

**State consultation on
Putting Citizens at the Centre:
Sustaining Improved Urban Sanitation Services in Uttar Pradesh**

28 December 2019,

Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh



Executive Summary

On December 28, 2019, the Society for Participatory Research In Asia (PRIA) organized a day-long State Consultation in collaboration with the Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies, Lucknow University, on “Putting Citizens at the Centre: Sustaining Improved Urban Sanitation Services in Uttar Pradesh” at RCUES, Lucknow University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

The consultation arose as part of the European Union supported *Engaged Citizens, Responsive Cities* (ECRC) project, which was developed in 2016 to transform sanitation and foster hygienic practices in the cities of Muzaffarpur, Jhansi, and Ajmer. The project is premised on the theory that if the capacities of the urban poor civil societies are enhanced; municipalities, residents, and markets are sensitized; and the media and local academic institutions can work in tandem, then sanitation services in the city can be improved exponentially. These organizations must work together with the civil society of the urban poor in planning, implementation, and monitoring, in order to achieve sustainable change in sanitation. This can positively impact every citizen in the city, and includes the formation of Settlement Improvement Forums (SICs), which comprise of community leaders from local women and youth groups, as well as the Citizen Forum. The latter comprises of diverse members from academic institutions, Resident Welfare Societies (RWAs), civil society forums, and media organizations. The role of PRIA has been to facilitate and encourage the formation and work of these groups, so as to foster community organization concerning the issue of sanitation.

The objective of the consultation was to explore solutions for the prevailing issues faced by the urban sanitation sector of Uttar Pradesh, by utilizing innovative methods centred on citizen engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The conversation during the event focused on the successful application of programs in the state, that tackled issues like open defecation, lack of running water, and waste management. Various new initiatives targeting sanitation and the monitoring of sanitary services were also brought to light. A number of positive examples of change were highlighted during the consultation, and further discussion took place to gauge how these positive results might be replicated in other wards and cities. Various participants spoke about innovative, sustainable, and community-inclusive methods of managing waste disposal, and talked about the importance of developing multi-stakeholder partnerships for sanitation services. They emphasized how different instances of good governances arise from community-led developmental initiatives, since without the participation and mobilization of citizens, any governmental program cannot hope to succeed, in any kind of sanitary or solid waste management. Government schemes alone do not cover the entirety of the affected areas, since they do not have the contextual and community context that members of the community possess.

The consultation thus emphasised the process and importance of facilitating community participation in sanitation, and the challenges inherent therein. This includes local leaders, elected representatives, and sanitation workers. Community leaders who were members of the SICs highlighted that their achievements would not have been possible without the consent and participation of various other members of the community, who played an essential role in the maintenance and upkeep of sanitation infrastructure, due to their

contextual knowledge of how this infrastructure was used in their settlements. Democratic inclusion, community participation, and corporation are essential for achieving the desired level of sanitation services, and for bringing about a model of good governance. This sensitization can only be brought about with the help of leaders within the community. Additional progress can only be sustained in an inclusive and participatory system of governance.

Background Note

Urban areas in Uttar Pradesh, the largest Indian state by population, are characterised by densely populated towns and cities. Urban centres of Uttar Pradesh accommodate around 11.8% of urban population of India. With 22.3% population living in urban areas, it was ranked at 30th out of 35 states/ UTs in urbanization (percentage of urban population of total population) in 2011 Census. Presently there are 652 urban local bodies in Uttar Pradesh including 17 Municipal Corporations. There are seven million-plus cities in the state. 14 percent of the state's urban population lives in informal settlements or slums. 60 towns of Uttar Pradesh are covered under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and 10 has been selected under Smart Cities Mission. In Swachhta Survekshan 2019, Uttar Pradesh was ranked 10th among total 28 states covered. As per NSSO Swachhta status surveys conducted alongside 72nd Round of NSSO in 2015, 84.4% of wards were found having system of street cleaning in Uttar Pradesh. 50.3 % of the wards in urban Uttar Pradesh were having sewer network which is lower than national figure of 56.4%.

