



JAY CHIAT STRATEGY AWARDS  
CATEGORY: CONNECTION STRATEGY

# FIVE WORDS THAT MADE TOILETS INDIA'S NEW STATUS SYMBOL



# SUMMARY

Building and maintaining toilets isn't a necessity for Indians.

That's why half a billion Indians defecate in the open. Still.

Women are the worst affected by this indifference - often subjected to health and security hazards.

Lack of toilets hurt Harpic - India's No. 1 toilet cleaner, which needs new toilets to grow.

In a nation that refuses to consider toilets a necessity, we decided to turn them into a luxury, a status symbol.

The Great Indian Wedding is the ultimate display of any family's status and it all begins with the the Great Indian Wedding ad - A newspaper matrimonial ad.

Each expensive word here is loaded with status connotations.

We decided to make this medium our message.

Tying up with the largest Hindi language daily in the worst affected areas, we offered free matrimonial ads if the advertiser added 5 extra 'status' words -  
"Home Must Have Clean Toilet."

Our campaign reached 13 million people.  
30% ads included these 5 status words.

This completely changed the conversations around toilets - and marriages.

Even a Bollywood movie came out on the issue!

By making matrimonial pages a deafening call for clean toilets, we made clean toilets india's newest status symbol.

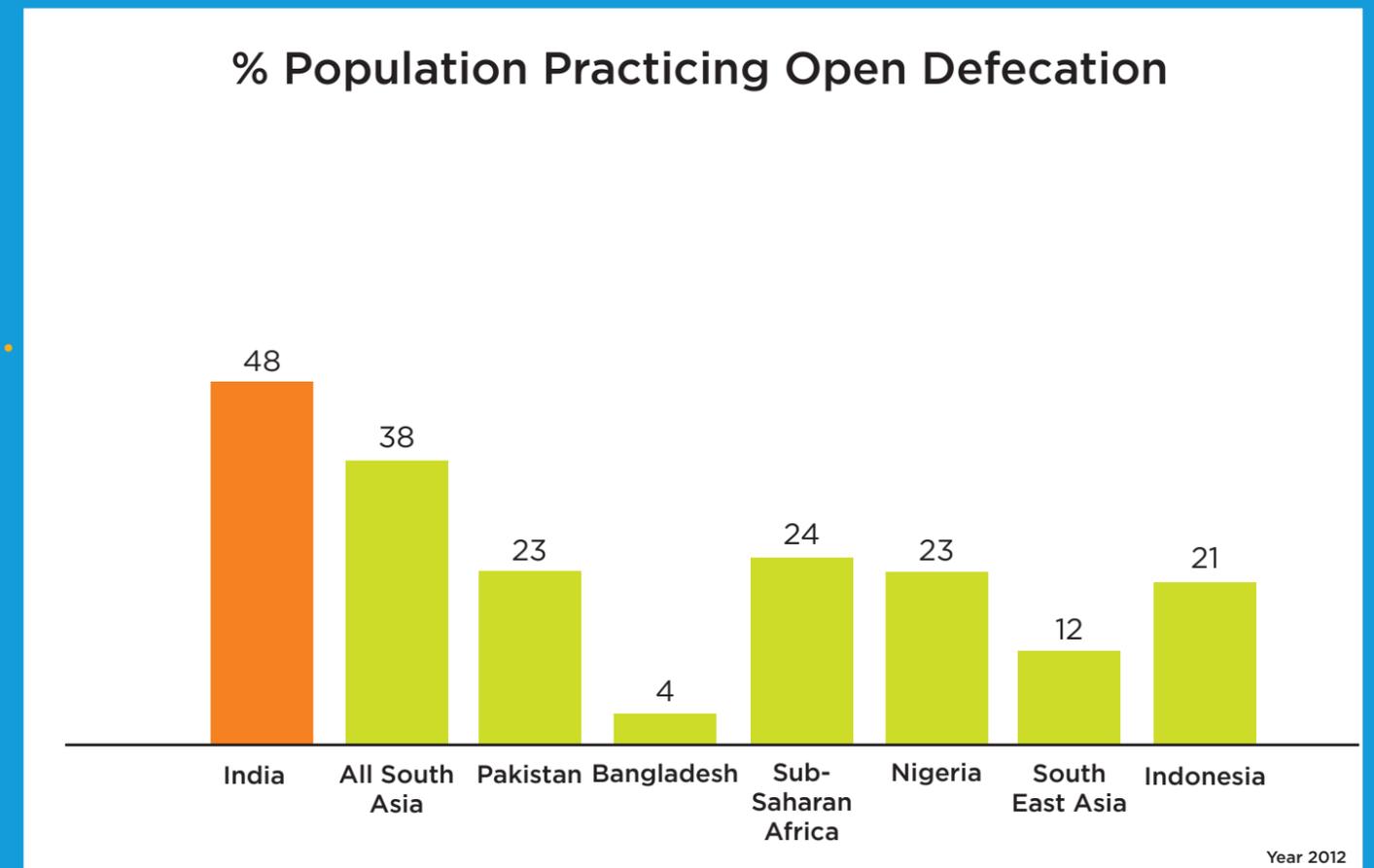


# BUILDING TOILETS ISN'T A NECESSITY FOR INDIANS

India fares much worse on open defecation even in comparison to countries like Bangladesh and Nigeria!

“Somehow in India it’s become an accepted norm that you can go out into the open for defecation. Infact, people prefer it in many places.”

Madhu Krishna,  
Country Head - Water Sanitation & Hygiene, India  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



# LACK OF TOILETS - CRUELTY TO WOMEN

Women have paid a high price for these statistics as going out to defecate comes with unimaginable suffering. They feel insecure and troubled about having to go to the fields, particularly after sunset, making them vulnerable to attack or rape. (2016 study by the University of Texas)

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“Women in villages have to wait for dark to venture out in order to relieve and as a result have to bear with physical pain.”

- Family Court Judge Rajendra Kumar Sharma

