



RESEARCH - ACTION - LEARNING NOTES

About Project Nirmal

The overall vision of Project Nirmal is the demonstration of appropriate, low-cost, decentralised, inclusive and sustainable sanitation service delivery solutions for two small towns (Angul and Dhenkanal) in Odisha leading to improved sanitation access for all households and integration of FSM in the sanitation value chain, through enabling institutional and financial arrangements and increased private sector participation.

The project is being implemented by Practical Action and Centre for Policy Research with support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Arghyam; Housing and Urban Development, Government of Odisha; and Municipalities of Angul and Dhenkanal.

The project aims to :

- Demonstrate State Government and ULB commitment towards sanitation service delivery in small towns;
- Capacity development of states and cities for effective sanitation service delivery;
- Increase in number of people in Angul and Dhenkanal with access to better sanitation services;
- Improve city-wide planning approaches for sanitation; and
- Demonstrate models for Faecal Sludge Management (FSM).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING SANITATION/FSSM INTERVENTIONS



Background

Community engagement, in the context of sanitation, can be defined as “*actions and processes undertaken to ascertain sanitation related needs, preferences and aspirations of communities as well as to ensure their active participation in designing and implementing sanitation solutions*”.

Recognising the importance of community engagement for ensuring inclusive and sustainable sanitation solutions, community engagement platforms have been created at the slum and ward level under Project Nirmal, in Angul and Dhenkanal Municipalities. The main objective of creating these community engagement platforms has been to ensure that local communities, especially the marginalised and vulnera-

ble communities residing in slum settlements, are actively involved in planning and implementation of sanitation services. These community institutions have been entrusted with the responsibility of articulating collective demand for sanitation at the slum and ward level as well as to collaborate and/or negotiate with the local/state government agencies for the fulfilment of their sanitation related needs and aspirations. It was envisaged that this bottom up planning approach would ensure that grassroots issues related to sanitation are well understood and adequately addressed in the city level sanitation plans. Further, these community institutions were also envisioned to take on information dissemination, demand creation and Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) roles.



Box 1 Composition of SSCs: Induction of Volunteers in SSCs to bolster the efforts of the SSC members

In Dhenkanal due to the administrative arrangement of recognising two geographically distant slums as a single unit, SSCs are formed in the primary slum (defined as the slum with a higher number of households) with a few members (two to three) from the allied slum. While members from the allied slum attend SSC meetings, their numbers aren't enough to enable them to effectively undertake community mobilisation, implementation and oversight work in their slum. Thus, volunteers are chosen in these allied slums to add strength to the SSC members. Further, in slums where SSCs could not be mobilized effectively, due to factors such as lack of motivation and/or conflict and the inability of SSC members to devote enough time due to preoccupation with their jobs or seasonal migration for work, volunteers are chosen to bolster the efforts of the SSC members.

Three-tiered community engagement structure (at slum, ward and city level)

A three-tier structure for community engagement has been put in place at the slum, ward and city level in Angul and Dhenkanal Municipalities. (Figure 1) While the slum level institutions, that is, the Slum Sanitation Committees (SSCs), aren't a part of the formal urban governance structure the institutions at the ward and city level, namely, the Ward Sanitation Committees (WSCs) and the City Sanitation Task Force (CSTF) have been constituted under the provisions of the Odisha Urban Sanitation Policy (2017) and the Odisha Urban Sanitation Strategy (2017).



Figure 1: Three tier community engagement structure implemented under Project Nirmal in Angul and Dhenkanal

Slum Sanitation Committees (SSCs)

SSCs are the primary community-based institutions created at the slum level which are mandated to (a) facilitate demand generation related to sanitation services; (b) ensure adoption of improved sanitation practices among slum households; and (c) initiate and monitor community level actions for ensuring quality sanitation services in the slum. Through their participation in the WSCs and CSTF, the SSCs participate in planning and decision-making processes at the ward and city level respectively. Two members from each SSCs find direct participation in their respective WSCs.

