Sanitation is not a new concept for the residents of Vedullavalasa, a small village in Amadalavlsa Mandal of Srikakulam District. Recognising the benefits of sanitations on the health and dignity of individuals, the residents have been working for achieving complete sanitation for 8 years now.

As a part of this initiative, the Gram Panchayat (GP) completed 100% construction of toilets in 2008 and won the Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP), awarded under the then sanitation scheme called Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan. A fund of Rs. 7 Lakhs was also conferred on the GP as an incentive for achieving NGP. Vedullavalasa utilized this fund and further laid a plan to install taps in streets for ensuring adequate availability of water. This helped residents cut down drudgery of fetching water from long distances.

After a few years, the change in local government, changes in policies, increase in population and water issues, etc. together, put the GP back on the path of open defecation.

In this state, Swachh Bharat brought a new energy among the residents of the GP. 26 toilets were constructed as a part of SBM there by achieving 100% toilet coverage for 183 families in the GP. All schools, Anganwadi and Govt buildings in the GP have been ensured toilets. Mandal and District level officials are ensuring the necessary awareness activities, carried out at regular intervals. With these efforts, the GP was able to regain its status as an open defecation free village.
Toilet built under SBM

Present day challenges in maintaining sanitation:

The GP suffers from severe water problem, despite the bore installed few years ago. This did not solve and gets accelerated in the summer to an extent that getting a pot full of drinking water in the village is extremely difficult. Apart from drinking water, the residents do not have access to water for other domestic purposes. Therefore, opting for open defecation to reduce the consumption of available water is the only option available to the residents.

All the efforts to bring this to the notice of the Govt went in vain as the GP still suffers from the issue.

The irony of Vedullavalasa’s situation is that though there is awareness in the residents regarding sanitation, water scarcity has been hindering any further progress on sanitation in the village. “To sustain the efforts of the people, Govt could help ensuring water in this area” says the Sarpanch.

Plans ahead for Swachh Vedullavalasa:

While sanitation stands as a priority, residents of this GP are concentrating on developing other indicators such as drinking water, roads, canals, electricity and greenery in the village.

Vedullavalasa GP slipped back to open defecation from the open defecation free status it achieved 8 year ago under NGP. Water scarcity is a serious issue in this GP and measures to ensure water can only lead to utilization of toilets.