



## Jhalana Kunda – A Process Report

Jhalana Kunda slum is located in ward number 51 of Jaipur city. It has about 1050 households and a population of 6300. The settlement has a childcare centre and primary and private school.

### Principal Concern: Lack of Toilets

Seventy five percent of the people in the settlement did not have toilets and though there was a community toilet, it was defunct due to lack of water, forcing people to resort to open defecation. Children defecated either in the open drain near their houses or in the area behind their homes.

*“This community toilet was built by our earlier councilor but there was no water supply so it was not used.” – Shyamlalji*

*“It is very difficult for women and adolescent girls who have to get up at dawn and go to the nearby hills. And we always go in a group because there have been cases of harassment”- Gulab*

Despite these inconveniences residents had ruled out the construction of individual toilets because of lack of space in their homes. Moreover, even if they did build a toilet, there was the question of how these pits could be emptied given the fact that it is a hilly region, which makes it difficult for any vehicle to reach individual houses.

### Inadequate Water Supply

Water supply in the community was being provided through water tankers. This means long queues and frequent quarrels as fifty percent of families depended on tankers for water. It also took the women two to three hours to collect the water.

### Waste Management

Since there were no designated spaces for waste, people tended to throw it in any open area; be it in ditches and pits, the open drains outside their homes or the lane that leads to the slum. There was also a huge sewer line that runs along the slum that had not been cleaned for the past twenty years, resulting in a terrible stench.

*“Fever was a common feature in every family in our area. This sewer line has not been cleaned for the past 20 years and at least 10 feet of garbage has accumulated in it. How can we be healthy?” Nemichand*

### Construction of Road and Cleaning of Sewerage -2012-13

In October 2012, the community decided unanimously to fight for the construction of a proper concrete road in their settlement.

*“We are a deprived community. Our area does not have a concrete road and people throw waste everywhere, which adds to our health problems. If something needs to be done this is the first issue we should address” said Teeja, summing up the sentiment of the group.*



However, members of the group were not hopeful of getting a positive response from the authorities because as Mamta, one of the members pointed out, *“We have filed many applications with the Corporation office, but there has been no response. They say we will send someone but eventually no one comes to collect the waste. Nevertheless, let us try one last time”*

So the women supported by the youth of the community collectivized and created a Forum to raise their demand before the Ward Councilor and the MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly). This proved to be a long drawn process but the members refused to give up.

Recalling their efforts, Forum member Gulab said, *“We filed at least 5 petitions with our MLA and visited him at least thrice. Then a group of 6 of us went to see him and told him we would not leave until he agreed to visit our settlement and see how we lived.”*

Eventually, after a three month long struggle, the Forum succeeded in bringing both the MLA and the Councilor to their area in December 2012. The women took them around the slum and explained how painful it was for them to live amidst so much filth. They submitted memorandum on the issue

*“Our approach worked. The visit left an impression on the on the MLA and Councilor and within a week the Executive Engineer and Junior Engineer from the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) and zonal office visited Jhalana Kunda-Rumali*

During the site visit by the engineers, the Forum members' accompanied them and ensured that the survey and measurement of the settlement was done properly and no segment within the slum was left out.

Subsequent to this, the Forum persisted in following up with the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) and zonal office, monitoring the progress of the file and holding discussions with concerned officials. After a wait of ten months, the JMC released the tender for the CC road and when the construction began two months later the entire process was closely monitored by the Forum. Finally in June 2013 the road was completed.

The successful construction of the road boosted the confidence of the Forum and motivated them to address the problem of the open sewer line which had not been cleaned for twenty years. More importantly, it was the main reason for the high prevalence of water borne diseases in the area.

*“Though it took us close to a year, we were motivated by the fact that we were able to get the authorities to respond to us. So we have decided to approach the concerned officials for the cleaning of the sewer”- Mamta*

As planned, applications were submitted to the Ward Councilor, MLA and senior officials of the JMC, followed by one to one interactions.”

Meanwhile, the Forum also reached out to the larger community to ensure that it would take ownership and help in keeping the sewer clean. The Forum, with support from CFAR, also organized a number of outreach events such as the celebration of flagship days like Hand Washing Day and World Toilet Day as well as street plays and wall paintings. More than eleven hundred persons



were reached out to. Three health camps were also organized in the slum benefitting eight hundred and forty seven persons

After waiting for eight months for a response the Forum decided to put pressure on the concerned officials. Rumali a resident of Jhalana, recalled how, *“We waited for eight months for a response and were adamant that this time we would get the officials to respond to our demand. So in June 2013 around 20-25 of us went to the office of the Ward Councilor and made it clear that we would not budge unless he relented”*.

Left with no option the Ward Councilor conceded and the very next day he cleaning of the sewer was done. Six to seven inches of waste was removed but this was an interim solution.

The Forum knew that the cleaning of the sewer had to be regularized and more importantly, it had to be repaired and covered. A concerted effort to achieve this goal was undertaken. Finally, in April 2014 the JMC cleaned the sewer on the recommendation of the Ward Councilor and MLA.

Keeping in view their previous experience, the community played an active role in cleaning the sewer. They held repeated discussions with the contractor and supported him in removing the hurdles that came up during the cleaning process. This time around three to four feet of waste was removed over a period of 15 days but the contractor kept dumping it in an open area of 700 meter within the settlement though the standard operating procedure requires it to be removed. Undaunted, the Forum lodged a complaint and the contractor, left with no option, removed the waste, cleaned the sewer and repaired it.