# LACK OF TOILETS HURT INDIA'S #1 TOILET CLEANER - HARPIC

Harpic is India's number one toilet cleaner brand. It has successfully established itself as an expert through efficacy based communications that demonstrate its superior cleaning.

It enjoys a healthy urban penetration of 38.9% (MAT April 2017, IMRB HH Panel) and leads the 'toilet and bathroom cleaners' category with 77.8% market share (YTD September 2017, Nielsen). Over 36 million urban Indian households use the brand.

The obvious frontier for growth is rural and small-town India - where the category rural penetration stood at a mere 12.9% (MAT June 2017, IMRB HH Panel).

But given the lack of toilets in rural India, Harpic's future looked bleak.



38.9%  
Penetration  
(Urban)

77.8%  
Market Share  
(Urban)

12.9%  
Penetration  
(Rural)



# **TASK**

**HOW COULD HARPIC ACCELERATE  
THE ADOPTION OF TOILETS IN RURAL INDIA?**

# CHALLENGE 1

## PAST COMMUNICATION WASN'T WORKING

The government has shown intent in tackling the issue and announced the Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission in 2014 as its flagship program for achieving sanitation goals.

But the focus of communication before and under the Mission has been largely on the rational reasons for building toilets at home. Campaign after campaign on television as well as local wall paintings have stressed on the benefit of reducing illness by avoiding open defecation and building toilets at home.



If you want to get free of diseases, don't defecate out in the open. - Clean India Mission

# CHALLENGE 2

## TOILETS WERE A DEFERRED INVESTMENT

Despite the government subsidies on offer, building a new toilet was an investment for the rural household. Extra space needed for the new structure, productive time spent in the process of subsidy and supervision, labor of the family and additional funds - all had to be spent in the process.



# INSIGHT

WHEN IT COMES TO SPENDING MONEY, INDIANS SURPRISINGLY WILL PRIORITIZE LUXURIES OVER NECESSITIES BECAUSE LUXURIES SIGNAL STATUS



Adding another room for a newly married couple in the joint family, buying a television set, a new motorcycle or a mobile - any of these could defer the decision to build a toilet.

# STRATEGY

IN A NATION THAT REFUSES TO CONSIDER TOILETS A NECESSITY,  
WE DECIDED TO TURN TOILETS INTO A LUXURY, **A STATUS SYMBOL.**

