on track to becoming ODF much before the national target of October 2019.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, congratulated the team from Jharkhand for declaring the State as Open Defecation Free today. He further emphasized the importance of continuing behavior change efforts and periodic verifications to ensure that the safe sanitation habits and practices developed over the past few years are sustained in the future as well. He further appreciated the team from West Bengal for committing to declaring rural West Bengal ODF by December 2018.

Shri Akshay Rout, Director General, Special Projects, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation shared details of the ongoing Swachh Bharat World Toilet Day Contest (9th-19th November 2018). He urged all States and districts to come forward and participate in the Contest by organizing mass mobilization for Swachhata at the grassroots.

Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, spoke about the importance of undertaking solid and liquid waste management activities as ODF-plus interventions in all districts.

The review meeting was preceded by an early morning village visit during which the Ministry officers and State Mission team visited villages in the outskirts of Kolkata and

interacted with villagers regarding their access to and usage of household toilets. The Swachh Bharat Mission Directors from the participating States were also present at the meeting.

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