



# Only 26% of rural toilets use twin-leach pits, finds survey

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## **Only 26% of rural toilets use twin-leach pits, finds survey-Waste disposal from other toilets could turn into health and environmental nightmare**

- Over the last year, a government advertisement featuring film actors has been preaching the benefits of the “do gadde” or twin-pit latrines, which would create valuable farm manure from human excreta.
- “Shauchalaya ka ashirvadis the tagline used in the advertisement produced by the Centre’s flagship sanitation scheme Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
- This month, with the scheme claiming to be on the verge of completing toilet construction for all rural households, a government-commissioned survey shows that just over a quarter of rural toilets use this twin-pit system.

### **From waste to manure**

- Under the twin-pit system, two pits are dug with honeycombed walls and earthen floors which allow liquid to percolate into the surrounding soil.
- When one pit is filled and closed off, waste flow is transferred to the second pit, allowing waste in the first pit to be converted into manure after a year or two.
- The analysis of raw data from the National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey 2018-19, shows that just 26.6% of rural households use the recommended twin-pit system to dispose of excreta from their toilets.
- Septic tanks are the most popular option, with 28% of toilets connected to a septic tank with a soak pit and 6% to a tank without a soak pit.
- Others use a single leach pit (18%) or a closed pit (11%).
- Open pits, open drains or nallahs, or simply discarding waste directly into a nearby pond or waterbody are the other options, while a few toilets are connected to a closed drain leading to a sewer system.

- The twin pit has been promoted by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and the World Health Organisation as an in-situ sanitation system, which claims to bypass thorny issues as owners will be dealing with manure, not excreta.
- Uttar Pradesh, which tops the list with 64% of toilets with twin pits, had made the technology mandatory for anyone who wanted to avail the government's Rs.12,000 subsidy to build toilets.
- Jharkhand, which is second on the list, with almost 58% of its toilets connected to twin pits, was declared open defecation free (ODF) only late last year.

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