Constituted in slums across Angul and Dhenkanal Municipalities, a typical SSC has 9 to 15 members, depending upon the number of households in the slum. Its members include slum leaders, representatives of youth groups, *Mahila Arogya Samitis* and women Self Help Groups (SHGs). In addition, the frontline health and education community workers including, Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) and Anganwadi Worker (AWW), are also members of SSCs. In order to ensure mainstreaming of gender, at least 50 percent of the members are women and the post of one of the office bearers (either President or Secretary) is to be held by a woman member. The office bearers, namely, President and Secretary, are selected by the members from amongst themselves. While the President is responsible for convening the monthly meetings, the Secretary is responsible for recording the proceedings of every meeting.

Process of formation: SSCs were formed in open meetings organized in each slum to which all households residing in that slum were invited. The meetings were initiated by sharing the objectives for the formation of SSCs along with the criteria for selection of members. Once the members of the SSC were selected a resolution was passed regarding the formation of the SSC.

Selection criteria for members and volunteers: The members / volunteers are required to have working knowledge (reading and writing) of the local language. Ability to devote time for community work along with willingness and prior demonstrated experience of taking an active role in addressing community problems are other eligibility criterion. The members must also be willing to be a part of the SSC.

Capacity building of SSCs to enable them to take on community development works: In order to build capacities of SSCs to take up community development work regular meetings were conducted with SSC members. Further, key leaders were oriented on their roles and trained on how to fulfil their responsibilities.

Key sanitation related issues identified by SSCs: Wide prevalence of Open Defecation (OD), lack of Individual Household Latrines (IHHs), improper disposal mechanisms (presence of toilets in which outlets are connected to open drains), scarcity of water supply, irregular collection of solid waste from households and irregular cleaning of streets and drains by municipality's sanitary staff were identified as key sanitation related issues by SSCs across Angul and Dhenkanal.

Ward Sanitation Committee (WSCs)

At the ward level, WSCs has been constituted in Dhenkanal and Angul Municipalities with a mandate of facilitating collective problem identification, prioritization and planning related to sanitation. WSCs are also responsible for monitoring the quality of sanitation services in the ward.

A typical WSC has 15 to 17 members including the local Ward Councillor, who serves as the President of the Committee. Other members include representative(s) from SSCs of that ward, senior citizens, Youth Group/Association leaders, teachers and leaders of the ward level SHG federation. Further, representative(s) of frontline health and education community workers (ASHAs and AWWs), as well as ward level municipal sanitary officials including Sanitary Inspector (SI) and Community Organiser (CO) are also members of WSCs. In order to ensure mainstreaming of gender concerns, around 30-40 percent of the members are women. The WSC meets every month and the meetings are convened by the President. The Secretary of the WSC, who is selected from amongst its members, is responsible for recording the proceedings of every meeting.

City Sanitation Task Force (CSTF)

The CSTF is a city level platform mandated to coordinate, implement and monitor the City Sanitation Plan (CSP) under the National Urban Sanitation Policy, 2008 (NUSP, 2008) as well as the Odisha Urban Sanitation Strategy, 2017 (OUSP, 2017). Un-

