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**TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE
AND RESILIENT WASH SERVICES**

**Limited community led approach in implementation of the
Clean India Programme in urban areas**

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It has been more than three years since Clean India Programme, locally called Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) with one of ambitious objective to make the Country open defecation free by 2019. The Paper is based on working experience on sanitation in Bhopal City of Madhya Pradesh and it attempts to assess the Programme on roles of urban poor community, in planning, accessing and monitoring of sanitation services being provided. It argues that despite political will at the national level, whole programme with a dead line has become a target driven toilet construction programme compromising strategy, adequate quality, monitoring and most importantly community engagement. In-fact, for last three months a race has begun to make city declared as open defecation free using all fair and foul means. It emphasizes that despite City demonstrating successful models of community led infrastructure planned and developed in slums under different bilateral agencies supported programme, the learning has not been replicated.

Introduction

Rapid urbanization has negative correlation with the quality of life of the residents of the urban areas. The basic services like water and sanitation do not reach equitably to the citizens due to various supply side reasons- ineffective planning, inadequate investments in developing infrastructure, unplanned operation and maintenance systems, weak policy measures on cost recovery etc. Indirect democracy poses a challenge in a large country like India, with population base of more than a billion citizens to effectively participate in decision-making process and demand their basic rights. Therefore, there has been conscious effort in India in the mid-nineties to promote direct democracy by enacting the 73rd and 74th amendments in the Indian constitution to strengthen rural and urban local bodies respectively. The 74th Constitutional amendment envisages that the elected representatives of different wards and towns will constitute urban local body (ULB) and this legal entity will be responsible for economic development and social justice of their area. Towns are classified as Municipal Corporation (Nagar Nigam) and Municipality (Nagar Palika) and Municipal Panchayat (Nagar Panchayats). The 12th Schedule list of the 74th Amendment includes eighteen functions for the ULBs including water, household and environmental sanitation.

It has now been more than three years since Clean India Programme, locally known as Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was launched and 30 years since India recognized sanitation as an issue needing active government intervention with the formulation of the Central Rural Sanitation Programme. Despite a steady march of over two decades, the SBM was lauded as a giant leap forward because it was the first time, the sanitation Programme of India acknowledged the equivalence of urban and rural sanitation. Moreover, at policy level, the diversification of success indicators also promised a progressive and holistic approach. For instance, the guidelines of Clean India Programme (Urban) expressly states the need to target various marginalized groups like manual scavengers, rag pickers, homeless, migrants and street dwellers which earlier have never been focussed. Secondly, it also emphasized on need to target sustainable behaviour change through intensive community led information, education and communication (IEC) Campaign. Most importantly, while ensuring access to sanitary toilet by all remains a prerequisite, it is not seen as an end in itself. The present paper is based on working experience of Water Aid and its partners in three cities of Madhya Pradesh. It makes an attempt to raise concern over the approach of the state government and Urban

Local Body for looking sanitation as a toilet construction programme without considering required implementation strategy, quality, local need and adequate engagement of community. Interestingly, Madhya Pradesh and Bhopal have been the state and city respectively having a long history of demonstrating community led basic services programme like Slum Environment and Sanitation Initiative (SESI), Madhya Pradesh Urban Services for Poor (MPUSP). It argues that with the given approach, the state might get the required number of toilets completed but the way it has been driven, would arise multiple issues of hygiene, waste of fund due to lack of planning and most importantly, leaving the citizens unconnected with the urban local body. For establishing the fact, the paper cites the experience and data of Bhopal city, which is capital of Madhya Pradesh.

