

Gender Equality Case Study: Samagra



Innovator Project Description

Samagra is a for-profit social enterprise that is dedicated to providing access to clean, safe and reliable communal toilet facilities to urban slums in India.

Gender Equality Score: GE2 – Significant Consideration to Gender Equality

Innovator Solutions to Key Gender Equality Challenges

Gender equality is an organizational priority and informs Samagra’s structure and approach. The table below presents key issues, challenges and opportunities encountered by the innovator during the award period, and their according strategies and solutions.

Issues, Challenges & Opportunities	Innovative Solutions
<p>SEXUAL ABUSE</p> <p>Half of India’s population practices open defecation, which can result in women being the victims of sexual abuse. Due to a lack of gender considerations in toilet design, there is often a lack of space, security and privacy in women’s toilets.</p>	<p>Samagra has increased the number of toilets available to women, and has implemented several design changes to existing washrooms, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved lighting for greater security • Increased privacy measures • Improved internal plumbing and ventilation • Installment of hand washing stations
<p>CULTURAL NORMS AND SOCIOECONOMIC BARRIERS</p> <p>Certain genders experience systemic challenges due to cultural norms and socioeconomic barriers that impact their access to proper sanitation services.</p>	<p>Consideration of the systemic gender challenges within the surrounding communities has led Samagra to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the workforce participation of women by ensuring that 50% of all staff and 100% of all sales agents are women • Support the financial independence of women by providing microfinancing opportunities for female entrepreneurs • Install discrete and secure toilet facilities to decrease incidences of discriminatory acts towards transgender people



MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

Close to half of the women in India do not have access to sanitary napkins. Currently millions of women in India face significant barriers to a comfortable and dignified experience with **menstrual hygiene management**.

Menstrual health management has been an integral consideration in Samagra's product design and community involvement. Some examples include:

- Introduction of waste disposal bins to allow for safe and effective sanitary waste management
- A separate plumbing system for women's toilets to ensure access to water for menstrual hygiene
- Vending machines that dispense low-cost sanitary napkins
- Donation of quality sanitary napkins to young girls in slums

PUBLIC POLICY

Analyzing gender patterns and incorporating **gender-specific considerations into public policy** is a significant step towards establishing equal access to sanitation services.

Acknowledging the responsibility to act as an advocate for the inclusion of gender considerations in sanitation policy, Samagra has:

- Acted as a primary driver behind the Pune Public Toilet Policy, which included the Pune Pattern of Ladies Toilets (comprehensive plan for providing ladies toilets & urinals in public places)
- Successfully advocated for the provision of free sanitary napkins by the Pune Municipal Corporation to young girls in corporation schools

