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CONSULTATION REPORT

State level consultation on

Putting Citizens at the Centre: Sustaining Improved Urban Sanitation Services in Rajasthan

Venue – Hotel Grand Xenia, Ajmer
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Centre for Urban Development
CMS, HCM RIPA, Jaipur



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Executive Summary

On January 3, 2020, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) in partnership with Ajmer Municipal Corporation, Centre for Urban Development, CMS HCM RIPA, Jaipur, CMAR, Rajasthan organised a day-long State consultation on “Putting Citizens at the Centre: Sustaining Improved Urban Sanitation Services in Bihar” at Hotel Grand Xenia, Ajmer, Rajasthan. The consultation is supported by European Union.

The state consultation was a part of the *Engaged Citizens, Responsive Cities* (ECRC) project, developed in 2016. It is a four-year-long intervention supported by the European Union which focuses on strengthening civil society of the urban poor to participate in planning and monitoring of sanitation services. This project was implemented in the cities of Ajmer, Jhansi, and Muzaffarpur. It primarily aims to strengthen civil society of the urban poor through capacity building activities to enable them to become active citizens and use the new skills learnt to participate in the planning and monitoring of sanitation services. This involved the formation of Settlement Improvement Committees (SICs), which comprise of community leaders from local women and youth groups, as well as the Citizen Forum. The latter consists of diverse members from academic institutions, Resident Welfare Societies (RWAs), civil society forums, and media organisations. PRIA has been instrumental in the formation of these groups and has helped facilitate their work to foster community organisation concerning the issue of sanitation.

The consultation aimed to explore solutions for prevailing issues in urban sanitation sector of Rajasthan through innovative means centred on citizen engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The existing issues concerning Sanitation in Ajmer were discussed, and instances of positive change were shared. Good examples and ongoing initiatives from other cities were presented, and participants enquired about different models that can be adapted to improve the urban sanitation level in Ajmer. Further, the discussion focused on how behaviour change can be brought about concerning sanitation and how improving sanitation has to be an effort beyond just having the right infrastructure, through that is a pertinent issue. Mr. Dharmendra Gahlot, Hon’ble Mayor, Ajmer Municipal Corporation, said, “Until citizens take ownership of their communities, we will not be able to improve sanitation. The need for change and improved urban sanitation must come from within to make the improved sanitation sustainable.”

Increased awareness leading to citizen participation was seen as essential to bring about sustained improved sanitation, and SICs and Citizen Forums are of paramount importance in this. Representatives from the SIC forum and the Citizen Forums shared about the changes they have seen in their cities since PRIA’s intervention and the active role these forums have taken in engaging with community members and the municipality to improve sanitation services in the city. The ways in which behaviour change regarding sanitation was brought about, such as through awareness rallies, and door to door awareness campaigns was discussed. Ms. Kusum Prajapat, President, Citizen Forum, Ajmer, shared, “We started a campaign on segregating wet and dry waste. We went door to door explaining this and taught them about composting. We also made efforts to clean the water bodies, and to discourage vendors from giving out plastic bags.” Participants were interested in the various initiatives by other organisations such as UNDP and raised questions on how these can be implemented in their cities.

The consultation also focussed on capacity building for members of informal settlements and the importance of equipping the community with the resources that they need to be able to participate in improving urban sanitation and addressing the challenges that come along the way. Through the Citizen Forums, the communities were made aware of the various sanitation issues faced in informal settlements such as lack of infrastructure and awareness. This will contribute to changing the perception that informal settlements are generally responsible for unsanitary conditions in cities. The progress made can only be sustained through an inclusive and participatory system.

The consultation was attended by Mayor, Ajmer Municipal Corporation; elected representatives and officials of various cities of Rajasthan, SIC Forum and Citizen Forum Members of Ajmer, experts on sanitation and municipal governance, civil society organisations, media and academia.

