

Abstract: Third International Conference on Ecological Sanitation

Title	Cultural preferences for latrines and flush toilets with wetland treatment in North West Frontier Province, Pakistan
Keywords	Eco-sanitation, constructed wetland, rural community
Author(s)	Bahadar Nawab, Kjell Bjørgen Esser, Petter D. Jenssen
Address	Centre for international environment and development studies, Noragric, Agricultural University of Norway
Telephone	++ 47 64 94 99 50
Fax	++ 47 64 94 07 60
Mobile	++ 47 91 16 43 81
E-mail	bahadar.nawab@noragric.nlh.no , bnawabkk@yahoo.com
Abstract ID no	B/10

Cultural preferences for latrines and flush toilets with wetland treatment in North West Frontier Province, Pakistan

Ecological sanitation has been shown to be economically feasible and environmentally sustainable. However, cultural and religious acceptance is still questioned, specifically within Muslim cultures. To understand the perceptions of rural Muslim societies regarding options for ecological sanitation, the heads of 49 households in Machaki village in district Karak, NWFP, were interviewed. The ideas of urine-separating latrines and flush toilets with wastewater treatment in constructed wetlands were put forward for consideration. All those interviewed were strongly against the urine-separating latrines and favoured flush toilets. They see any form of latrines as an age-old fashion, backwards and a matter of taboo, while flush toilets are considered prestigious and desirable. The poor rural community even prefers open defecation instead of latrines to avoid the psychological effect of imagining untouchable waste in their backyard. Anal cleansing in the Muslim societies together with the strict religious prohibition of contact with urine and faeces are other factors for community reluctance to latrines. However, the rural community shows interest in participation in the construction of improved sanitation consisting of flush toilet and underground sewerage system. People are also interested in recycling plant nutrients from urine and faeces after treatment in constructed wetlands. The physical appearance of faeces and urine in latrines is repulsive to the people, but it is less objectionable once the material has disappeared in water and relocated in a constructed wetland. Large families with high numbers of persons per toilet may not operate latrines hygienically. Therefore, flush toilets with decentralized constructed wetlands for municipal wastewater treatment might be a possible solution for low-cost sanitation in rural Muslim communities.