Bhopal City with population of 18.86 lakh with an area spread over 285.9 km as per census 2011; the city is also the administrative headquarter of Bhopal district, the most urbanized district of state with over 80.53% of its population living in urban areas. The City with decadal growth rate of 29.1 per cent has gone through varied number of slum improvement programmes like the National Slum Development Programme (NSDP), Patta Act of 1984 for tenure regularization, Slum Environment and Sanitation Initiative (SESI), Madhya Pradesh Urban Services for Poor (MPUSP). Recently, it is also selected among cities for the implementation of Housing for all. Besides there are conventional regular state sponsored Programme like Chief Minister Urban Sanitation Mission (CMUSM), Chief Minister Drinking Water Mission, and Narmada Jal Apurti Yojana etc., which directly or indirectly addresses the access of WASH in urban slums, but due to target driven approach, this is failing at different fronts. As per data of Bhopal Municipal Corporation, it has 388 slums after considering the recent merging of Kolar Municipality with Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC Slums List, 2012).

Status of WASH services

As per Survey conducted by BMC under Housing for All Programme (HFA, 2014), 64% of slum dwellers belong to below poverty line (BPL) and only 41% of slums households have land tenure, locally called Patta. In terms of access to water, there are 31% of slums households having no access to water facility within or near premises. As far as concerned with sanitation services, despite state having a mission mode scheme for sanitation called as Chief Minister Urban sanitation Mission (CMUSM) since 2012, survey under Clean India Programme (locally SBM) recorded a number of 40,000 households without toilet facility. Data collected under housing for all, also reveals that 86% of total existing toilets have some kind of tank (including septic tank) for collection of faecal sludge whereas 8% of household toilets discharge their faecal sludge into open drains.

Issues of sanitation

With the launch of Clean India Programme in 2014, undoubtedly Government of India, shown its commitment towards providing safe sanitation facilities by 2019. Since the Programme was launched by Prime Minister of India and considered to be his commitment, the states particularly being ruled by same party, in last six months initiated a toilet construction based Campaign without addressing the nature of local urban area, issues, required technology, foreseen development and most importantly adequate engagement of citizens in planning. Implementation and monitoring of toilet construction. City Sanitation Survey started last year by central government to rank the city on basis of sanitation, where achievement of open defecation free (ODF) status was given a significant weightage added the pace of construction as all cities diluting the definition of ODF, the focus moved on driving the administration to meet toilet construction targets. Moving on same line, Bhopal Municipal Corporation whose progress was 0% by end of 2014 under CMUSM, suddenly the administration took a step, brought eight agencies through tendered contractual model and engaged them in construction of toilets. Different agencies were handed over the draft surveyed demand list of toilets and were asked to verify the beneficiary, get the construction done using all fair and foul means. Even the GPS and bank account No of beneficiary which was required in the reporting format of central government and which was supposed to be done by Municipal Monitoring Authority, were done by Contractors themselves. Different Contracting agencies used different mechanisms of communicating false statements and commitments on behalf of Municipal Corporation to meet his target. While interacting with communities in 40 slums at different locations of city, it reveals different kind of implementing strategy were used by Agencies to construct the toilets.

Following the guidelines of Clean India Programme, State redesigned the Programme calculating an amount of 13, 600 INR (Indian National Rupee) for one household toilet with contribution of 4000 INR of central government, 6,880 INR of state government and 1360 INR each of Municipal Corporation and beneficiary. (SBM (U) MP, 2012). After interacting with 1200 beneficiaries in 40 slums in Bhopal City under different community groups meetings, it was revealed that each household, to complete the construction spent an additional amount of 5000 to 10,000 INR per unit. Ironically, about 70% of households were unaware of the implementing mechanism and the accountable officials to contact for any issues. Almost 90% of beneficiaries were unsatisfied with the quality of construction and they perceived themselves as cheated by agency. There were 44 such beneficiaries whose toilets were constructed before SBM but they were reported in the Programme in lieu of getting some materials from Agencies. Almost in all slums, Contractors took the account No of beneficiaries making false promise that they will get subsidy in their account whereas the Account No were taken just for reporting purpose because as per SBM guidelines, central government contribution of 4,000 INR is to transferred to beneficiary's account in case one constructs one's own. In all 40 slums, community wished to get the subsidy and wanted to construct their toilet at their own as they felt that the quality would have been far better and of optimum technology. 80% of constructed toilets were of faulty deign and lacked correct technology, in-fact most of the toilets which community perceived as septic tank were actually neither septic tank nor leach-pits as they all had one rectangular pit with non-plastered brick walled keeping floor of the pit open with ground soil. Ninety percent of observed twin-pits toilets did not had 1-meter distance between pits and both pits were internally joined to each other with no chamber connecting them before opening into pits. There are also 4 out of 40 slums in which there are plans to relocate to different locations under housing programme in next three months yet all of them were covered with toilet construction of the kind discussed above. There are 5 such slums where temporary units are kept to showcase accessibility. It was only because Bhopal Municipal Corporation wanted to get declared ODF in National Sanitation Survey 2016 scheduled in February 2016 (Aarambh, 2016).

