

## CONTACTLESS HANDWASHING STATIONS IN LAHAN MUNICIPALITY BRINGS ABOUT HYGIENE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

As Covid-19 spreads rapidly across the globe, handwashing with soap and water frequently has emerged as the first line of defense to reduce the risk of infection from Coronavirus. However, many people in Lahan municipality do not have access to soap and water for handwashing. As a part of The Beacon Project hygiene response for Covid-19, 25 contactless handwashing stations were installed in Lahan Municipality.

Installing contactless handwashing stations in Lahan municipality has contributed in bringing hygiene behavior change. Selection of locations to install contactless handwashing stations were finalised after discussions held with the ward chairs.

### Gudigaun, Ward no. 10

One of the locations is Gudigaun Ward no 10, which is near a holy place called Dihibarthan. This serves as an entry point of new wards and people often gather in the area to perform religious rituals.

Manodevi Ram is the owner of a small tea shop located in the area. She has expressed great joy to finally have a handwashing facility installed since there were no such facilities earlier.

According to Manodevi, almost 25 to 30 people use the contactless handwashing station daily during the lockdown and the numbers might increase once the lockdown is lifted. The unique model is of great interest to the children as well as adults and they enjoy using it.



Manodevi at her tea stall

*"We have started washing our hands more frequently, after the contactless handwashing stations were installed. I came to know the importance of handwashing with soap to reduce the risk of infection from Covid-19 through radio, flyers distributed by DJKYC and after they demonstrated handwashing in steps. I request all my customers to maintain social distancing and wash their hands."*

**- Manodevi Ram**

Initially, Lahan Municipality were in charge of filling the water in the 500 litre tank, but currently Manodevi is filling water from the deep tube well using a water pump. Lahan Municipality refills the liquid soap and currently they have stock which will suffice for three months. As the liquid soap is not easily available in the market, WaterAid Nepal is planning to conduct liquid soap making trainings for the local people of Lahan. Manodevi and her neighbours also happily provide soap in case there is a shortage of liquid soap.

Ward Chairperson and The Beacon Project team constantly monitor the contactless handwashing stations. Currently, the ownership is with Lahan Municipality, but a management committee will be formed in the future who will take up the responsibility of operation and management.

### **Maiyamaharani Chowk , Ward no. 9**

One of the contactless handwashing stations is installed at Maiyamaharani Chowk, Ward No. 9, which is a busy area. A lot of people gather here to buy vegetables and other essentials or to just enjoy their tea sitting under the tree shed. Earlier, there were no handwashing facilities in this area, but now almost 30 to 40 people wash their hands on a daily basis and the numbers will definitely go up once the lockdown is lifted. The contactless handwashing station has become the main attraction and people show interest to use the new technology.

*"Ward office is in charge of maintenance and operation of contactless handwashing stations. We have requested the locals to take care of the facility. We monitor it frequently and a handwashing management committee will be formed soon for its sustainability. We are thankful to The Beacon Project and Lahan Municipality for their support and also hope it will be replicated in other communities too."*

**- Pradip Chaudhary, Ward Chairperson**

63 year old Bindeshwar Sahu and 50-year old Manoj Sah are in charge of the contactless handwashing stations. Bindeshwar fills the water tank and Manoj co-ordinates with the ward office to refill the liquid soap and maintenance.

Around 20 people visit Bindeswar's tea soap on a daily basis. He makes sure everyone washes their hands and maintains physical distancing. He also teaches them to operate the contactless handwashing station, if needed.

*"Earlier, I had placed a small bucket with water and soap in my tea soap to wash our hands, but it was difficult to use. Now, I wash my hands at least six to seven times and request all my costumers to do the same."*

**- Bindeswar Sahu**

*"All the people who come here wash their hands at least once from the unique handwashing station."*

**- Manoj Shah**