State-wise status of implementation of solid waste management component under SBM (Urban) up to October 2019 shows that Uttar Pradesh is processing 58% of the total waste being generated at the rate of 15,500 MT/ day. Under SBM (Urban) 91% of wards have been covered under 100% door-to-door collection. Construction of 8,87,906 individual household latrines and 62,490 public/ community toilet seats has been completed in urban Uttar Pradesh till October 2019.

Despite of several efforts, some of the issues which Uttar Pradesh is facing on the front of urban sanitation include:

- Lack of segregation at source
- Processing of solid waste generated including organic waste and plastics waste is low
- Lack of decentralised community oriented processing of waste
- Coverage of safe waste water conveyance and treatment systems is low
- In cities depending on on-site systems, Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) services are trying to get ground
- Public and community toilets need better maintenance
- Sanitation facilities in informal settlements need improvement

The issues are multidimensional and may be pertaining to various stages of development or service delivery like policy, planning, implementation and operations/ maintenance. Furthermore, underlying reasons may be attributed to technical, financial and institutional aspects at many levels. However, effective participation of citizens and collaborative effort by all stakeholders are two common areas which possess potential to affectively contribute to address many of the above issues. Citizen's role in effective urban sanitation services has been reiterated by *Swachh Survekshan 2020*. This has a provision of validation of service level progress through citizen feedback. It provides for validation of minimum 50% wards (samples) wherein progress in service levels has been claimed.

Highlighting the urgency to tackle the menace of plastic waste, on 15th August Honourable Prime Minister in his address to nation on the occasion of Independence Day urged people to initiate a mass movement for making India free of single-use plastic. The speech clearly spelt out the role of various stakeholders like citizens, municipalities, businessmen, technicians etc. in this initiative. It is obvious that effective citizen participation and a multi-stakeholder engagement have a key role to play in the fight against plastic waste.

‘Engaged Citizen, Responsive City’ (ECRC) Program in Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh): Started in 2016, with support from European Union (EU), ECRC Programme has endeavoured to transform the sanitation situation in the city of Ajmer along with Jhansi and Muzaffarpur. The overall objective of the programme is to promote diversity and strengthen the capacity of civil society of urban poor and municipal authorities in addressing the sanitation issue of the urban poor in these three cities. In Jhansi during past three years through programmatic intervention 42 Settlement Improvement Committees (SICs) have been formed having 1668 members with leadership from youth (47 percent) and women (48 percent) of informal settlements. Besides this ‘Citizen Forum’ in Jhansi is active since 2018. It has members from different walks of the city like Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), educational institutions, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), senior citizen groups, market associations, etc.

Objectives of the consultation

The consultation aims to explore solutions for prevailing issues in urban sanitation sector of Uttar Pradesh centred on citizen engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Below are the objectives of the consultation:

- To discuss the ongoing initiatives in the area of urban sanitation in Uttar Pradesh
- To induce discussion on existing issues related to urban sanitation in the state
- To share good examples and instances of change from cities of Uttar Pradesh
- To evolve strategic ideas for transforming urban sanitation in the state through effective citizen engagement and behavioural change
- To appraise ULB’s on Participatory Planning and Monitoring for Inclusive Sanitation Services in the state
- To explore possibilities of multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustaining urban sanitation in the state

Conference Proceedings

Inaugural Session

The conference started with the showcase of different short films prepared by PRIA during the *Engaged Citizens, Responsive Citizens* (ECRC) project, sourced from fieldwork in the cities of Ajmer, Muzaffarpur, and Jhansi. The films expressed PRIA’s efforts towards organizing informal communities in SICs, making cities more inclusive, and encouraging settlement members to mobilise around the issue of sanitation. It featured various community members talking about the difficulties they face without adequate sanitary services, such as defecating in the open, no running water, disease, lack of hygiene, and open drains, as well as their efforts for achieving sustainable and desired levels of sanitation.