Background

Urban areas in Rajasthan, the largest Indian state by area, are characterised by sparsely distributed towns and cities. Urban centres of Rajasthan accommodate around 4.5% of urban population of India. Rajasthan was ranked at 26th out of 35 states/ UTs in urbanization (percentage of urban population of total population) in 2011 Census. The state had 187 statutory towns and 112 census towns in 2011¹. Presently there are 193 urban local bodies in Rajasthan including 7 Municipal Corporations. Jaipur, Jodhpur and Kota are the million plus cities of the state. 12.13 percent of the state's urban population lives in informal settlements or slums. 29 cities of Rajasthan are covered under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT). Asian Development Bank (ADB) supported Rajasthan Secondary Towns Development Investment Program (RSTDIP) is targeting improvement of water and waste water management services in 42 secondary towns of the state².

In Swachhta Survekshan 2019, Rajasthan was ranked 11th among total 28 states covered. As per NSSO Swachhta status surveys conducted alongside 72nd Round of NSSO in 2015, 69.8% of wards were found having system of street cleaning in Rajasthan. 64.3 % of the wards in urban Rajasthan are having sewer network which is higher than national figure of 56.4%³ State-wise status of implementation of solid waste management component under SBM (Urban) up to October 2019 shows that Rajasthan is processing 70% of the total waste being generated at the rate of 6,500 MT/day. Under SBM (Urban) 100% of wards have been covered under 100% door-to-door collection and 82% wards are covered under 100% segregation at source. Construction of 364,237 individual household latrines and 23,147 public / community toilet seats has been completed in urban Rajasthan till October 2019⁴. Despite of several efforts, some of the issues which Rajasthan is facing on the front of urban sanitation include:

- Though processing of waste generated is far ahead of national average but few of the municipal corporations including Ajmer is far below the state and national average.
- Limited focus on decentralised community oriented processing of waste
- Shifting from on-site systems to offsite systems of liquid waste management is sluggish

¹ Census of India 2011, Govt of India

² RFP for selection of consultants for project management and construction supervision under RUIDP Phase IV (Rajasthan Secondary Towns Development Investment Program)

³ National Sample Survey Office NSSO (2016), 'Swachhta Status Report 2016'

⁴ State-wise Status of Implementation of Various Components under SBM upto October 2019, accessible at http://swachhbharaturban.gov.in/writereaddata/Statewise_status_of_implementation.pdf

- 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

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 recently announced 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 claimed⁵.

About 'Engaged Citizen, Responsive City' (ECRC) Program in Ajmer (Rajasthan): 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 and municipal authorities in addressing the sanitation issue of the urban poor in these three cities. In Ajmer during past three years through programmatic intervention 100 Settlement Improvement Committees (SICs) have been formed having 1668 members with leadership from youth (47 percent) and women (48 percent) of informal settlements. Citizen Forum in Ajmer is active from end of the year 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. The SIC Forum and Citizen Forum are working in close coordination and actively engaging with Ajmer Municipal Corporation and other institutions for the effective implementation of various initiatives under SBM (Urban).

Objectives of the consultation

The consultation aims to explore solutions for prevailing issues in urban sanitation sector of Rajasthan through innovative means 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 Rajasthan
- To induce discussion on existing issues related to urban sanitation in the state
- To share good examples and instances of change from cities of Rajasthan
- 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

⁵ 5 Press Information Bureau, Government of India (2019), 'Swachh Survekshan League 2020'

Consultation Proceedings

Inaugural Session

Ms. Shashi Shikha opened the conference by providing a brief background about the ECRC project, which was initiated in 2016, with support from the European Union. The aim of the project is to *strengthen civil society of the urban poor to participate in planning and monitoring of sanitation services*. The project is implemented through the constitution of Settlement Improvement Committees (SICs) and the Citizen Forum, a multi-stakeholder forum, which facilitate citizen engagement at the city level. Through continual efforts by PRIA in Ajmer, 100 SICs and over 1600 members are actively involved in work regarding sanitation in their community. The aim of the SICs and Citizen Forum is to continue building capacity of citizens and strengthening their civil society. Ms. Shashi outlined the key issues that would be discussed at the consultation including effective citizen participation, sustained behaviour change, and successful sanitation models implemented in Rajasthan.