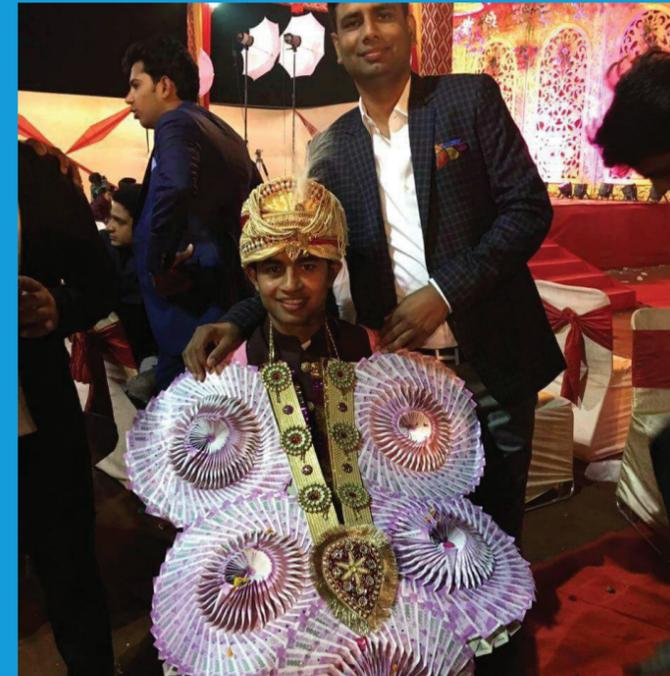
# THE ULTIMATE DISPLAY OF A FAMILY'S STATUS - THE GREAT INDIAN WEDDING

In Indian society, marriages are said to be a relationship between two families, not just two individuals.

Finding a match actually means finding a family worthy of being related to. And the basis of the relation is pretty much always – social status.

Intense comparisons are made to filter out prospective alliances basis the social status of the family.

There are clear and accepted markers of status – caste of the family, profession/occupation, salary, property/wealth and other assets, etc. – that are used to match status in the process of making matrimonial alliances.



# IT ALL BEGINS WITH A NEWSPAPER MATRIMONIAL AD

If marriages are the ultimate arena for signaling status, then the epitome of the Indian society's quest for seeking status is the matrimonial ad.

Every harmless looking descriptor is in reality, a sign of the Indian society's bias for status in the form of various attributes/status symbols - education, profession, salary and physical appearance, caste/sub-caste of the family, etc.

It is the shortest possible resume cum curriculum vitae cum bio-data of the prospective bride/groom and the family!

Each expensive word is loaded with status connotations.

The image shows a collage of newspaper matrimonial advertisements. At the top, there's a banner for 'SUNDAY TIMES' and 'matrimonials' with the tagline 'for the better half of your life'. Below this, a large advertisement for 'India's most Trusted Marriage Bureau' is featured, including contact numbers and a list of branches. The main body of the collage consists of numerous smaller ads, many of which are categorized under 'WANTED BRIDES' and 'MARRIAGE BUREAU'. These ads contain detailed text describing individuals and their families, often listing specific attributes like education, profession, and physical characteristics. Some ads are for specific communities, such as 'MUSLIM' or 'KASHMIRI'. The overall appearance is that of a busy, information-dense page from a newspaper's matrimonial section.

This is a close-up of a specific matrimonial advertisement. The ad is primarily yellow with red and black text. It reads: 'Suitable Match for Punjabi Girl 27.12.81/5'3" Extremely Beautiful, Educated, Very High Class Business Family Boy must be Punjabi, Educated, Well Established, Businessman/Industrialist Family. Contact: Co-ordinator Sanjay 9873602399'. To the left of the ad, there is some partially visible text from another ad: 'Preferred height... upto 35 yrs. 98610, 09313108612'. To the right, there is more text: 'Triple M.A., B.E., U.P. Teacher & LPA Seek QRO and...'. The ad is placed over a background of other newspaper text, including a WhatsApp number and a call voice ad.

# CONNECTION IDEA

## WE DECIDED TO MAKE THIS MEDIUM THE MESSAGE

We made toilets a status symbol by implanting them in matrimonial ads that epitomize Indians' lust for status.

# PRESENTING - 5 STATUS WORDS

'घर में साफ़ शौचालय ज़रूरी'.

Home Must Have Clean Toilet



## EXECUTION

We tied up with the largest read Hindi daily in the worst affected regions – U.P., Bihar and Jharkhand – Dainik Jagran

And launched a special matrimonial ad that girls (and their families) seeking a groom could use and advertise for free if they added merely 5 extra words – “Ghar Mei Saaf Shauchalay Zaruri” (Home Must Have Clean Toilet).

For the first time ever, women in small towns and villages could use the ad to express their demand for the most basic yet scantily available necessity in their future homes – a clean toilet.



**'घर में साफ़ शौचालय ज़रूरी'.**

**Home Must Have Clean Toilet**

**29** different editions  
reaching **13 million** readers  
in **3 states**



# WE CHANGED CONVERSATIONS AROUND TOILETS AND MARRIAGES

The Harpic Matrimonial Ad generated a 30% response – much higher than normal matrimonial ads and many times higher than the best-performing direct marketing campaigns.

The campaign brought attention to women’s need to have toilets at home - The campaign reached an estimated 13 Million readers in the focus states and generated huge amount of PR on the issue.

