

Study on Household Sanitation Decisions in Rural Odisha and Bihar

Considering the slow response to adopting many environmental health technologies (e.g., bednets, latrines, cookstoves), a more thorough understanding of these mechanisms was deemed essential for designing effective interventions and developing appropriate technologies.

In this project, Sambodhi focused on household beliefs and perceptions of social networks (including how beliefs operate through networks). Sambodhi planned to understand how such interventions might encourage latrines' adoption (and later abandonment). Recognizing that latrine abandonment is a new and growing challenge to global sanitation initiatives (Orgill-Meyer et al., 2018), this project was the first to study abandonment by households that previously adopted latrines. This project has a panel study design wherein data is collected over time to understand the trend. The study's primary objectives were:

- to understand the mechanisms that influenced households to maintain or abandon improved sanitation behaviours and
- to understand how social factors influence household sanitation decisions.

This project had two rounds of data collection, first in Bihar and Orissa, second only in Bihar because of the Pandemic. This project had two components:

- Household study, which aimed to explore the community member's knowledge, attitude, practice, and perception around sanitation and hygiene.
- Experimental games with incentives. The game's incentives were designed to mirror those in the public health environment and sanitation. Households individually chose the amount of effort they exerted in the game. The group was rewarded based on their aggregated effort, similar to how sanitation practices affect a community's disease environment.