This initiative has enabled around 2100 families living in Jhalana to get rid of the smell and dirt caused by this sewer. It has also reduced the number of mosquitoes and flies in the area.

The women also demanded the setting up of a Health Kiosk under NUHM in Jhalana since the nearest public dispensary was far and most residents were not able to access the services. There were also other settlements around Jhalana who would also benefit from this the women stated

### **Overcoming Open Defecation-2013-15**

Meanwhile 75 percent of the people were practicing open defecation. The women said that they were well aware of the hazards of open defecation but were compelled to do so, in the absence of toilets. In this context it was also pointed out that though a community toilet was constructed in the settlement it was never opened for use because there was no water. Moreover, many people were reluctant to construct individual toilets in their homes due to the hilly terrain, which made it difficult to clean the pits.

However the Women’s Forum was determined to address the issue and organized a number of interactions and group discussions on the low cost toilet technique. Four trainings were also organized in the community on the construction of toilets and its importance. Fifteen persons were also trained on the low cost twin pit toilet construction technique and twelve were taken for an exposure visit to Bikaner where they saw and interacted with users of the low cost toilet construction technique. These interactions, trainings and exposure visits included both women and young people from Jhalana Kunda.



Post the exposure visit to Bikaner the women decided to construct twin pit toilets

Speaking about this Maya stated that:

*“After the training I realized that it would be easy to construct a toilet using this technique and that I should construct it so that other people will also be inspired to build toilets. However I was worried that the ground would not soak the water as it is hilly. This doubt was cleared when the rain water that had collected was absorbed within an hour. Today I feel good. I do not have to go out every morning through dirt and slush and it requires only two to three litre of water for one use”* stated Maya

CFAR team provided technical support.

### **Linking with Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)**

This had a snowball effect with as around 39 families constructing toilets at their cost, while another 45 families had constructed toilets with support from SBM. On learning about the subsidy being given by the government another two hundred and sixty households applied to the JMC for construction of individual toilets but their applications were only sanctioned six months later after a Forum member Poonam Varma spoke out during the observation of World Toilet Day, on November 19, 2015, saying *“All of us want a toilet in our house. About 60% of us who have submitted applications for construction are awaiting approval from you.”* And another member Gopal Rathore added, *“Many of us are willing but the lengthy process of verification and approval discourages us”*.

Taking note of the grievances raised by the members of the Forum, the State Mission Director-SBM, who was present at the event, immediately instructed the Nodal Office, JMC to take prompt action and clear all pending applications within 7 days.

But the delays continued till the Director-(DLB), the nodal implementing agency under SBM, immediately instructed the Commissioner JMC to visit Jhalana Kunda and if necessary camp there, till all outstanding issues had been addressed.

Following his call the CEO-JMC and his 8 members team including Zone Commissioner, Senior Engineer, Executive Engineer, Nodal Officer-SBM and the Junior Engineer visited Jhalana Kunda the very next day, December 17, 2015 and spoke to both toilet users who had received subsidy under SBM and those who were awaiting approval. He also instructed his team to take up the approval work on a war footing and clear all pending applications, to ensure Jhalana Kunda was Open Defecation Free (ODF).

Meanwhile, the Chief Executive Officer JMC and CFAR jointly organized a camp on December 22, 2015, at Jhalana Kunda, where all concerning municipal officers were available for verifying the household sites and sanctioning 260 pending application for the building of toilets.

It was also officially suggested by the Commissioner JMC that Jhalana Kunda be developed in collaboration with SBM, Government of Rajasthan as a learning site on ODF to orient the newly recruited ULB officials on the importance of community engagement in sanitation.

## **Jhalana Declared as a Learning Site**

In August 2015, Jhalana Kunda was declared a Learning site by Mr. Pushottam Biyani, Director ULB Rajasthan.

Three community representatives, Maya, Poonam and Anil were designated as *Swachhta Grahi (Sanitation warriors)* under SBM

In September 2017, NUHM set up a Health Kiosk with a designated ANM catering to Jhalana and the nearby settlements

Since the declaration, 435 newly recruited ULB officials and engineers have visited Jhalana Kunda to understand the benefits of involving community in the implementation of SBM on the ground.

In December 2017, Jhalana Kunda was declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) under the SBM guidelines

## **Lessons Learnt**

One, to achieve small but significant milestones, staying with the issue and seeing it to its logical conclusion through persistent engagement is important

Two, the collective community ownership displayed in Jhalana Kunda established the need to engage communities to shape and lead the implementation of sanitation programmes on ground

Three, readiness of the community and confidence of the government to facilitate the process go hand in hand, one without the other will not give the desired results.

Four, sanitation is not a standalone issue of toilets, it involves an integrated approach to sanitation which includes, waste management, clean water, health care and safety of women and girls

Five, at the community level women, men and young people, everybody worked in close partnership and coordination with each other making it possible to negotiate from a position of strength

Six, pro-active leadership of women in Jhalana has established the importance of involving women at every level to demonstrate leadership and take innovative steps to improve their quality of life

Seven, convergence between various departments and active involvement of the community is the key to building long term sustainability in sanitation programmes.