Ms. Shashi Shikha opened the conference by providing a brief background about the ECRC project, which was initiated in 2016, with the support of the European Union. The founding principle behind the project is to strengthen the inclusion and participation of urban poor communities in the planning and development of sanitary services and infrastructure. This is carried out by the development of the Citizen Forum, a multi-stakeholder forum, and the Settlement Improvement Committees (SICs), which create engagement at the city level. For instance, the project successfully encouraged participatory governance in Jhansi, when the SICs submitted a completed report of the mapped and geotagged informal settlements in the city to the Jhansi Municipal Corporation.



Dr Kaustuv K Bandhyopadhyay moderated the introductory panel, by keeping the spotlight on the importance of collective work and conversations between all the stakeholders involved in the development of sanitary services. This included the members of the community, SICs, and the Citizen Forum, the elected representatives, and the various organizations facilitating the provision of sanitary services. These conversations must always involve all the stakeholders, including and especially the urban poor.



Mr. AK Gupta is the Director of the Centre for Regional Studies, and has been at the epicentre of change-making decision in sanitary services in this role. He mentioned the various improvements and challenges that the government has faced regarding participatory development, using solid waste management as an example. He explained that the decentralization of organic waste separation at the household level and its conversion to organic compost involves community effort that would reduce the daily rate of waste collection. This is because the daily collection and disposal of waste cannot also involve the segregation of solid waste, and this lack of segregation is a barrier to compost generation; it also necessitates that organic waste be collected on a daily basis. Any efforts to manage solid waste cannot exist without community participation, because government schemes do not have the contextual knowledge that the communities themselves possess.



Dr. Anshuman Karol explained the rationale behind the ECRC project, and how it enhances participatory development and sanitation. Choosing Jhansi as one of the cities to work in was a decision to that effect; it was a small city, and that impacts the capacity of the municipal bodies in the city. These bodies need external help in order to mobilize community participation, and instil a sense of responsibility, ownership, and involvement in public infrastructure. This is also crucial in altering cultural norms and attitudes over a period of time regarding sanitary services, and contributes towards sustaining these services. Having communities that enabled effective functioning of infrastructure outside of governmental management also makes up for the geographical gaps in the municipal schemes, which are extremely common. Therefore, the main objective of the ECRC project was to mobilize communities, and encourage natural leaders from within the communities to emerge and raise their voices. Efforts were made to collect data and map these informal settlements, since they were often excluded from the Census of 2011. This was done less as research, and more as a participatory project, since this report formed the basis of many conversations revolving around the community sanitation plan, which was later submitted to the municipal corporation.



Professor Nishith Rai also explicated on the importance of mapping informal communities so as to successfully pinpoint urban slum areas, and identify the communities in need of assistance and development. This is just as important as the social mobilization and awareness regarding developmental schemes, and needs extensive application all over India. Rapidly expanding cities need planned development, which must involve different stakeholders such as civil society organizations, Corporate Social Responsibility, and government organizations.



Panel One

Dr. Anshuman Karol moderated this panel, which focused on the different components of waste—collection and recycling. The majority of the presentations discussed the collection of solid waste, and why it is important to segregate this waste at the household level. This drastically changes the overall process of waste collection and disposal, and is an important step for achieving a waste-free city.

Mr. Sudhir Singh shed light on the formation of the SICs and the Citizen Forum over three years. The SICs are especially important, because they work in corporation with the municipal bodies, and process reports of mapping the settlement and its infrastructure. This sustains community participation and monitoring, in order to empower communities themselves to measure and maximise the progress of the project.



Ms. Mahadevi, Vice President of the SIC Forum in Jhansi, discussed the role of the SICs, which were formed on the basis of consistent meetings between PRIA and the community members. The SICs now work for the betterment of all people, and include a large proportion of women and youth. They work to encourage people to raise their voices, improve the rights of the urban poor, and increase community inclusion. They also work to map informal settlements in order to identify their needs, and additionally, work on the issues of employment, road improvement, and sanitation schemes. They function in tandem with municipal bodies, to improve programs of sanitation and drinking water in informal settlements.



