

## Press Release

New Delhi, Oct. 12, 2017: A celebratory event was organized today to observe and mark the year-long, collective effort made towards developing strong community engagement and involvement in 13 settlements, aspiring to become 'Adarsh Bastis' with improved access to basic civic and sanitation services.

Organized by the Centre for Advocacy and Research and the Mahila Pragati Manch, senior officials of DUSIB, MCD and Civil Society leaders felicitated 381 representatives of the Community Management Committee (CMC), Peer Educators, Grassroots Communicators and Editorial Team of Wall Newspaper, Sanitation Workers, Caretakers, Male Groups from these Settlements of South, South-West, East and North-East Delhi. They were recognized for the tireless work they put in to improve access to quality sanitation facilities and services at a special event titled, Celebrating the Spirit of We Can Overcome.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri S.K. Mahajan, Chief Engineer, DUSIB, one of the architects of the programme, stated that without community participation and involvement DUSIB cannot fulfil its mandate beyond constructing toilets and strengthening infrastructure. "The contribution of the community under the leadership of the women in managing sanitation services is not only path-breaking and the settlements are not ready to be declared as model bastis but have the potential to be scaled up across the JJ clusters." While announcing the inauguration of a She toilet in Vikaspuri, he urged the CMC members to "ensure the management of these toilets and train the community representatives in all these settlements including Vikaspuri."

Shri Atique Ahmed, Dy. Commissioner, EDMC, while saluting the untiring work being done by sanitation workers also appreciated the work being done by community forums and groups and urged them to take over the management of the community toilet complex and emphasized that "we are willing to support the community management of these services in every possible way including budgetary and logistical support," he added

Reinforcing this Mr. A.K. Gupta, Member, Expert, DUSIB, praised the community –women, young people and men- "for not only showing the pathway in their settlements but showing the entire city what a community is capable of doing if they are united." He went on to state that having constructed over 600 CTC with over 18022 toilet seats, DUSIB will soon launch an APP-based helpline to ensure instant redress and support for the users

Explaining the entire endeavour, Akhila Sivadas, Executive Director, CFAR stated that the "efforts made by the community committees and groups were significant in many ways as these demonstrated their ability to bring together their demand for basic right to sanitation

services as well as assume responsibility for managing the services and adopting many levels of behavior change.”

Taking this forward, Vimla, Founder member of Mahila Pragati Manch, said, “we see day not only to honour the champions but to scale up community engagement five-fold at the very least or let us say move from 13 settlements to 65 settlements.”

On behalf of the National Alliance of Fecal Sludge and Sullage Management (NFSSM) and Centre for Policy Research, Anju Dwivedi not only commended the work done by the community but also highlighted all the barriers that women and girls have overcome in achieving not only safe sanitation but also empowerment of women. “The amazing work each one of you is doing should not only be strengthened but taken across the city,” she stated. However, she cautioned the government not to stereotype gender and declare that all She Toilets be made pink and that of men blue.

The contributions made by the community ranged from: Piloting bio-culture treatment of septic tank and undertaking segregation of waste at the household level in Sunlight Colony; setting up an incinerator for menstrual absorbent, initiating composting, ensuring the entire settlement is truly open defecation free in Karotia Camp; undertaking community cleaning drive or shramdan, breaking the silence on menstrual hygiene management and segregating waste in Rajasthani Camp; conducting ‘Stop Dengue Campaign’ in collaboration with MCD and raising awareness on linkages between poor sanitation and vector borne diseases and viral fevers in East Guru Angad Nagar.

Speaking about this Indravati, CMC Member, Karotia stated that “as an integral part of the city and as citizens, the community is clear that sanitation is not the sole responsibility of the government, they must actively partner with CMC and other volunteers to strengthen access to quality sanitation services.” Reaffirming this, Tabassum of Mahila Pragati Manch, stated that “we are not only working in our settlement but across the city.” Taking the observations forward, Rinki, CMC member, Rajasthan emphasized that “it is the obligation of the government to respect community and keep us informed about all the policies and program the government is planning to implement for bastis.”

Other contributions included: Making the settlement open defecation and litter free in Sanjay Gandhi Camp; working collaboratively with DJB and DUSIB in setting up hydrants, taps, maintaining clean drains, motivating households to segregate waste in Janta Jeevan Camp; raising awareness on the ill-effects of open defecation and demonstrated that segregation of waste at source was possible in Chitra Vihar.

Representing Janta Jeevan Camp, Rinta, CMC member stated “we have shown everyone that we cannot only manage services but also ensure the cleanliness of CTC and we are now confident we can replicate our experience across settlement.”

Last but not the least are the on-going contributions being made by the following settlements: Strengthening the practice of hand washing across the settlement and improved management of sanitation facilities with the installation of dustbins; introducing monthly card for CTC users, getting grills installed for women’s toilets and maintaining cleanliness of CTC at IG Camp; fostered great unity and worked towards meeting the needs of every household such as water, using CTC, maintaining drains, settling all disputes amicably at Seemapuri.

Elucidating this Munni Begum said that “we have along with CFAR and in collaboration with concerned officials not only ensured improvement of basic amenities and services but also built enduring relationship with each other and created strong partnership.”

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