As of December 2016, as per Bhopal Municipal Corporation Monthly Progress Report, 12,000 toilets were constructed against demand of around 40,000 under the Mission. Despite the Wards variation, this amount to 30% of the total city target, which the BMC opines, is "broadly on course". But toilet availability is understood by the Mission as a necessary but not a sufficient pre-condition to ending open defecating. It knows that building toilets does not equal ending open defecation and yet, the implementation of the Programme, does not reveal this insight. Informal conversations with state government and Municipal Officials and staff across levels, find that the focus so far has been on driving the administration to meet toilet construction, get declared ODF at earliest so that better ranking can be achieved in the sanitation survey. And this toilet construction business is being done using all means fair and foul. (Deshpande, 2016). An Accountability Initiative Survey conducted across 5 states last year reveals that the number reported in MIS (Management Information System) are not inoculated against inaccuracies and over-reporting which government officials acknowledge informally. Still even, assuming that numbers are verified does it mean that urban Bhopal is 30% along the way to being open defecation free? Not quite.

Several factors, practical and cultural, inhibit toilet usage especially over a period. Lack of water and sewerage connections, poor construction quality and lax maintenance, difficulties with managing faecal sludge, all combine to either prevent toilets from being used consistently or force people to relapse into open defecation as toilets become unusable. WaterAid and its partner's work experience is that in households, which have gained access to toilets for the first time in the recent past, one or more members of the households, often children and men, resort to open defecation. One of the most influencing factor pushing few members of households for open defecation appeared after interacting with 400 households was smaller size of toilet tanks and pits constructed under the Clean India Mission. These households in fear of getting these pits full at faster rate, preferred to go for open defecation whenever possible. Hence, it concludes that health aspects that should have been very much at the core of getting household and community open defecation free, the strategy to communicate this somewhere did not succeed.

This reinforces the need for developing comprehensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategy, which is government parlance for social and behaviour change communication (SBCC). There have been numerous past experiences providing learning that no such communication can make reach to households and communities until they adequately participate in this process and own the same. To make this reality, there is need to invest on process of communication customized to specific community rather spending on activities of different communications events that has been so far the strategy. Undoubtedly, this has been the intention in the Mission guidelines and this is evident as it earmarks as much as 15% of the

outlay for this component with 12% to be granted to the states for the purpose. However, so far this has been on paper (Deshpande, 2016). IEC expenditure was 4% of total expenditure in 2014-15 which was further reduced to 1% over the next year. In 2016-17, towards the end of the third financial quarter, a little more than Rs 40 crores (140 Million) has been released by the centre to states under this head which is about 1.75% of the total SBM Urban budget for the year. Barring a mad rush to reach out to people in the final quarter, it is unlikely that the targeted 345 crores will be spent. (Deshpande, 2016). In Bhopal, two Agencies were hired for IEC and were given contract for conducting slum wise activity in uniform way.