[Sh. Dhruv Singh](#) presented the journey and role of the Citizen Forum as a supporting body to informal communities, consisting of advocates, doctors, academics, social workers, and civil society organizations. Initially, it comprised of only 30 people after its inception three years ago. But over the years, more and more city dwellers and municipal bodies have shown an increasing interest in supporting the work of the Citizen Forum. This has contributed to different communities and individuals to work together with their municipal bodies. The Citizen Forum often works in collaboration with various government bodies and programs, and often raises and addresses concerns about sanitation directly. The Forum has led various initiatives to boost collective effort since its formation, such as conducting surveys, geotagging locations, and running a campaign to ban single use plastics. They function by instilling a sense of ownership of cities in city dwellers.



[Mr. Rahul Mankotia](#) from the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) works to provide technical support to a Fecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) program in Chunar and Bijnor. The CSE studied the sanitation value chain in these areas, and discovered that the design of septic tanks is often incorrect, and can be a huge source of pollution. Often, the trucks that clean these tanks also operate on an informal basis, and most of the waste gets treated incorrectly, or not at all. This untreated waste often gets deposited in open drains and other areas. In order to address this concern, efforts have been made to highlight these findings, organize training and exposure visits, raise sensitivity and awareness in the media, and to publicise these findings. These engagements involved generating awareness in the city wide sanitation task force, and organising training sessions for private desludgers and vacuum tank operators regarding the correct use of septic tanks.



FSSM is an important issue, primarily because it is an unseen problem. A great amount of community involvement and awareness generation is needed for the reformation of this area; for instance, cleaning septic tanks once a year is advocated by the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, but often does not take place. Almost 80% of households use single tanks for drainage, which then empty into open drains, and can often contaminate ground water and contribute to the spread of disease. This is why it is important to raise awareness on this issue, and initiate a campaign of behavioural and cultural change.

[Alka Singh](#) summarized the panel discussion effectively, and spoke about the main conclusions that could be drawn from all the conversations. She discussed how essential it was to integrate existing citizen groups and collectives into the effective use and maintenance of infrastructure, and to encourage participation and mobilization in such groups. This will contribute towards the decentralization of development, and help in identifying and solving problems across the city.

Panel Two

[Dr. Anshuman Karol](#) introduced the second panel by briefly recounting the sanitation efforts that have taken place in the cities of Muzaffarpur (Bihar), Ajmer (Rajasthan), and Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh) since 2016. He mentioned the progression of events, including the formation of the SICs and the Citizen Forum, which brought citizen engagement into play, while developing an inclusive program on the basis of the existing municipal schemes. The aim of this effort was to build a solution oriented platform that would bring together all the stakeholders, including the municipal bodies and the Citizen Forum.



Smt. Sanyukta Bhatia, Hon'ble Mayor of Lucknow, spoke about the importance of clean drains, water supply, and disposal of waste with respect to the city of Lucknow. She discussed how the municipal corporation in the city worked with these issues, citing how they can often become health issues as well. There has been rapid expansion in Lucknow—as evident from its 80 villages and 80 wards—and being faced with low infrastructural capacity had formerly made garbage disposal and collection in the city quite poor. Community awareness, as demonstrated by the ECRC project, has already contributed to a lot of changes in Lucknow, and can do so even further in the future.



Mr. Arun Kumar Gupta from the Municipal Corporation of Jhansi stated that community involvement in municipal schemes is essential for knowing the problems that need to be addressed in informal settlements. As long as we can instil a sense of belonging and ownership in people, they will be willing participants in democratic planning. Municipal bodies will also be increasingly enriched by the eager initiative and involvement of people.



