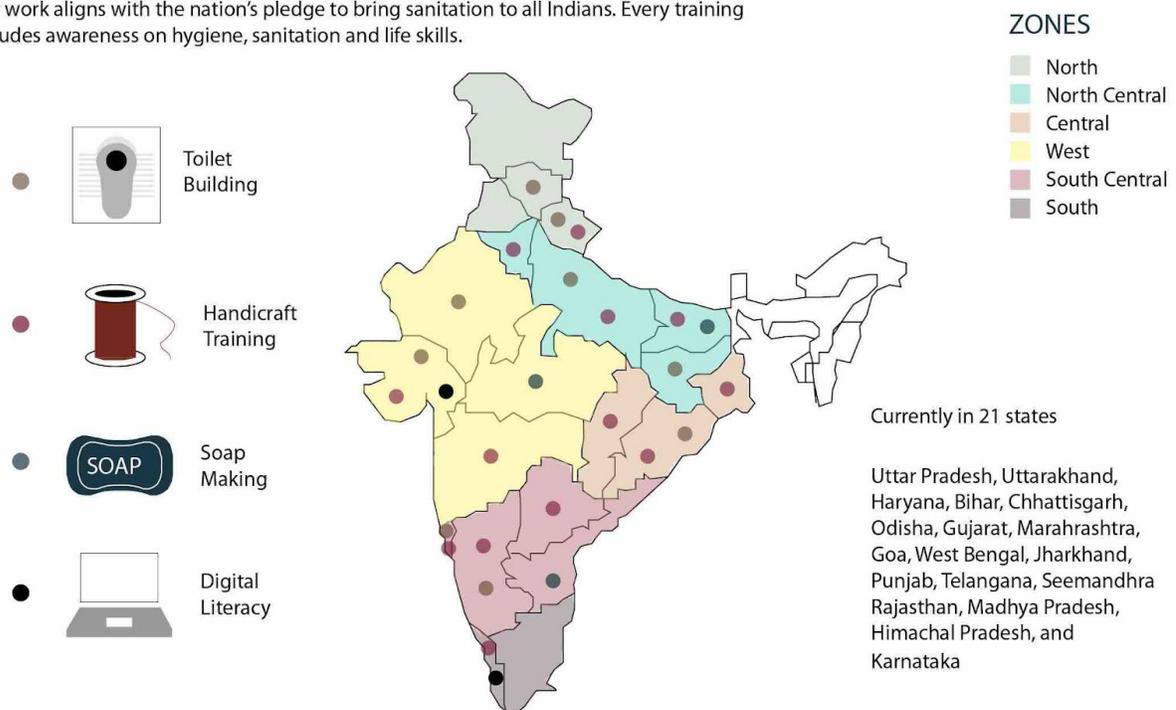


## Women's Empowerment: Rural Toilet Builder and Community Sanitation Project Phase II September 1, 2016 to September 1, 2018

Phase II of the Women's Empowerment: Rural Toilet Builder and Community Sanitation Project scaled Phase I efforts to 21 states throughout India. WE: Sanitation II extended the initial phase of the program that was conducted from 2014-16. This phase focuses on researching the scalability, wider impact, and establishment of best practices for global knowledge transfer—on the topic of women's empowerment and community-led total sanitation (CLTS). The inclusion of diverse income-generation programs was also studied, to see if greater economic empowerment would have greater sustainability. Community engagement through the establishment of SHGs, outreach programs, and inclusion into Government of India programs (especially Swachh Bharat Abhayan and Swajal) were also studied.

### WE: SANITATION FOR A CLEAN INDIA

Our work aligns with the nation's pledge to bring sanitation to all Indians. Every training includes awareness on hygiene, sanitation and life skills.



<https://youtu.be/OILOxxyNo2g>

Adequate sanitation has far-reaching impacts on everything from health and safety to education and livelihood. Lack of access to adequate sanitation is a daily reality for 2.5 billion people. Better hygiene can dramatically improve the incidence of disease and mortality from diarrhea to stunting and malnutrition; improved sanitation and hygiene can keep children healthier and in school. India currently accounts for 60 percent of the open defecation that is practiced globally.