Major barriers

Aaranbh Organization conducted a Study in 2015, working with WaterAid, on assessment of performance of sanitation services under Chief Minister Urban Sanitation Mission (CMUSM) that was later merged with SBM for Bhopal City reveals following issues of concerns:

- **Poor capacity in HR, Technical Expertise and financial resources of ULBs** affecting governance and accountability in delivery of sanitation services. Unlike SBM implementation in rural, there has been lack of dedicated Municipal Corporation of Team for implementation. Non-notified slums and slum dwellers without Patta have been less in priority.
- **Community Toilet proved generally a failure due to absence of O & M** as community participation was totally ignored. Ironically, to achieve target there has been an approach of constructing community toilet to showcase the accessibility of toilet to everybody.
- **Water missed from being linked with sanitation** affected the real motive behind ODF. While having a transact walk through 15 slums located at periphery of the city, it was revealed that with the lack of adequate water, open defecation is being practiced by men.
- **Weak campaigns and IEC strategies by BMC as this has not been** seen as continuous process. Two organizations have been hired by BMC but their engagement does not have any goal and approach. The contract is unit based and payment is linked with unit wise completion of activity.
- **Equity and Inclusion not addressed** in implementation mechanism. Little efforts were made to view slums as an organic part of the city and integrate them into the wider city network for service provision. Irony is, slum dwellers without having any legal document as landowner, and happily agree to become borrowers under housing programme and under SBM remain ready to accept anything coming in their plate. Moreover, Public and Community Toilets are faulty in design as they fail to address the issues of differentially abled people, gender and children.
- **Lack of operational mechanism for participation of people** despite having Community Participation Law (CPL) that mandates to form Neighborhood Committees, locally called *Mohalla Samitis* to help BMC in local planning and implementing Programme in mutual partnership. These mechanisms largely remained on paper with no initiative to realize them on ground.
- No planned sewerage and septage management system exist in the city. Most of the area of the city, has no sewage network, either internal or trunk, and the raw sewage or septic tank outflows are discharged into open drains which flow into the watercourses. In context of newly constructed toilets as well, there is no preparedness for addressing issues of fecal sludge management. No cleaning of septic tanks (with no soak pits) has been carried out in many years and as a result, direct raw sewage flows into nearby storm drains. There exist a **minimum of 5 days waiting period to get septic tank emptied since submission of application for it.**

In last one year, another issue of concern revealed is, Programme and Policy of Housing and Sanitation is not in sync and this would result to massive corruption, waste of unrequired resources and confusion among stakeholders. As evident, SBM holistically talks on different issues of sanitation and Prime Minister Housing for all Programme promise to give everyone a permanent house. There are two another different Programme called Atal Mission of rejuvenation and urban transformation (AMRUT) which talks on constructing largely sewerage and water supply infrastructure and Smart City Mission talks on building model city covering all aspects of urban facilities. Irony is, at one side BMC is constructing toilets at large scale covering all areas irrespective of its linkages with different plans, though all are aware, at the same time another department within BMC is planning to build houses and in many cases plans to relocate different slums where toilets were constructed just two months before. Moreover, AMRUT that could be aligned with both of these programmes but unfortunately, plans are being made without interacting with concerned interlinked departments sharing of issues.

The core strategy that could make planning and implementations easy is ensuring community and different stakeholder participation with continuous structured and unstructured dialogue. Though we all realize this principally, it is difficult to build mechanisms for systematic interactions of the citizens with the elected representatives and municipal functionaries. The ward offices, closest centre of BMC do not have adequate space and infrastructure. The ward representatives do not visit offices on specific date and time and provisions of establishing ward committee for structured interactions are not operationalized in the city. Moreover, available resources for each of the ward and approved plans are not known or easily available to the citizens and even to other department. The growing distance of the citizens with the elected representatives and municipal authorities is negatively affecting the quality of basic services like sanitation. It is putting question mark on the governance- accountability of the local municipal bodies. These have been the core reasons for lack of operational mechanism for participation of people despite having Community Participation Law (CPL) issued in 1990s when adhering to Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) Madhya Pradesh State framed Mohalla Samiti rules. It was then; BMC issued directions to form *Mohalla Samiti*, however, ground reality is that a mechanism that could have laid foundation of community based structure in planning and implementing of different programmes of BMC, but in practice, it always remained reluctant in releasing space to make them Partner in implementation of different Programme in field.