Mr. Vivek Gupta spoke about importance and implementation of capacity building. This took place in strategic steps, beginning with knowing the people that the program was attempting to impact. This involved mapping the people living in the city who were related to the issue of sanitation, such as the groups involved in the execution of sanitary services, the urban poor and the urban middle class, business owners, academic researchers, civil society organizations, and elected councillors. This was followed by multi-stakeholder engagement building with the following groups:

- Urban poor: This included holding meetings on the importance of data collection and mapping, taking ownership over the collected data as representing the reality of these communities, and discussing the resultant finding among themselves and with other organizations
- Academic and Civil Society Organizations, in order to understand how they could support these efforts
- Urban middle class: Involved presenting and understanding a city-wide sanitation plan, and how community involvement could increase its efficiency
- Elected councillors: This involved utilising participatory methods and adult learning principles in order to understand the needs and capacities of all stakeholders, and building the concept of constant capacity building into a policy framework



[Ms. Parmita Dutta](#) has been involved in capacity building to support the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan for the past few years, and spoke about the functioning of this process. This involved holding workshops for the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), to explain and understand the rules and methods for disposing different types of waste in cities. In order to do so, the National Institute of Urban Affairs utilized local engagement groups to interact with the ULBs. The subsequent workshops that took place displayed the best practices for processing, recycling, and the disposal of waste on field visits. This involved relying on the existent experience of the ULBs, while training them. A total of 50 workshops will be conducted under this initiative till March 2020, and their goal is to promote effective solid waste management, by adopting the real-time challenges and issues faced by the ULBs. The crucial takeaway from these workshops is that decentralized waste management is an important next step. Ultimately, training the ULBs will enable them to carry these learnings forward, and become national-level trainers.



Mr. Atil Jaiswal stressed on the development of plans and models for sanitation and waste management. Moreover, he emphasized that these plans must be decentralized in their application, and be specifically applicable to one state, rather than being pan-India designs. An effective example of this is the UP State Resource Centre, which organizes workshops for up and coming enthusiastic trainers in the field of sanitation, which help them effectively manage both solid and liquid waste.



Mr. AK Gupta concluded the discussion by stating that without the participation and mobilization of citizen groups, governmental programs will always be limited in their success. The mobilization of citizens is needed in order to expand such programs, and normalize them as cultural practices. Any efforts to enforce the segregation of waste as a cultural practice will not succeed without the active participation of the communities involved, and good leaders from the communities are also needed in order to expand, encourage, and sustain sustainable sanitary practices.



Conclusion

The ECRC state-level consultation consisted of three panel sessions, wherein the introductory panel addressed how the formation of the SICs and the Citizen Forum aided in the decentralization of solid waste management, and why this process was essential. The second panel focused on encouraging participation in, and the mobilization of existing citizen groups and collectives, to promote the effective use and maintenance of infrastructure. The third panel recounted the changes brought about by community involvement in Jhansi, and also introduced decentralized strategies for the future of urban sanitation. This involves innovation and engagement in the field of solid waste management in way that encourages the participation of local communities, the capacity building of ULBs. This also necessitates the possibility of multi- stakeholder partnerships for sustaining urban sanitation.

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09.30-10.00	Registration with Tea/Coffee
10.00-10.10	Welcome and Introduction to the Conference Ms Shashi Shikha, Sr. Programme Officer, PRIA, New Delhi
10.10-11.30	Inaugural Session Chair: Dr Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay, Director, PRIA, New Delhi Engaged Citizens, Responsive City: Building citizen leadership for inclusive urban sanitation- Dr Anshuman Karol, Sr. Programme Manager, PRIA, New Delhi Address: Er A K Gupta, Additional Director, RCUES, Lucknow, Govt of Uttar Pradesh Inaugural Address: Dr Nishith Rai, Director, Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES), Lucknow
11.30- 12.00	High Tea
12.00- 01.30	Panel discussion 1 Effective Behaviour Change through Community Organisations and Community Champions Chair: Dr Alka Singh, Deputy Director, RCUES, Lucknow Moderator: Dr Anshuman Karol, Sr. Programme Manager, PRIA, New Delhi Discussants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Sudhir Singh, Sr. Programme Officer, PRIA, New Delhi - Ms Mahadevi, Vice President, SIC Forum, Jhansi - Sh Dhruv Singh Yadav, President, Citizen Forum, Jhansi - Sh Rahul Mankotia, Programme Manager - CSE Programme Support Unit, New Delhi Open Discussion Comments from the Chair
01.30-02.30	Lunch
02.30-04.00	Panel Discussion 2 Capacitating Urban Local Bodies – Appreciating Participatory Planning and Monitoring for Inclusive Sanitation Service Chair- Smt Sanyukta Bhatia, Hon’ble Mayor, Lucknow Municipal Corporation Co- Chair- Dr Nishith Rai, Director, Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES), Lucknow Moderator: Dr Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay, Director, PRIA, New Delhi Discussants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Vivekanand Gupta, PRIA, New Delhi - Sh Arun Kumar Gupt, Deputy Commissioner, Jhansi Municipal Corporation - Dr Alka Singh, Deputy Director, RCUES, Lucknow - Ms Paramita Datta Dey, Senior Research Officer, NIUA, New Delhi Open Discussion Comments from the Chair
04:00- 04:15	Vote of Thanks and Closing Sudhir Singh, Sr. Programme Officer, PRIA, Jhansi