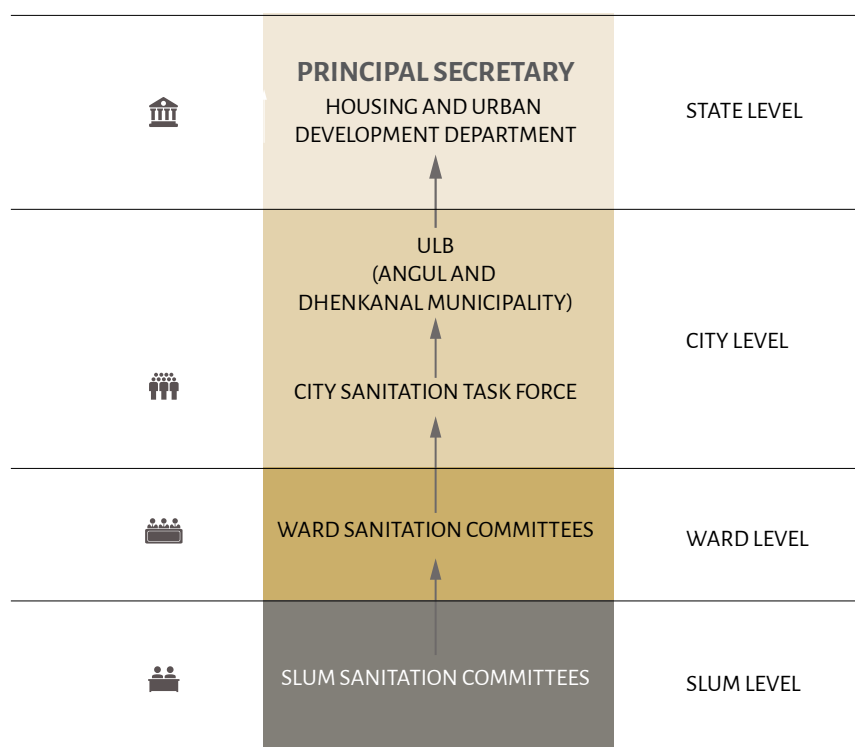


Figure 2: Community engagement structures at slum, ward and city level

Table 1: Details of SSC, WSCs and CSTF in Angul and Dhenkanal

	Slum Sanitation Committees (SSCs)	Ward Sanitation Committees (WSCs)	City Sanitation Task Force *CSTF)
Mandate	(a) facilitate demand generation related to sanitation services at the slum level; (b) ensure adoption of improved sanitation practices among slum households; (c) initiate and monitor community level actions for ensuring quality sanitation services in the slum. (d) through their participation in WSCs and CSTF, SSCs are involved in planning and decision-making processes at the ward and city level.	(a) facilitate collective problem identification, prioritization and planning related to sanitation at the ward level. (b) monitor the quality of sanitation services in the ward.	(a) coordinate, implement and monitor the City Sanitation Plan (CSP) and related activities under the Project Nirmal
Membership	9 to 15 members (depending on the number of households in the slum)	15 to 17 members	15 members in Angul and 13 in Dhenkanal
Representation of women	At least 50 percent of members; one post of office bearer (President / Secretary)	30-40 percent	
Office bearers	President and Secretary. The members select the President and Secretary from amongst themselves.	President and Secretary. President is the local Ward Councillor while the Secretary is selected from among the members	The Chairperson of the Municipality is the Chairman of the CSTF and the Executive Officer is the Member Convener
Frequency of meetings	Monthly; more often if deemed necessary	Monthly; more often if deemed necessary	Once in 2 months

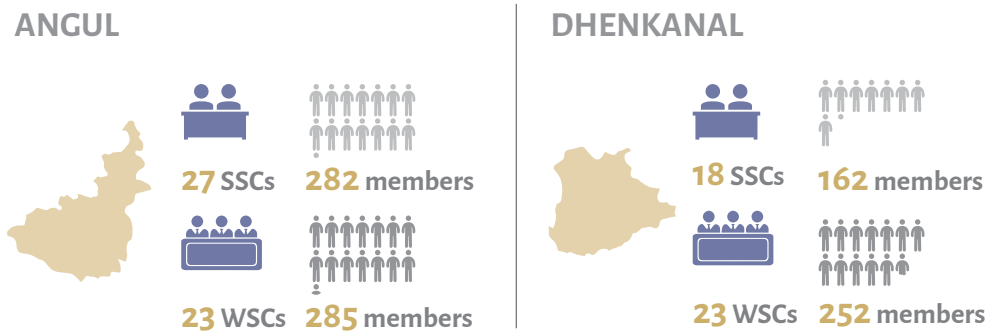


Figure 3: Community Engagement Structures in Angul and Dhenkanal

der Project Nirmal, Angul and Dhenkanal Municipalities constituted their respective CSTFs.

A non-statutory body, the CSTF comprises of representatives from public, private, community and voluntary sectors. The CSTF has as its members the Chairperson and Executive Officer of the respective Municipality, representatives of Development Authority (Talcher Angul Meramandali Development Authority in Angul) / Improvement Trust (Dhenkanal Regional Improvement Trust in Dhenkanal), Public Health Engineering Organization (PHEO), NGOs, private service providers, hoteliers, corporate bodies, market associations, educational institutions along with representatives of SSCs and WSCs. Representatives of Prac-

tical Action (PA) and Centre for Policy Research (CPR) are also members of the CSTF.

ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE GROUND

Project Nirmal has been instrumental in facilitating formation of SSCs and WSCs and their capacity building so as to enable them to adequately address sanitation related issues / challenges in their respective slums and wards, along with facilitating their participation in city level forums (i.e., CSTF) and interfacing with relevant government officials and agencies. In Angul, 27 SSCs and 23 WSCs have been formed while in Dhenkanal 18 SSCs and 23 WSCs have been formed. (Figure 2)





SSCs have played a key role in creating awareness on the importance of adequate sanitation and hygiene practices along with facilitating uptake of existing Government of India's (GoI's) schemes and programs on sanitation and ensuring monitoring of local level sanitation service delivery.

Awareness generation: SSCs have been engaged in spreading awareness on the importance of adequate sanitation facilities and hygiene practices for ensuring health and well-being, regular desludging and cleaning of on-site sanitation systems (septic tanks and pits) and discouraging households from engaging manual scavengers for cleaning of these structures. The awareness generation processes are conducted through meetings (both formal and informal) and events organized to commemorate special days such as World Water Day (22nd March), World Environment Day (5th June), Global Hand washing Day (15th October) and World Toilet Day (19th November).

Facilitating linkages with GoI's schemes / programs on sanitation: SSCs have worked in tandem with respective municipality officials in promoting toilet construction in slums under Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U). SSCs members have been involved in disseminating information regarding the Mission, distributing application forms, helping applicants fill the application form along with collating supporting documents, and facilitating the process of spot verification. In many instances, SSC members also deposited application forms on behalf of slum dwellers who were unable to

go to the municipality office. Further, in both Angul and Dhenkanal, most of the *Swachhagrahis* recruited, under the ambit of SBM-U, for motivating households to construct toilets, are either members of SSCs or slum level volunteers.

Local level (slum and ward) monitoring of sanitation service delivery: Even though municipal sanitary staff are assigned in all wards, slums are usually not provided services (including house to house garbage collection, sweeping of streets and cleaning of drains) on a regular basis. Since their formation, SSCs have been demanding these services from their local municipal office. Due to the efforts of SSCs these services have not only been regularised but their quality has also undergone substantial improvement.

Other services related interventions: Disseminating information about government schemes related to pension and housing is another role which SSC members have taken up. In some cases, they have also facilitated the application process for these schemes. Their contribution has been lauded by the ward councillors as it is not possible for the latter to access each and every household and SSC members have helped fill this void to ensure better uptake of these schemes.

Creation of community infrastructure: SSCs through their continuous efforts and negotiations with the local municipal office have been able to ensure provision of community level infrastructure including street lights, community halls, water points and concrete paved roads in many slums across Angul and Dhenkanal.

Gyanchand Mishra, Councillor of Ward 3, is the President of the WSC and is also a member of the CSTF. As a member of the WSC and CSTF he has leveraged support from Dhenkanal Municipality and Project Nirmal to improve the sanitation situation in his ward. As a result of his efforts Ward No. 3 was declared ODF in Dhenkanal Municipality. Due to the rigorous community mobilisation process all households in the ward now have toilets that are connected to septic tanks and the containment structures are regularly emptied with the help of a mechanical suction machine being operated by the Dhenkanal Municipality. The collected faecal sludge and septage is treated at the Dhenkanal Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) at Mahisapat. Mr. Gyanchand Mishra has led many other community development and infrastructure upgradation initiatives in his ward including upgradation of the cremation ground and provision of toilet complex within its precincts; cleaning of a pond located in the ward which had become a receptacle for wastewater coming from open drains; and negotiating with the Dhenkanal Municipality to procure additional mechanical suction machines for providing emptying services. Mr. Gyanchand Mishra says *“while a low-cost end-to-end decentralized sanitation system has been put in place in Dhenkanal Municipality with the active involvement of the community (through SSCs and WSCs), government agencies and local political leaders making it work in a sustainable manner is the biggest challenge facing the CSTF and the Dhenkanal Municipality”*.

Sita Behera, a 35-year-old mother of two, lives in Radhamadhabapada an unauthorised slum in Angul Municipality. She is the President of the local SSC. Driven by the desire to improve living conditions for her children and others in the neighbourhood, she prompted 140 families to construct toilets under SBM-U. Sita is also a member of a Self-Help Group (SHG) and works to provide micro credit to women entrepreneurs under the National Urban Livelihood's Mission. Due to her engagement with savings and micro credit initiatives she is well known in the community, articulate, and willing to work on social and environmental issues. She started working on sanitation related issues in 2016. When asked about her experience of working with community structures Sita said, *“My slum was dirty, most households lacked toilets, and people defecated in the open. I helped set up the SSC in Radhamadhabapada and the local councillor proposed my name for the WSC. My work through the SSC and WSC has made me realise the power of collective bargaining and has enabled me to take up numerous causes and work towards improving the infrastructure and quality of life for the residents of my slum and community”*.