Dr Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay moderated the session and shared his insight into the implementation of the ECRC project, which falls under the ambit of Swachh Bharat Mission, in Ajmer. He explained that there have been many government run programs on sanitation on different district and state levels. However, Swachh Bharat Mission is the first such endeavour that has been implemented at such a wide scale. Technology, efficient administration, and citizen participation are the pillars of the mission and the reason it has been successful so far. PRIA initiated ECRC in Ajmer to build citizen participation at the city level. This was implemented in Ajmer with the support of the municipal corporation. Members of PRIA along with SIC members identified the informal settlements in Ajmer, visited them to understand the existing level of sanitation and how it can be improved, and thought through how citizens can be involved in its improvement. Without Citizen Participation, a city cannot achieve a high level of sanitation. The learnings over the course of the project can be used to implement this program in other cities of Rajasthan.

Sh. Dharmendra Gahlot, Hon'ble Mayor, Ajmer Municipal Corporation, shared his belief that citizen participation and support are essential in making any sustained change in sanitation in Ajmer. The citizens need to take responsibility and ownership of the waste that they produce and only then will the overall sanitation of the city improve. He shared the improvement and growth he has seen in Ajmer in the past few years, "Right now 60 wards have 2 tempos each to collect waste. I am proud to say that when people hear the sound of the tempo, they bring out the waste to throw in the tempo instead of throwing it on an empty plot." He expressed his gratitude to PRIA for being integral in bringing about this change in Ajmer. He further elaborated on the importance of decentralised waste segregation at the household level. If the Municipal Corporation collects unsegregated waste and dumps it in one place, the resources and manpower required to segregate it is unfeasible. For the sanitation level in the city to improve, decentralised waste segregation is essential. Decentralised waste segregation, in turn, is only possible when citizens take ownership of the waste they produce. The need for change and improved urban sanitation must come from within to make the improved sanitation sustainable.

Dr Anshuman Karol explained how Citizen Participation is only possible through effective behaviour change. Participation can be facilitated through citizens being provided a forum to put forth their issues and ideas, and decide which issues are of urgent importance. PRIA did a sanitation survey and found out the existing state of sewage, bathrooms, etc. PRIA also worked with women sanitation workers to understand their struggles and how they can be made a part of the change. The findings were taken back to the community and also discussed further with the municipal corp. SICs in Ajmer have 1668 members (48% women, 47% youth) and they did a mapping of their own wards to make a list of the deficits and then they chose the issues that they needed to work on. Dr. Karol also shared the achievements of PRIA and the SIC and Citizen forums over the past 3 years. When PRIA started working in Ajmer in 2016, 1341 families did not have individual household toilets. Now, 36% of families have received these individual household toilets. In 20 out of the 100 informal settlements, all families now have household toilets. He also elaborated on the behaviour change efforts in Ajmer such as conducting awareness programs, using newsletters and pamphlets to spread awareness, sensitisation programs etc. There was also an effort to sensitise the middle class to the needs of the communities in the informal settlements and how they can contribute to the neighbouring informal settlements in procuring sanitation services. A collective consciousness was built to bring the citizens together in an effort to improve sanitation.



Panel Discussion 1

Dr Padmaja Nair moderated this panel, which focused on the waste management including segregation and recycling. Presentations were also made by the representatives of the Citizen Forum and SIC Forum on the efforts made in Ajmer and the changes that have come about as a result of these. Dr. Nair spoke about the need to reduce waste production, addressing the problem at the root, while also considering ways to effectively manage the exponential amount of waste already being produced.

Mr. Ramesh Yadavar spoke on citizen participation and how it is inherently democratic. Decentralised waste segregation, composting, etc. are all ways of participating in keeping the city clean. To increase the level of citizen participation, however, there needs to be skill and capacity building efforts. As citizen's knowledge about their rights and responsibilities increases, there will be behaviour change leading to sustained improvement in urban sanitation.