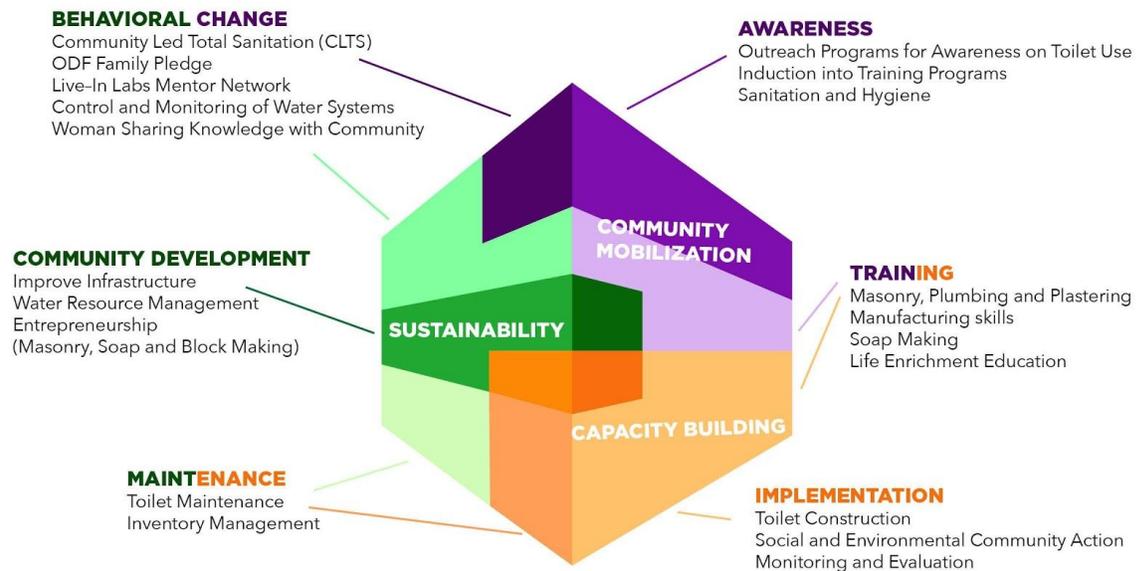
Girls and women in rural India are disproportionately affected by poor access to sanitation and hygiene. Due to the lack of privacy and dignity, women are far more vulnerable to the risk of physical and sexual assault. Women lose valuable time going far away from home just to relieve themselves or assist a family

member. When girls reach puberty, without access to private facilities, school dropout rates increase dramatically. In the workplace, unhygienic facilities can cause women to have higher rates of absenteeism and subsequently lose productivity and income.

The Government of India set a national goal to end open defecation by 2019. To address this lack of adequate sanitation, the Mata Amritanandamayi Math, through Amrita University’s AMMACHI Labs, is offering vocational courses in the construction of sanitation facilities to rural women, primarily to build, install and maintain toilets in their own communities. AMMACHI Labs in collaboration with UNDEF has provided vocational training using technology to more than 4000 women from rural and tribal areas since 2011.

## Our Approach

# EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH EDUCATION ON WATER, SANITATION AND SUSTAINABILITY



### *Ammachi Labs Model for Community Development through Skill Development*

Community development approaches that are collaborative in nature have demonstrated greater success in tackling development challenges by empowering and adapting to the unique nuances of a community[5]. Additionally, research has shown that the likelihood of adopting the habit of toilet use is greater when individuals are involved in the construction process.

AMMACHI Labs’ approach to ending open defecation in rural India is accordingly based upon a collaborative framework that trains women to build their own toilets, through our training model that has already demonstrated success in empowering marginalized communities. Using AMMACHI Labs’ integrated vocational education and training model, a dynamic emerges that engages entire communities in the movement towards total sanitation.

Additionally, as poverty continues to evolve into a multidimensional challenge, our strategy to provide vocational education and training in-turn reflects a multidimensional approach. AMMACHI Labs' objective to economically and socially empower individuals marginalized from mainstream education and consequently formal earning opportunities,[6] is through the combination of computerized vocational skill training and Life Enrichment Education (LEE). This combination of cVET and LEE impacts the individual's well being and further engages them in their community.

In addition to receiving training in the technical skills of masonry and plumbing to construct toilets, the students also learn to spread awareness on the importance of personal health, hygiene, water awareness and life skills, becoming ambassadors for change. This comprehensive skill training enables the student to learn what they need to know to be healthier to better take care of their families, identify safety concerns and strategize relief measures, better provide for their family, learn how to interact with others, contribute to society, utilize government infrastructures and schemes and leverage current technology.

From learning to build a toilet and also knowing how/why it's important to use a toilet, to recognizing flags for human trafficking, our students will be armed for increased control over their own lives.

#### Scaled and expanded: Greater populations reached

Since the launch of WE: Sanitation II, 188 women living in fifteen states throughout India have completed the Amrita cVET course on toilet building, and successfully built 327 toilets for their families. In addition, over 200 women in 11 states have taken a soap-making course to explore diverse sources of income. As the WE: Sanitation program expanded throughout rural India, continuous monitoring and follow-up became critical in confirming the intervention's long-term success. The simultaneous implementation of WE: Sanitation Outreach or "Community Events" in all of the project villages throughout rural India also confirmed that the issue of open defecation is as complex as it is widespread. It is apparent that what is required is more than a "one size fits all," solution that can only be achieved through community based approaches that maintain inclusivity.