Good lessons from the past

Interestingly, there are examples from recent past interventions within BMC led UKAid supported programme called Madhya Pradesh Urban Services for Poor (MPUSP) which was implemented in 2008-12 in 21 slums and demonstrated a successful case of Community and BMC Participation in slum infrastructure development, each playing its role in fulfilment of larger goal of slum improvement and poverty reduction. (Utthan, 2008). The primary objective of MPUSP was to strengthen governance at state and local body level to address access and affordability issues of poor related to basic urban services. The Programme mandated to form neighbourhood committees, building their capacity to prepare a micro-plan of their slum and then BMC taking it forward building DPR and implementing the Programme covering issues of improved water supply, drainage, roads, streetlights, waste management and sanitation with other community assets. The sustainability of the created infrastructure with community ownership and empowered capacitated community are still visible in those localities. Similarly, under Slums Environment Sanitation Initiatives (SESI) Programme implemented in four major cities of state including Bhopal during 2005-2008 led by BMC with support of UN Habitat and WaterAid. The Programme initiated with citywide Poverty Pocket Situation Analysis (PPSA) to identify poorer pockets of city, led intensive community process forming Community Groups Committees (CGCs) that could prepare their plan and support BMC in implementation and monitoring of these services. The quality and community ownership of work is still examples for future replications.

Similar such intervention like Andhra Pradesh Urban Services for Poor (APUSP) implemented in 2000-2006 in Andhra Pradesh and Support Programme for Urban Reforms (SPUR) implemented in Bihar in 2010-16 have been the excellent examples across country to demonstrate importance of local actions led by empowered communities that worked with Urban local bodies infrastructural development.

Way forward

Thus, it is high time to understand the importance of community participation and roles of SBCC. To begin with it must be understood that SBCC and community participation is studied and practiced by Organizations around the globes, many of whom are partnering with the Government of India on this and other issues. There is such a repository of case studies and best practices for Country, States and Cities to learn from. To that extent, there is no need to invent the wheel but there is need to use it correctly. For example, SBCC best practices advocate an integrated and strategic approach focusing not only on individual behavior change but on social norms. It advises a judicious mix of mass media, mid media, interpersonal communications and attention to build capacity. In context of SBM, there is need to understand that SBCC is not a PR exercise.

The Planning Commission of India has sought to address the issue of uneven and inadequate development by decentralizing the planning process and making it more people-centric and inclusive through community participation. The obvious intent behind the shift in strategy has been to move beyond a bureaucratic

understanding of developmental needs and designing large-scale development programmes and schemes, which can address changing people's aspirations. (Kumar, 2008). The present need therefore is to evolve mechanisms where citizen's aspirations (representing different caste, class and gender) are articulated, heard and responded. There is a need to mobilize resources by designing programmes in a participatory mode in our towns and cities where the Government, private organizations and municipality/citizens have close partnership. It appears that weak political will exist for decentralization. Personality centric politics and lack of administrative desire are responsible for not utilizing the link between effective and accountable service delivery with higher willingness of the citizens' to pay taxes. The second important trend found in urban development reflects that the unplanned and unregulated development works are jeopardizing even the provision of basic civic amenities like water, drainage systems and garbage management. BMC must engage in proactive planning with community participation using their laid structures so that the services can be sustained and owned by community. This is process led exercise that may not be possible without adequate funds, necessary policy reforms, stringent implementation guidelines and watchdog structures at every level. Therefore, it is recommended that higher citizens' participation in regular functioning and day-to-day management of basic civic amenities need to be evolved through sectoral committees like water and sanitation committee as well as recognizing resident welfare associations as a forum for interactions with the middle and lower middle class citizens. Also, there is a need to strengthen institutional mechanism for feedback from the citizens using community friendly tool.

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