Mr. Krishn Kumar Joshi, President, SIC Forum, narrated stories of how the SIC forum has improved urban sanitation through a photo essay. He explained how the SIC forum has been instrumental in bringing about a change in Ajmer. He says, "Over the years, we conducted awareness sessions, did settlement mapping, PSE, rallies against single use plastic, and encouraged more citizens to participate in discussions on sanitation." He also shared the latest composting efforts of the SIC Forum. Three compost pits have been created as a pilot project and as citizens are enthusiastic about this, there are plans to expand this to other wards.



Ms. Kusum Prajapat, President, Citizen Forum, Ajmer, shared the extensive efforts that the Citizen Forum has undertaken to improve the level of urban sanitation in Ajmer. The Citizen Forum started a campaign on segregating wet and dry waste. For this, they did door-to-door visits and taught the community about composting. As a result, families are only putting segregated waste in the waste collection trucks. The Forum also made an effort to clean the water bodies. Further, the Forum tried to

discourage people from using plastic bags by conducting campaigns in school and encouraging vendors to stop giving out plastic bags. There are plans to sustain these efforts and creation of compost pits is one of the issues that the Citizen Forum is aiming to take on.

Mr. Shashi Bhushan Pandit, President, All India Kabadi Mazdoor Mahasangh (AIKMM), focussed on waste segregation and the workers involved in waste management. He explained that there is a large percentage of people whose livelihoods depend on waste management. These workers deal with waste often without any protection. He says, “Waste segregators are able to only live half a life.” The way for citizens to give back is to segregate and compost waste as much as possible. Organic waste can be composted easily without any chemicals or machinery and can yield beneficial results in the form of ‘khaad’ or compost. He concluded that if citizens are able to reuse waste effectively, there is no need to dump waste in the landfills.

Panel Discussion 2

Dr Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay started off the discussion on the topics of capacity building and behaviour change to improve urban sanitation. He posed pertinent questions such as whose capacity building is essential and what kind of capacity? The need to work with multiple stakeholders and look into the capacity building and behaviour change of each in a different way was highlighted. This conversation was carried forward by Mr Vivekanand Gupta, of PRIA, New Delhi.

Mr. Vivekanand Gupta spoke about importance of capacity for all. Under the ECRC project, this entails understanding needs and aspirations of all stakeholders and prioritising stakeholders for capacity strengthening. The stakeholders were divided into 4 groups and the capacity building activities were customised to fit the goals of each of the groups with regard to sanitation. The groups comprised of the urban poor, urban middle class, Academic and Civil Society Organisations, and Elected Councillors. With the urban poor, formation of SICs, training on enumeration, conducting participatory enumerations, and handholding support were of key importance whereas the urban middle class needed support with forming a Citizen Forum and sensitisation on sanitation planning. Academic and Civil Society Organisations were sensitised to how they can support the sanitation efforts in the form on campaigning, providing internships, etc. Keeping in mind that the support of the elected councillors is essential, they were trained on solid waste management, and sensitized on various issues regarding urban sanitation using participatory methods and adult learning principles.

Ms. Akhila Sivas agreed with the consensus that citizen participation is of paramount importance. However, she shed light on the missing elements in the conversation regarding sanitation. The gender differences, the experiences of transgender people, experiences of disabled people, and their relationship with the rest of society, with regards to sanitation and otherwise, are often pushed to the side-lines. Engendering the discourse on sanitation is essential. Understanding the sanitation needs of men and women separately will lead to more effective planning and implementation. The needs of transgender people will also be different and we need to consider that separately as well. Ms. Sivas said, “Sanitation is not just a technical issue. We need to consider the social barriers. It is important to understand how sanitation affects “invisible communities” such as disabled people, transgender people, etc. We need to amplify their voice and put them at the center”.

