



OUTLINE India
Social Impact through Data

**Evaluation of WASH campaign at the Kumbh
Mela, Nashik, 2015
FINAL REPORT
Prepared for: WASH United**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND KEYWORDS

ABBREVIATIONS

FGD- Focused Group Discussion

IDIs- In-depth Interviews

KEYWORDS

ATTENDEES- A person who attends a conference or a gathering.

SWACHH/SWACHHTA- Spotless, clean

SWACHH DAYS- Clean Days

AKHADAS- A Gymnasium

MELA- A religious fair or festival

GHAT- Passage leading down to a river

GURUS- A Hindu spiritual teacher

SWAMIJI- A religious teacher

TIKA- Another term for *tilak* (*Putting a red powder mixed with liquid as a mark of starting something on an auspicious note as per Hindu religion*)





CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The *Swachh Kumbh Mela* campaign undertaken by WASH United in collaboration with the Global Interface Wash Alliance (GIWA) is centred on the cultural narrative of the idea of purity and pollution among Hindus which offers legitimacy to the practice of open defecation. Thus owing to the religious significance and the mass appeal, the *Kumbh* becomes a suitable setting to engage religious target audiences about the importance of toilet usage.

The sanitation challenges in India are contextual. While it can be inferred that the problem of open defecation pertains primarily to rural India and waste management to urban, the issues that surfaced during the investigation are unapparent. What has become evident are that the aspects of purity and pollution, clean and unclean, are interlinked with gender, caste and other distinctions and group affiliations as seen during the data collection procedure. Upper castes were unlikely to sit along with lower caste individuals during a discussion. Sanitation workers were mostly lower caste or from tribal communities. Thus, while the nature of *mela* made differences and spaces fluid, the idea of cleanliness and personal hygiene continued to be tied to group norms.

The demographic landscape of the *Kumbh* is broad: devotees from different cults or *akhadas* (*local term for cult or sect specific camps*) headed by different spiritual leaders, *sadhus*, who are largely nomadic, small scale traders and informal businessman, policemen, sanitation workers to state a few, from both the rural and the urban regions of the country.

While the entire geographical setting suddenly witnesses a massive influx of people, the challenges in maintaining sanitation and hygiene at the *mela* become manifold.





CHAPTER 2: CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

2.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE CAMPAIGN

WASH United tested a series of innovative interventions at the 2015 *Kumbh Mela* in Nashik, with the objective of learning what public awareness strategies work to engage people on the issue of improved sanitation practices around mass gatherings with more than five million people.

The theme of the campaign as aptly defined by the slogan was '*Har Sharir Ek Mandir Hain, Isse Swachh Rakhe, Shauchalay ka Istamal kare*' (keeping the body clean, hygienic and pure like a temple which can be attained by the usage of toilets). This metaphoric comparison of the human body to a place of worship is a traditional Vedic Hindu thought. The topic of purification is central to the Hindu belief system and hits off well with the religious audiences.

Broadly, the campaign can be divided into two phases:

1. The initial roll-out phase, included two *Swachh* Days with a direct message delivery strategy that were held at two different camps (*akharas*) on subsequent days and were co-organized by GIWA. The location for the first *Swachh* day was at Trimbakeshwar while the second one was held at *Sadhugram*. During the sermon sessions, renowned and popular religious leaders from different cults informed the attending devotees about the sanitation challenges and called upon devotees to reconsider traditional practices and adopt safe sanitation practices. The speeches were supported by 4 myth-buster videos screened during the session. At the end of the session the leaders took a pledge for sanitation at the wall, and encouraged the devotees to do the same, after the session outside.

Consequent programs within the camps, included an outdoor quiz-based game to deliver sanitation messages and bust existing myths through direct engagement with the participants, followed by pledging for sanitation. These attracted a wider range of participants, including devotees and *sadhus* who were attending the session and a few others who had come to visit that camp.

The visibility of the campaign for the general *mela* attendees was retained by setting up LED screens at different key locations of the *mela*, which initially screened the four myth buster videos.

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