Participants list				
S. no	Name	Designation	Dept/ Organisation	Email

S. no	Name	Designation	Dept/ Organisation	Email

1	Sh A. K. Gupta	Additional Director	RCUES	ad.rcueslko@gmail.com
2	Sh Adesh Kumar		NPP	adeshkumar231077@gmail.com
3	Sh Anil Kumar Singh		Nirman Vibhag	
4	Sh Anil Tripathi		Jaagraj Foundation	anil_londonuk@yahoo.co.uk
5	Dr Anshuman Karol	Sr Programme Manager	PRIA	anshuman.karol@pria.org
6	Ms Archana		Vigyan Foundation	vigyanfoundationlko@gmail.com
7	Sh Arun Kumar Gupt	Additional Municipal Commissioner	Jhansi Nagar Nigam	arudeep03.ad@gmail.com
8	Sh Ashish Shirke		Nagar Nigam Agra	amcagra1@gmail.com ; amcagra@yahoo.com
9	Sh Ashwani Kumar Rawat	Faculty of Architecture	Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow	ashwani.7309@gmail.com
10	Sh Atit Jaiswal	Manager	India Development Center	atit@indevcen.org
11	Dr Awadesh Kumar Singh		RCUES	awadesh.rcueslko@gmail.com
12	Sh Awanesh Kalik	Senior Regional Manager & Incharge	AFC India Ltd	afcllko@gmail.com
13	Ms Bharti		PRIA, Jhansi	
14	Sh C S Joshi	Administrative Manager	PRIA	chandrashekhar.joshi@pria.org
15	Dr Chandra Shekhar		Nagar Nigam Kanpur	kanpur_nagar.nigam@yahoo.co.in
16	Sh Deena Nath Singh	Programme Coordinator	SSK, Ghaziabad	dnsingh@sahbhagi.org
17	Sh Dhan Singh	Administrative Officer	PRIA	admin@pria.org
18	Sh Dhruv Singh Yadav	President	Citizen Forum, Jhansi	citizenforumjhansi@gmail.com
19	Ms Fariha		Vigyan Foundation	vigyanfoundation@yahoo.com
20	Ms Gayatry Singh		Dep. of Sociology Lucknow University	singhgayatry@gmail.com
21	Ms Geeta		PRIA	
22	Sh Harpreet Singh	SRC	Urban Development Department	harpreet@indevcen.org

