

Piloting community-led advocacy with local authorities for FSM solutions in Kolkata, India

A case study from Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality in South Kolkata, West Bengal

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▶ PROJECT SUMMARY ◀



- ▶ Community engagement in fecal sludge management is critical to preventing open discharge, ensuring safe containment and collection of fecal sludge
- ▶ Community representatives collected evidence and advocated with government on the problem of open discharge from insanitary household toilets
- ▶ This evidence-based advocacy resulted in construction of sanitary toilets and regular desludging

The Problem: Insanitary Toilets

- ▶ Millions of household toilets were constructed in India over a period of five years under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission)
- ▶ In unauthorized, unsewered urban settlements these household toilets are connected to makeshift containment units or open drains
- ▶ This open discharge leads to contamination of water bodies and spread of vector-borne diseases, putting resident communities at risk
- ▶ These adversely affected communities are therefore well-positioned to drive change and shape community led solutions



Strategies and Processes

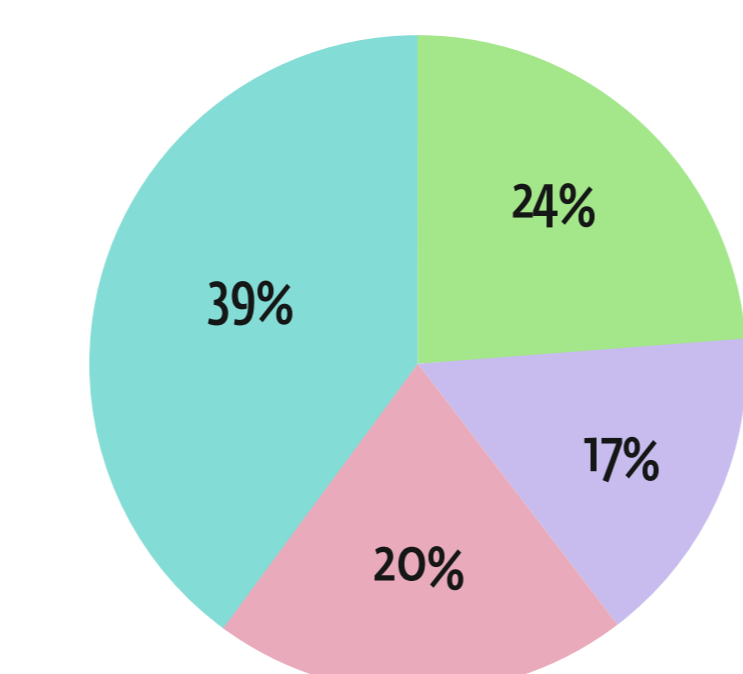
1. Setting up sanitation focused community management committees (CMCs) and supportive forums of men and youth
2. Collecting evidence on insanitary toilets, types of containment and desludging practices
3. Presenting findings to local service providers, government and relevant stakeholders
4. Facilitating subsidy applications for toilet construction and desludging
5. Monitoring construction of toilets with properly designed containment units
6. Regularized desludging through registered government operators

Impact:

- ▶ Toilet subsidy approved – for 505 households
- ▶ Constructed – 303 twin pit toilets; 296 toilets with septic tanks
- ▶ Desludging – 328 household toilet tanks/pits



Insanitary Toilet Connections



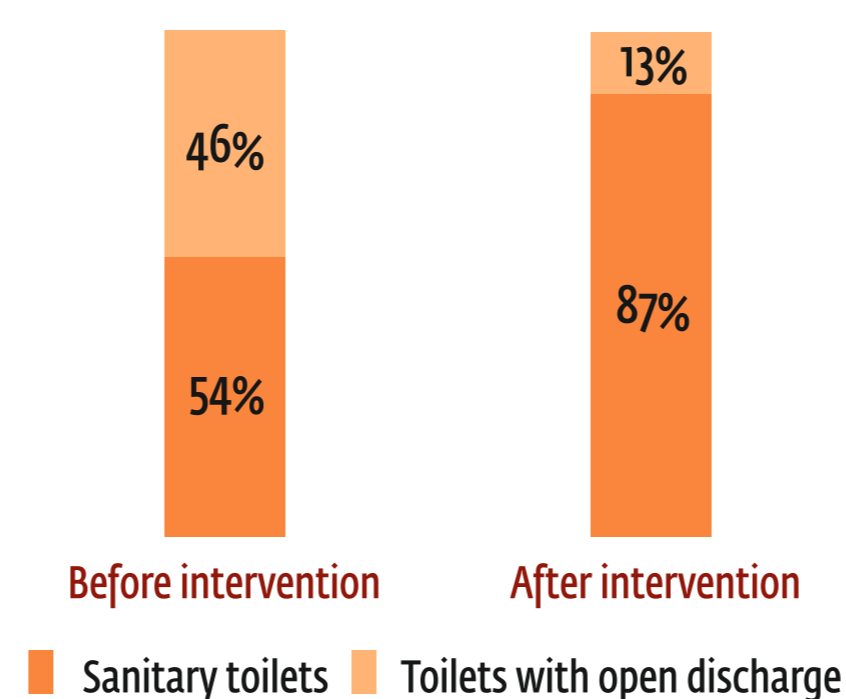
- Leach pits
- Septic tanks connected to local pond
- Direct connection to drain/local pond
- Defunct twin pits

Generating Evidence

A survey of 2800 household toilets revealed 1300 insanitary toilets with open discharge. Of these:

- ▶ 784 were directly connected to drains, ponds, leach pits or septic tanks without soak pits
- ▶ 516 had incorrectly designed twin pits that functioned like insanitary leach pits and required immediate desludging

Increase in Sanitary Toilets



▶ LESSONS LEARNED AND WAY FORWARD ◀



- ▶ Community engagement is the key to strengthen the FSM value chain from the settlement to the city level
- ▶ Accredited community representatives can advocate, plan and shape community led FSM solutions
- ▶ Community representatives play a vital role in educating community on safe sanitation practices including toilet construction, usage, management, monitoring quality and user behavior
- ▶ Convergence between government, community and civil society can improve containment, safe collection and transportation and timely desludging
- ▶ Women's ownership and leadership is essential to harness and augment service delivery, supported by men and young people to motivate self regulation