Sh. Srikrishna Balachandran, Program Manager - Plastic Waste Management, UNDP, shared the new methods being used by them in partnership with local organisations and the municipal corporation to manage waste. The model involves establishing material recovery facility for which the municipality provides land and access to waste. UNDP then identifies a local organisation, does capacity building

for them, and in turn facilitates segregation of the waste. Sh. Balachandran explained that there are very few organisations that are working at the regional level. UNDP, in partnership with the Municipal Corporations and with corporate support, wants to segregate and recycle waste in effective ways to prevent waste being left in dumping yards.



Sh. Purushottam Biyani, IAS (Retd), Academic Consultant, RSVK, CMS, HCM RIPa spoke about the need to find alternatives to plastic. He emphasised that as citizens are becoming aware of the harmful effects of plastic use, more research and technology will be developed to find replacements. He further emphasised that while major CSOs and organisations can provide support to sanitation services, if the citizens of small towns and cities are not empowered and their capacities are not built, progress cannot take place. He appreciated PRIA's efforts in capacity building activities and the work PRIA has undertaken in Ajmer as citizen collaboration is key in PRIA's work. He also highlighted the role of municipalities in improving urban sanitation. The municipalities need to assess the local conditions and then plan how their specific issues can be worked on in innovative ways. They are the ones present at the root level and they can be a major contributor to behaviour change in small cities. Hence, the collaboration between municipalities and citizens, with support from CSOs, is essential.

Ways Forward

The ECRC state-level consultation consisted of three panel sessions, wherein the introductory panel addressed the necessity of citizen participation in improving sanitation in Ajmer. The formation of the SICs and the Citizen Forum and the impact of PRIA's work in Ajmer over the past 3 years was also discussed. Ownership of the waste create by the community was seen as essential for the community to take responsibility and participate in decentralised waste segregation. The second panel highlighted the work done by SIC and Citizen Forums in various ways such as awareness rallies, door-to-door campaigns, etc. to promote urban sanitation. Composting and its effectiveness in reducing waste thrown in landfills was also discussed. The third panel emphasised the importance of capacity building and partnerships between citizens, Municipal Corporations, CSOs, and corporates. Innovative waste management methods need to be implemented through multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustained improvement in urban sanitation.

Consultation Design

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
10.10-11.30	<p>Inaugural Session</p> <p>Chair and Moderator: Dr Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay, Director, PRIA</p> <p>Special Address: Sh Dharmendra Gahlot, Hon'ble Mayor, Ajmer Municipal Corporation</p> <p>Presentation - Engaged Citizens, Responsive Ajmer - Dr Anshuman Karol, Sr. Programme Manager, PRIA</p>
11.30- 12.00	Tea
12.00-01.30	<p>Panel Discussion 1</p> <p>Engaging and Organizing Citizens for improved sanitation services in cities</p> <p>Chair and Moderator: Dr Padmaja Nair, Urban Specialist, Lucknow</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Ramesh Yadavar, Sr. Programme Officer, PRIA • Mr Krishna Kumar Joshi, President, SIC Forum, Ajmer • Ms Kusum Prajapat, President, Citizen Forum, Ajmer • Sh Shashi Bhushan Pandit, President, All India Kabadi Mazdoor Mahasangh (AIKMM), New Delhi <p>Open Discussion Comments from the Chair</p>
	Lunch
02.30-04.00	<p>Panel Discussion 2</p> <p>Capacity Building & Behavioural change for Sustaining Urban Sanitation Services</p> <p>Chair: Sh. Purushottam Biyani, IAS (Retd), Academic Consultant, RSVK, CMS, HCM RIPA</p> <p>Moderator: Dr Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay, Director, PRIA</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Vivekanand Gupta, PRIA, New Delhi • Sh Srikrishna Balachandran, Program Manager - Plastic Waste Management, UNDP • Ms Akhila Sivadas, Executive Director, CFAR <p>Open Discussion Comments from the Chair <i>Facilitation of Engaged citizens, Responsive City Champions, Ajmer Chapter by Hon'ble dignitaries</i></p>
04:00- 04:15	<p>Vote of Thanks</p> <p>Ramesh Yadawar, Sr. Programme Officer, PRIA</p>

Participant List

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			Rajasthan	<u>m</u>
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