23	Dr Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay	Director	PRIA	kaustuv.bandyopadhyay@pria.org
24	Sh Lalit Kumar Arya	Executive Officer	Nagar Palika Parishad Baghat	aryalalit01@gmail.com
25	Ms Mahadevi	Vice- President	SIC Forum, Jhansi	
26	Sh Mahesh chandra Verma	Zonal Sanitary Officer	Nagar Nigam Moradabad	moradabadnagarnigam@gmail.com ; mcverma329@gmail.com
27	Sh Mahesh Kumar	Junior Engineer	Nagar Palika Parishad Bulandshahr	maheshkrahul@rediffmail.com
28	Sh Manoj Kumar Shrivastava		Nagar Nigam Firozabad	manojleo2003@yahoo.com
29	Prof Mohit Kumar Agarwal	Dean	School of Architecture, Babu Banarasi Das University Lucknow	agarwalmohitk@gmail.com
30	Ms Nafisha		PRIA	
31	Dr Nasruddin	Assistant Director	RCUES	nasar.rcueslko@gmail.com
32	Sh Nathi Lal Kushwaha	SFI	Nagar Nigam Saharanpur	nagarnigamsaharanpur@gmail.com
33	Sh Naveen Kumar		CSE, New Delhi	naveen@cseindia.org
34	Ms Nayanika Guha	Assistant Program Officer – Communications	PRIA	nayanika.guha@pria.org
35	Ms Neelam Sharma		PRIA, Jhansi	
36	Ms Nida Ahmed	Programme Officer	CSE, Lucknow	nida.ahmed@cseindia.org
37	Dr Nishith Rai	Director	RCUES	directorrcueslko@gmail.com
38	Ms Padmaja Nair	Consultant		nair.padmaja@gmail.com
39	Ms Parmita Dey	Senior Research Officer	NIUA	pdey@niua.org
40	Sh R. K. Prasad	Executive Officer	Nagar Nigam Jaunpur	eonppjaunpurju-up@nic.in
41	Sh R. K. Trivedi		RCUES	
42	Ms Rachna Rishi	Publication Officer	RCUES	rachna.rcueslko@gmail.com
43	Sh Rahul Mankotia	Programme Manager	CSE, New Delhi	rahul.mankotia@cseindia.org
44	Ms Rajasvi Gandhi	Program Officer	PRIA	rajasvi.gandhi@pria.org

45	Ms Rajni Verma	Asst Project Officer	PRIA, Jhansi	
46	Sh S. K. Gautam	Executive Officer	Nagar Palika Parishad Kannauj	skgautam.eo@gmail.com
47	Sh S. K. Singh	AMC	Nagar Nigam Shahjhanpur	sksingh27@gmail.com
48	Ms Samyukta Bhatia	Mayor	Lucknow Nagar Nigam	nnlko@up.nic.in
49	Sh Sandeep Bhargava		Nagar Palika Parishad Hathras	sandeep97bhargava@gmail.com
50	Ms Sangeeta Gupta	KNA	Nagar Palika Kasganj	eonppkasganj123@gmail.com
51	Sh Sanjay		PRIA	
52	Sh Satish Kumar Jatav	Animator	PRIA, Jhansi	kumarsatish8808@gmail.com
53	Ms Shalini	Executive Officer	Nagar Palika Parishad, Loni	npp.loni@gmail.com
54	Ms Shanta		PRIA	facilities@pria.org
55	Ms Shashi Shikha	Sr Programme Officer	PRIA	shashi.shikha@pria.org
56	Ms Soja Mathew	Sr Accounts Officer	PRIA	soja.mathew@pria.org
57	Sh Sonu Kumar	IT- Officer	PRIA	sonu.kumar@pria.org
58	Sh Subhash Srivastava		RCUES	
59	Dr Subhrajit Banerjee	Associate Dean Post Graduate Studies and Research	Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow	drsubhajit4@gmail.com
60	Sh Sudhir Singh	Sr Programme Officer	PRIA	sudhir.singh@pria.org
61	Sh Sujit Kumar Sourav	Officer- Knowledge, Management, Learning	PRIA	sujit.sourav@pria.org
62	Sh Tej Bahadur Singh	Tax Collector	Nagar Palika Bhadohi	nagarpalika.bhadohi@gmail.com
63	Col V. P. Gupta	Director	PRIA	vp.gupta@pria.org
64	Sh Vinay Kumar	Executive Officer	Nagar Palika Parishad, Mirzapur	mirzapurnpp@gmail.com
65	Sh Vinay Singh		Nagar Nigam	bjpvinay7@gmail.com
66	Sh Vivekanand Gupta	Consultant	PRIA	vivekanand.gupta@pria.org
67	Sh Yogesh Kumar		HCL Foundation, Lucknow	yogesh_kum@hcl.com

68	Sh Zia Ul Haque		RCUES	ziaurp2912@gmail.com
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