*Participants of the rural toilet building course in Guptapada are in the process of constructing toilets for their village of Guptapada, in Odisha.*

<https://www.facebook.com/ammachi.labs/photos/a.518661888158007/1694624290561755/?type=3>

<http://ammachilabs.org/2017/08/extensive-toilet-building-under-the-swachh-bharat-mission-urban-started-at-dewgain-village-jharkhand-inagurated-by-the-block-development-officer-this-is-the-first-village-in-the-whole-panchayat/>

Addressing the needs of sanitation in India: Further Scoping and context establishment for women's empowerment in new regions

In line with objective of Phase II to scale and expand, alternative methods to constructing toilets at scale were explored and innovated.

The initial research question was, how to provide sanitation to the most number of Indians in the shortest amount of time and to ensure behavior change at the same time. To that end, the "mold-based Toilet" program was initiated that included a pre-fab mold that could make a toilet in ½ the time of conventional construction and included skills that were important to the formal construction industry.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNH\\_0f4n2Cw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNH_0f4n2Cw)



*Mold-style toilet design and implementation*

<https://www.facebook.com/1727354863955364>

For further information:

<https://www.amrita.edu/news/ammachi-labs-designs-easy-make-toilet-villages-north-india>

<http://www.embracingtheworld.org/news/ammachi-labs-invents-3d-modeled-mould-based-toilet/>

*State-wise breakdown of WE: Sanitation activities*

This project extended the WE: Sanitation phase 1 project, as well as incorporated some of the best practices from the UNDEF funded WE:CSDP Project. The major component that was included was the "life enrichment education" curriculum on community mobilization and engagement with government bodies. As toilet building is a primary focus of the current government of India, through its Swachh Bharat and similar schemes, this component is necessary for ensuring a holistic approach to community development. For more information on the WE:CSDP project, please follow the link:

<http://ammachilabs.org/undef-wecsdp/>

Through the impact assessment study of this project, we found that the implementation of Amrita cVET indicates improvements over the way sanitation problems are conventionally addressed. The most

pronounced difference is the inclusion of women, taking an active role in the development of sanitation infrastructure, raising awareness levels within their community on the importance of proper sanitation, and even mobilizing community action. Additionally, while WE: Sanitation has demonstrated direct and immediate impact on the students enrolled in the Amrita cVET course, indirect benefits of raised community sanitation awareness and action have begun to appear.

By leading with skill development, participants recognized the opportunity for better sanitation as an opportunity for better livelihood. While not every student enrolled in the Amrita cVET course voiced plans to pursue the learned skills as a livelihood, an observable sense of ownership in the process of ensuring their family practiced better sanitation was evident. By positioning students in an environment where they learn and work together towards community development, a culture of addressing personal and social problems collectively also begins to emerge. These initial observations and indications, while promising, warrant further exploration to better understand the specific points of impact. From September 2016 to September 2018, Phase II of the project achieved the following results.

<b>State</b>	<b>TB Students</b>	<b># Toilets Built</b>	<b>Soap Making Students</b>	<b>Community Event participants</b>
Andhra Pradesh	9	8	11	480
Bihar	16	11	13	845
Chhattisgarh				300
Goa	4	14	12	280
Gujarat	37	47	29	600
Haryana	11	27	13	25
Himachal Pradesh	13	13		150
Jammu	16	18		25
Jharkhand	8	6	15	400
Karnataka	17	35	46	200
Madhya Pradesh			7	150
Maharashtra				30
Odisha	33	53	29	300
Punjab	12	13		
Rajasthan	5	8		90
Tamil Nadu	10	10		

Telangana				50
Uttar Pradesh	18	17	13	575
Uttarakhand	13	28		175
West Bengal			21	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>4,735</b>

**Successes and achievements:**

On October 2, 2018, the Hon'ble Prime Minister awarded the Mata Amritanandmayi Math, Kerala for their generous contribution towards the Swachh Bharat Kosh.

<https://www.amritapuri.org/73720/18swachhkosh.aum>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62\\_Ro6tivHA&list=LLuGjbqEo8rM9bSnDstMtH2A&index=1219](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62_Ro6tivHA&list=LLuGjbqEo8rM9bSnDstMtH2A&index=1219)



Ammachi Labs’ nationwide efforts in addressing sanitation open defeciation were are also recently featured in in Better India.

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/203404/sanitation-women-india-ammachi-labs-amrita-university-swachh-bharat-india/>

In the future, we plan to take this approach to women’s empowerment, skill training, and community mobilization on social needs and apply them to other social problems. Sanitation could be addressed in this way. Likewise, women’s legal protection, access to drinking water, disaster risk reduction, and

agriculture sustainability may also benefit from adopting this approach. Future work will explore these new applications.