



Swachhata hi Sewa Pakhwada

October 2, 2017

Janta Jeewan Camp, Okhla, New Delhi

For the last one year Community Management Committee (CMC), Mahila Pragati Manch (MPM) and Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) and Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) have partnered to strengthen community engagement in bettering urban sanitation in clusters and poorer settlements of Delhi.

Affirming this, Mr.S.K.Mahajan, Senior Engineer, DUSIB, said when we met him, *"Given the commitment and zeal of the community, we need to make an effort to match it and work together to solve all the problems collectively"*. Mr Atique Ahmad, Additional Commissioner, EDMC, stated, *"Sanitation is not a stand alone issue which can be solved by any one stakeholder. This is an issue in which each one has to do their bit -community, officials, workers, NGOs, government and citizens"*.

This partnership got further strengthened through the week-long *Swachhta hi Sewa Pakhwada*, from September 15 through October 2, 2017, announced by the government. During this fortnight a series of consciousness raising initiatives-*Swachhata* rallies, sanitation drives, knowledge camps and nukkad nataks were conducted across nine settlements to motivate community to take collective initiatives to improve and manage sanitation services from the household to the city level.

On October 2, 2017, a joint ceremony was hosted at *Janta Jeewan Camp, Okhla* to commemorate the culmination of the *Pakhwada*, attended by 275 CMC and forum members across thirty settlements, including women, men and young people.

The event started with a rally across the settlement in which slogans of *"Pehle mal niptaan ka iradaa, phir shauchalaya banane ka vaada"*, *"Mal niptaan zaruri hai, beemari se doori hai"*, *"Geele se tum khaad bana lo, sukhe se paise kama lo"*, *"Waste kudedaan mein, na naali na maidaan mein"* were raised.



Ms.Monica, CMC member, Janta Jeewan Camp, welcomed the participants. Setting the context, Ms.Tara, CMC member from Rajeev Camp, Chitra Vihar stated, *“urban sanitation is not about one toilet or one drain, it is about improving access, creating awareness, facilitation inclusion and creating a responsive system for the poor”*.

The first panel, *Strengthening Community Engagement on Urban Sanitation* was chaired by Dr. Indu Prakash Singh, Action Aid India, who in his opening remarks stated, *“Community is the backbone of all interventions-not only sanitation. They are a repository of knowledge which should be respected and recognized by everyone. We should all make efforts to learn and make use of this expertise.”*

The panelists focused on the benefits of joint partnerships with stakeholders, integrating gender concerns of vulnerable households, community ownership of facilities, need for sustaining the values chain of build, use, maintain and treat as a means to bring about a holistic change in quality of life.

Ms.Munni Begum, CMC, D Block Seemapuri stated, *“We are consistently working with DUSIB and DJB to work out interim solution to our concerns on insufficient water in the settlement. This has been possible as we are constantly sharing our concerns and helping the department in finding common solutions”*.

Ms.Sunita, MPM sharing the link between open discharge and urban sanitation stated, *“The fecal sludge from insanitary and community toilets contaminates our water bodies, we drink this water and invite diseases”*. Adding to this Ms.Tabassum, a senior member of MPM and a resident of Sunlight Colony, shared how through consistent struggle since 2015 the community has finally succeeded in persuading the government to provide a sewerage connection for insanitary personal toilets in the settlement.

Ms.Lalsa, CMC, Block 18 Kalyanpuri, reiterated the need for inclusive sanitation and shared, *“I support elderly and pregnant women by accompanying them to the CTC so that they do not have to compromise their dignity or health.”* Ms.Vimla, Founder MPM, added, *“We need to take cognizance of the visible and invisible barriers which prevent women from accessing sanitation facilities. It is also important to ensure that all residents irrespective of who they are access amenities without any discrimination or inconvenience and this includes addressing their specific needs.”*



The second panel, *Role of Men as Enablers* was chaired by Mr. A.K.Gupta, Board Member Expert, DUSIB who invited the panelists to share their experiences in transcending gender stereotypes to work shoulder to shoulder with CMC and young people on sanitation concerns in the settlements.

Mr.Shyam Sundar, Male Forum, 18 Block-Kalyanpuri, shared, *“The young people have shown us so explicitly how male mindset that assumes that- cleanliness is primarily women’s responsibility- has to be changed. I also understood this when I saw an elderly gentlemen in my block sweeping the settlement in the early hours.”* He went on to say what the elderly told him. He had told him that: *‘Women are busy in household chores in the morning so some of us decided to take responsibility for keeping the settlement clean without waiting for the sanitation workers, whose duty hours began only a nine and in course of time found that everything was happening smoothly, children were going to school on time, settlement was clean, sanitation workers responded positively and both men and women could work outside without stress’.*

Mr.Suresh Kumar, Male Forum and Pradhan, Karotia Camp, stated how stakeholders and community can work together to ensure that the facilities provided are well maintained.” *In Karotia Camp, the community has taken ownership of the CTC. We have introduced a monthly payment to users, which is used to maintain the CTC for twelve hours, from six in the morning till evening. For the remaining twelve hours the community takes responsibility for ensuring proper usage, cleanliness and safety at night. Similar efforts can be encouraged in other settlements also.”* Mr. Muslim Khan, Male Forum and Pradhan, IG Camp Ashram added, *“Issues of safety need to be ensured so that women can use the CTC. We have installed grills, dustbins and lights in our CTC. Men have taken responsibility for ensuring that men refrain from alcoholism and drunken brawls in the settlement.”*

In his concluding remarks Mr.A. K. Gupta expressed appreciation for the support DUSIB received from the community , *“Many a times we officials are not clear on the course of action to resolve community concerns. Having worked closely with the community, we have made efforts to understand not only their needs but also sought help in finding mutually beneficial local solutions. This has been a great learning experience for us and this partnership should be strengthened.”*



The highlight of the day was the creative expression by grassroots communicator forums through street plays and wall newspapers.

The theatre activists from Janta Jeewan Camp and New Sanjay Camp performed a Nukkad Natak on Build, Use, Maintain and Treat and Conserving Water. Shubham, Kalyanpuri block 18, shared, *"I am motivated to make a difference by becoming a part of this nukkad natak. This is a medium which has enabled me to reach out to many residents, men and women, peers and even those in other settlements and public spaces to think on sanitation."*

The editorial committees from twelve settlements displayed wall newspapers on sanitation related themes such as Community toilets and cleanliness, Household sanitation, ODF, FSSM, SWM, strengthening sanitation for mother and child health, BUMT, water, gender sensitive sanitation. Soni and Muskan from Rajasthani Camp stated, *"Wall newspapers have played an important role giving us a voice and putting out our concerns and suggestions. When other residents read the newspaper they understand their responsibilities and also put forth their suggestions. We are able to work together"*.

The event concluded with a pledge by everyone present to work together to make not only their households, settlements but also the city clean.