Mr. Atal Behari Debata, Angul Municipality's Nodal officer for SBM-U says, *“The living conditions in slums have improved drastically in the last couple of years. Project Nirmal has helped organise slum communities into SSCs in which most of the members are women and they are also SHG members. The SHGs were set up under the National Urban Livelihoods Mission in an attempt to empower women and now these very women are taking charge of improving the sanitation conditions of their respective slums. Under the ambit of Project Nirmal, members of SSCs and WSCs are trained on community mobilisation, negotiation with officials, technical aspects of making toilets and hygiene. Further, the local elected representative (councillor) monitors how the ward, including slums, is performing on sanitation and cleanliness”*.



Lessons Learnt

While the SSCs are not a part of the formal governance structure they have provided an opportunity for households residing in slums to participate in planning and management of sanitation service delivery at the slum level and, through their representation in WSCs and CSTF, at the ward and city level as well.

Impact, of community engagement processes and structures, has been documented in the form of perspectives and experiences of key stakeholders, namely, Gyanchand Mishra (Councilor, President, WSC and Member, CSTF) and Sita Behara (SHG member, President, SSC, Member, WSC, Angul) and Mr. Atal Behari Debatra, Angul Municipality's Nodal officer for SBM-U.

- Community engagement structures at the slum level have ensured that the most marginalized and vulnerable sections of a city, that is, the slum communities now have a "voice" and that their development needs and aspirations related to sanitation are well understood by the formal governance structures and thus integrated as a part of the overall city level sanitation plans.
- Slum and ward level community structures, i.e., SSCs and WSCs, have ensured active and meaningful participation of local communities in the planning and implementation of sanitation related initiatives. This process has also spurred many individuals to take on leadership positions in their respective communities and at the ward / city level. This process has also prompted them to expand their work to other community developmental themes beyond sanitation.

- The bottom up approach of participation, whereby members of SSCs get nominated to the WSCs and members of the WSCs get nominated to the CSTF, has ensured active citizen participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of sanitation related initiatives in both Angul and Dhenkanal Municipalities.
- Women have emerged as leading change makers in their respective communities. Driven by a desire to improve the environmental conditions of their settlements for the health and well-being of their children, women have led sanitation and other community development initiatives from the front.

Aspects to consider while facilitating community structures

- Community engagement structures, especially at the slum and ward level, cannot be expected to take on roles without adequate capacity building and training inputs and providing these inputs is crucial for ensuring that these structures are strong and can fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- In order to ensure that there is effective and meaningful participation of local communities, through members and volunteers of community engagement platforms, it is important that meetings are organized at convenient locations and timings. The location and timing of the meetings must take into cognizance the special needs of women.
- The criteria for the selection of members and volunteers must be clearly spelt out to ensure that only those community members who have the time and the motivation to participate are inducted as members.





Project
NIRMAL

Prepared by

SCI-FI: Water and Sanitation, Centre for Policy Research

Authors

Anju Dwivedi, Shikha Shukla Chhabra, Shubhagato Dasgupta

Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to urban local bodies and district officials of Dhenkanal and Angul for providing support to implementation of Project Nirmal and preparation of the Research and Learning Note. Authors are thankful to officials at Housing and Urban Development Department and Odisha Water Supply and Sewerage Board for the guidance and support. The authors wish to thank Dr Hrudanand Mohanty and Mr Ganesh Parida from Practical Action to provide relevant documents and contents for the Research and Learning Note. Authors acknowledge the support of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Arghyam for supporting the project in Odisha. Special mention for the SCI-FI team members- Ambarish Karunanithi, Swati Dhiman, Aditya Bhol and Pooja Gupta for their contributions and support of towards preparation of this note.

Publication design

Trinankur Banerjee

E: trinankur@gmail.com

New Delhi, India, March 2020

SCI-FI- Water and Sanitation, CPR is responsible for the content of this publication.