“A subtle yet thought-provoking initiative by Harpic” **BangaloreTimes**

“21% increase in toilet numbers in Haryana households looking for brides” **THE WIRE**

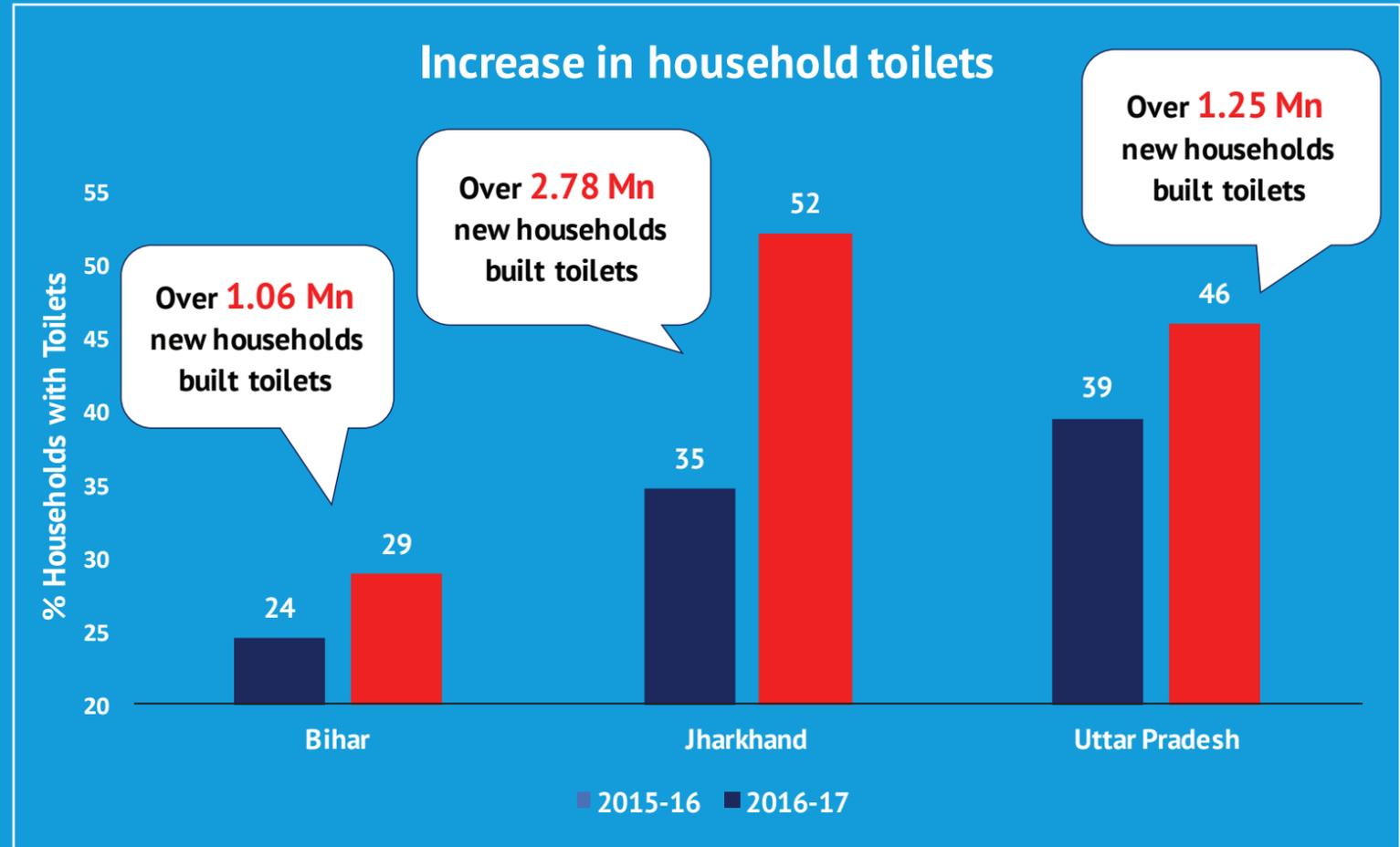
“Jamshedpur family builds toilet for brides”



