

## CASE STUDY CONCEPT NOTE

**Institute name:** ITN-BUET and Practical Action Bangladesh

**Unit of relevance:** Sub-course 3 (Unit 3.1)

**Link to video:** [https://youtu.be/PueDVX2E\\_RY](https://youtu.be/PueDVX2E_RY)

### **TITLE:**

**Engaging Traditional Pit Emptier Groups of Satkhira Municipality in FSM Ensuring their Health and Safety and Promoting Protection of the Environment**

[\*The “case study” is based on a FSM initiative of “Practical Action Bangladesh” in Satkhira Municipality; and was developed with permission and support from Practical Action Bangladesh.]

**DURATION:** 18:10 minutes

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT:**

Satkhira Municipality with a population of about 140,000 people is entirely covered by on-site sanitation system (i.e., septic tank system and pit latrines). People usually desludge septic tanks and pits when they become full or overflow; draining of pit contents to drain/low-lying area is also common. Traditional pit emptier groups (often referred to as “sweepers”) carry out the manual pit/tank emptying operations without any protective gear, exposing themselves to serious health hazards; this has serious adverse impact on their lives and livelihood. The emptied faecal sludge used to be discharged into a water body causing serious environmental pollution and threatening public health.

Satkhira Municipality with support from Practical Action Bangladesh (PAB) initiated FSM services covering entire service chain from collection to treatment through construction of a 2000 l/day capacity treatment plant in 2014. However, ensuring proper collection and transportation of faecal sludge employing the traditional pit emptier groups was a major challenge. After a series of awareness raising, motivational programs and training, the traditional pit emptier groups are now using locally available/fabricated modern equipment and safety gears for collection and transportation of faecal sludge to the treatment plant. This has significantly improved the lives of the traditional pit emptier groups. However, the FSM service is able to cover only a small fraction of the population and major challenges remain.

### **DESCRIPTION:**

The case study focuses on the hazards associated with traditional pit emptying practices, and vulnerability of traditional pit emptier community to these health hazards. Such practices are in fact common in most developing countries.

The case study focuses on efforts made by PAB and the Satkhira Municipality in providing FSM services involving the local pit emptier groups, while at the same time addressing the occupational health hazards faced by them. The case study also covers the approach taken to achieve this issue and also the local innovations made in regard to collection and transportation of faecal sludge. The case study will make an attempt to document (through interviews) the impact of these initiatives on the lives of traditional pit emptier groups.

The case study will also address the challenges that are yet to be addressed, including limited capacity of the municipality in terms of both personnel (including pit emptier groups) and infrastructure (collection/transportation, and treatment), poor level of awareness among people, and so on.

### **PRESENTATION STYLE:**

The case study consists of written description, power point presentation and videos (including interviews). The case study starts with description of the poor state of FSM, and associated adverse impacts in the Satkhira Municipality. Traditional pit emptying practices and their adverse impacts are also described (including video clips). Pit emptiers were interviewed to learn first-hand about the occupational hazards associated with pit emptying.

The case study then focuses on the initiative of PAB and Satkhira Municipality to initiate FSM services, particularly focusing on protecting livelihood of traditional pit emptiers and ensuring adequate health and safety measures. The challenges faced throughout the process are also described. The case study focuses on the innovations made in regard to fabrication of faecal sludge collection and transportation equipment/vehicle, and safety gears.

**TAKE HOME MESSGAE/S:**

Transition from traditional pit emptying practices to modern FSM must consider the lives and livelihood of people already associated with faecal sludge management services. Through awareness raising and training, these communities could be integrated into the modern FSM service delivery chain, utilizing local innovations.