

A Summary of
Outcomes of the Community Consultations on Urban Sanitation
Visakhapatnam, 11th August 2016

Visakhapatnam City has been one of the fast growing cities on the coastline of Andhra Pradesh. It has a long coast line, a natural harbour and port, lot of industries and hospitals. All of them add to the concerns of environment and sanitation in the city. The city also has a large number of floating population, people live on the street and off the street adding to the pressure of Sanitation systems in the city. The volume of waste from the city is about 800 MT per day, a major concern as the city has limited space and facilities for dumping. Special efforts have been made in the past also by the present Government to ensure that Visakhapatnam is a future SMART City, however has these challenges. The Community level consultation on Urban Sanitation was organized with the participation of community members, Civil Society organizations, Student Volunteers and Academia (List of participants annexed) in the premises of a Government college on 11th August 2016.

The Challenges:

Most vulnerable Sections: The issues of access to toilets, safe drinking water and in adequate drainage system are of concern for the poor settlements otherwise known as slums spread in the core of the city, fishermen colonies on the sea coast and the low cost housing colonies developed through the Government schemes. In the rainy season and at the time of Cyclones and high velocity winds situation worsens further as their habitations are located in the low land areas with waste and sewage floods these locations, affects them badly as decongestions takes a long time.

Waste water disposal & drainage system: As the housing was unplanned construction and maintenance of drainage facilities has been affected. One of the major concerns is a major part of it is the city has an open drainage system, while only some part of it is covered. The sewage systems in core of the city especially slums and old colonies need to be re constructed. Those sewage systems which were constructed being small in size were unable to handle the sewage requirements of the current population density.

Few areas of open canals and people are throwing waste into it with an assumption that it will flow with the waste water but it is affecting houses in the low land areas where actually it gets blocked and those who are staying there get affected by all the diseases and create diseases.

Access to Toilets: Construction of individual toilets is constrained with in adequate housing and the question is how to find some space for construction of toilet when the priority is having some space for them. In a few locations there is no sewerage disposal system which can handle this waste and its staying back which is not helping them to use the toilets. Another challenge seems to be the increasing costs of construction with increased cost of building materials like cement, Sand, Bricks is a big issue as they have to go to nearby city and procure things.

People moved in to multi stories JNRUM housing, especially those living in ground floor are unable to use the toilets as the sewerage system gets clogged and in fact had to face the brunt of filth and foul smell. They do not get any service or maintenance support as they are usually located very far from the city ranging from 20-30 Kms. Therefore their access to service and maintenance especially their

access to the concerned departmental services are hampered. School sanitation continues to be a problem especially for Adolescent girls to maintain menstrual hygiene.

Waste Management: Household waste especially in the poor settlements and slums there is no organized system of collecting waste from house to house. Large garbage bins meant for household waste disposal are located far from the homes. So this waste is disposed in the open drainage systems or in the nearby open lands. The huge waste produced by the industry and hospitals is dumped is also a cause of concern for the city.

Implementation of ISL Schemes:

Reimbursements for the expenditures incurred on construction of Individual Latrines has been a challenge, while release of payment on phase wise construction self is a problem for the BPL families to invest on toilets. For example on digging of foundation for toilets the first instalment is paid however it needs to be photographed, concern officials need to come and inspect and then release. This is taking lot of time and people are losing interest for constructing the toilet.

A few best practices, requires scaling up:

In some locations through civil society organizations segregation of waste at household level with an intention to reduce pressure on public disposal was taken up. However such Wet and dry waste management of waste did not get the momentum in the City. Efforts were also made to convert such waste in to bio mass based compost. Corporation in collaboration with civil society organizations and market can evolve a strategy to see that the volume of waste to be disposed is reduced and find ways for recycling more.

The interface with the Sanitation workers and the communities were facilitated in a few locations, through NGO efforts. "Soukarya Groups" were formed to facilitate quick maintenance and services of corporation restoring sanitation services, through increased participation in *Grievance days* in the Municipal Corporation areas.

Slum dwellers and people on the street and off the street use paid toilets. Beach cleaning was taken up by citizen organizations and special drives through Swachh Bharat initiatives were taken up from time to time and at times of various events in the city.

Public Policy: Recommendations from the Consultation

1. Streamline implementation of ISL programs for proper reimbursement/cost sharing in construction of Individual toilets and sensitize the concerned departments to understand that BPL families cannot spend Rs.10, 000-Rs. 12,000 for construction of the toilets if they are not reimbursed. Otherwise communities continue to remain with the question "if its so simple why cannot the government construct them toilets themselves" as one of the participant raised.
2. Arrange for systems for waste collection from every house and otherwise demarcated large garbage bins for every 10 to 15 houses and municipality should take responsibility for regular clearing and disposal of waste from these bins.

3. It was opined that the community level plans could be developed considering the diversity of problems across locations so that the concerns of the people and the field level functionaries which otherwise could not be communicate to the higher up (authorities) and could not find place in the planning.
4. Visakhapatnam is growing and also expanding as a Smart city needs therefore enough attention to be paid to the areas, municipalities and Gram Panchayats on the periphery.
5. Considering the growing costs of building materials it was suggested that the Government can come up with a policy to open up rate card for procurement of rate card especially for construction of toilets and cancel taxes on this material for construction of toilets which can reduce the costs. SHGs may be given the responsibility to procure materials and negotiate for uniform labour costs for construction.
6. **Skilled human resource for facilitation at community level:** Developing volunteers who can act as change agents at all the levels who can work with the government in solving the issues collectively instead of working with isolation. Skill training programs could also target women to take up vocations in the areas of construction, such as plumbing which can help increase access to services.

The Consultation concluded that a greater collaboration is needed between Government, Industry and Civil Society. It was opined that it could lead to enhancing awareness on Public Sanitation, identifying and advocating for actions to be taken at different levels and lead to strengthening the ongoing efforts and scaling up of ideas and innovations to address the challenges of sanitation in Visakhapatnam city.

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