“Bride delays marriage till groom builds toilet at home” **The Indian EXPRESS**

# CONTRIBUTED TO CREATION OF NEW TOILETS IN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN FOCUS STATES

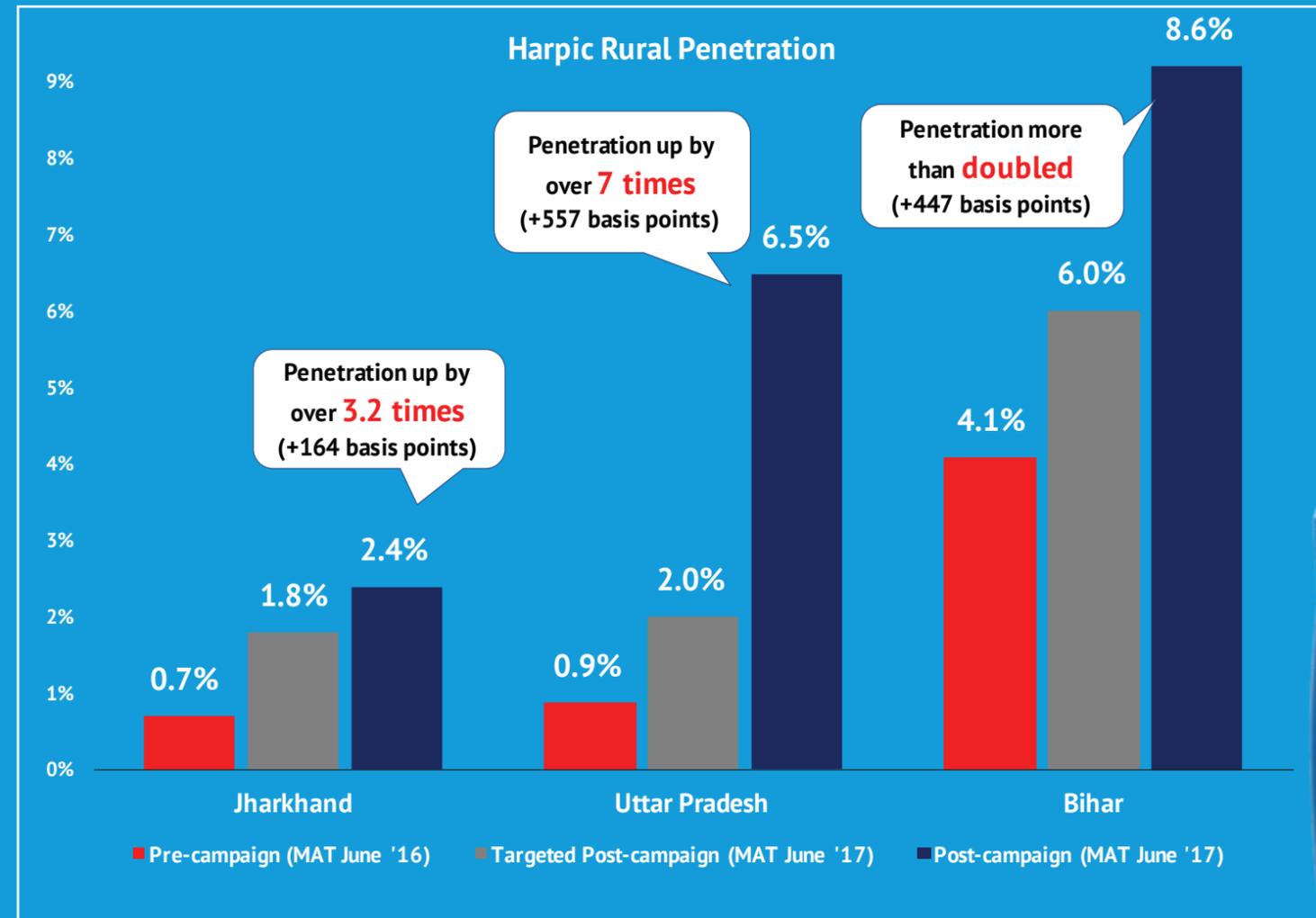
Our campaign contributed to the building of new toilets in an estimated 5.09 Mn households previously without a toilet in 3 of the worst affected states.



# ACCELERATED HARPIC ADOPTION IN RURAL MARKETS

The campaign unlocked demand for Harpic in rural India.

Penetration went up beyond targeted levels to reach a historic high – especially in the states with the worst open-defecation record – proving beyond doubt that the campaign drove behavior change.



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. MAKING THE MOST UNUSUAL MEDIUM THE MOST HARD HITTING MESSAGE.
2. BRINGING ATTENTION TO THE IGNORED TOPIC OF TOILETS BY MAKING THEM PART OF MARRIAGE CONVERSATIONS.
3. REPOSITIONING TOILETS AS STATUS SYMBOLS.





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**Home Must Have Clean Toilet**

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