Reviewer's report

Title: Socio-cultural and behavioural factors constraining latrine adoption in rural coastal Odisha: An exploratory qualitative study

Version: 3
Date: 22 March 2015

Reviewer: Aidan Cronin

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
The paper provides interesting insights into qualitative research on sanitation from rural Eastern India and will be of interest to the journal readership. However, the current format can be significantly strengthened in several ways.

It is a pity that no background is given on Odisha – not just demographics but the health and economic impact of poor sanitation, recent RCT in the same District. There are several recent additions to the literature that can help the reader to contextualise the setting and the scale of the challenge in this particular State.

One major area of confusion at present is on the stats of how many FGDs were undertaken (13 is mentioned on page 4 but 12 is in Table 1) and how many participants were in each village and when the FGDs were undertaken as this will affect replies even if the authors do report over the annual sanitation practices. Hence additional details for Table 1 will be # villages, # participants, dates etc.

No mention is made of the comparison of the latrine observation and the FGD outputs in the discussion.

The gender norms issues are interesting and very important in the context presented – these paragraphs do not link well and the authors are suggested to rework and strengthen this section as it is the important contribution of the paper.

Minor Essential Revisions
The text would greatly benefit from a strong review of text, flow and formatting. This currently distracts from the paper and leads to lack of clarity in several places. Examples include (but are not limited to):

P1 ‘it’ installed public toilet in urban areas: is it GoI or State Govt? the former would be unlikely given sanitation is a State subject in India.

P2 ‘in addition to it’ where is where it is not clear.

P2 the sentence ‘Over 25 years…. between 2001 and 2012’ is poorly formulated but also not clear why 25 years is being referred to in the same sentence as data for an 11 year period.

P3 – One line says little exposure to urban living standards and the next says people have come back from the city after retiring – just needs clarifying and strengthening the text.
P4 – “premier NGO” would be better worded as experienced, long-standing, respected etc.

P6 – Majority of the study… should read “The majority of …” - just one of areas throughout the text where definite or indefinite articles are missing.

P19 ‘waving through standing water’ to read ‘wading through standing water’.

P21 – The subsidy figures presented are unclear – ie please clarify what do the two figures refer to. Also these figures are quite old and it would be good to date them in brackets and/or give the appropriate reference.

P23 – add RATS to the abbreviations

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests’