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Institutionalizing Community Engagement for Urban Sanitation: Towards a Transformative and Sustainable Model

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Institutionalizing Community Engagement for Urban Sanitation: Towards a Transformative and Sustainable Model

Jaipur

Research Team IDSJ

Shobhita Rajagopal, Kanchan Mathur, Radheyshyam Sharma



Institute of Development Studies Jaipur
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AE: Assistant Engineer

CBO: Community Based Organization

CFAR: Centre for Advocacy and Research

ICDS: Integrated Child Development Scheme

JE: Junior Engineer

FSSM: Faecal sludge and Sullage Management

KMC: Kolkata Municipal Corporation

MHM: Menstrual Hygiene Management

NBM: Nirmal Bangla Mission

NHM: National Health Mission

NULM: National Urban Livelihood Mission

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

Rti: Reproductive Tract Infection

SBA: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

SJSRY: Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana

WSH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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Shobhita Rajagopal, Kanchan Mathur
Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur

Executive Summary

The project 'Aligning with National Programmes and Policies on Sanitation: Enhancing Community Engagement and Demand Generation' under implementation by CFAR focuses on deepening community engagement and generating demand on issues pertaining to urban sanitation by addressing the extensive problems faced by women, men and children in underserved urban settlements and habitats.

The thrust of the current WSH interventions is on making all sanitation priorities, services and solutions, gender and community responsive by placing the unmet needs of the vulnerable and least served populations at the core of the interventions. The approach is to leverage the mandate of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) by bringing providers and users into a constant dialogue in pursuit of common action.

This qualitative mid-line assessment attempts to understand the potential breakthroughs made and challenges faced during the course of the intervention to strengthen access to services, facilities and schemes in Kolkata. The specific objective of the exercise is to arrive at a studied approach/model to community strengthening and engagement in the context of marginalised communities and urban sanitation by situating the multiple linkages for furthering policy advocacy and future programming especially in the context of SBA.

The study was undertaken in the city of Kolkata in the months of July 2017 and covered four urban settlements: Uttaro Kumrokhali and Stadium para in Rajapur-Sonarpur municipality where the women's forums are evolved and at a mature stage; Addy Bagan, Muchipara and Tiljala, Darapara (Ward 59) Park Circus where the community forums are at a nascent stage.

The assessment has used tools like participatory focus group discussions and key informant interviews to understand the context, the intervention processes and the processes of change both at the individual and the community level in the selected intervention locations.

Key Findings

- Building women's collectives and forums in each intervention area has been one of the focus areas of the project. In Kolkata, the emergence of Alor Disha, -women's forums, forum for adolescent girls and boys and men's forums have helped in raising critical concerns and negotiating for services with local government officials.
- The mobilisation of communities on issues related to water, sanitation and hygiene was initiated by CFAR in Kolkata in 2012. The CFAR team identified Ward 27 of Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality as it was the most vulnerable, with a high density of population. In the current project, CFAR scaled up its efforts of deepening community engagement from six clusters of one municipal ward to 11 clusters across three municipal wards i.e. Ward 59 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation, and Ward 21 and 27 Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality.
- The approach to community engagement in Kolkata, though similar to those adopted in Delhi and Jaipur, has taken into account the specific socio-political context of the area and communities residing in these areas. The localities largely dominated by Muslim minority residents, have their own challenges. Breaking through restrictions on women's mobility and public interaction has required sustained effort.
- The coming together of community women under the banner of Alor Disha (Ray of Hope) has been a major step in community engagement in Kolkata. It has emerged as the first respondent group and contact point for women in the community. Alor Disha

was formed in 2014 and has 22 members across various wards and all clusters have women's forums. Women members from all clusters are represented in Alor Disha.

- In the beginning of the intervention, one of the issues that came up was related to women's reproductive health. The baseline survey indicated that women and girls generally used the local pond for bathing. This led to various health problems such as reproductive tract infections. CFAR organized a health camp and invited women doctors but women were initially shy to attend the camp and had to counsel by CFAR team to be able to talk about their health problems openly.
- The issue of domestic violence has been taken up by the members of Alor Disha. The forum now works as a Community Response Unit on violence against women.
- Women now understand the importance of proper sanitation and the need for a hygienic environment an awareness that was lacking earlier. They have undertaken a signature campaign and have submitted numerous petitions to the municipality to ensure basic amenities like proper roads and safe drinking water.
- The Alor Disha members have played a major role in generating awareness regarding menstrual health among women and adolescent girls. The forum members made door to door visits to advise the women to save money for buying sanitary napkins. Since some of the women/girls were continuing to use cloth, and were hesitant to buy sanitary napkins from the market, they were counseled not to use the same cloth every month. Most women and girls have however, switched to sanitary napkins now. The collection and disposal of garbage has been streamlined with the Intervention of the women's forums. The use of dustbins and segregation of waste has been initiated. Regular monitoring by the women's group have ensured that municipal workers carry out their cleaning duties regularly.
- There is a focus on deepening the understanding on issue of faecal sludge management among the forum members and community members.
- The members of Alor Disha are articulate and confident. Interacting with the assessment team, they said now they could now approach the local administration for their needs related to civic amenities like repairing of roads, garbage disposal and other cleanliness related issues. A few members of the group had visited Delhi with the CFAR team for a sharing meeting.
- The women are demanding their rights for a dignified life. They are also speaking up against all forms of domestic violence. The community mindsets, however, did not change overnight. It was made possible through their long struggle and support of CFAR who helped in collectivizing them into a group. Now men of their cluster listen to the views expressed by the women and abide by their decisions.
- The active participation of adolescent girls and boys in creating awareness on sanitation and cleanliness, menstrual hygiene has been received well. The girls are vocal and can discuss issues related to menstruation with family members as well as boys.
- The male members in Muchipara were unanimous in acknowledging that the discussions and public hearing initiated by CFAR on sanitation had helped the community women and men to understand the various issues related to sanitation. They could now confidently approach the local Councilor and other government functionaries.
- Government officials from KMC, NULM and Mallickpur Panchayat appreciated the efforts made by CFAR in raising awareness and helping in changing sanitation practices in the

concerned areas. They pointed out that CFAR's activities in the various wards had generated awareness on health and hygiene, garbage disposal, solid waste management and FSSM. In Ward 59, the members felt that organisations like CFAR should come up with more interventions so that gaps in the government's interaction with the community are bridged.

- The assessment indicates that processes initiated by CFAR have been received well and the mature groups had since taken up many issues on their own. There was evidence of strong leadership among women who acknowledged that they had gained knowledge and experience by being part of the forums. It is evident that the sustainability of the various interventions in Kolkata would depend on strengthening the knowledge base of the women's forums with exposure to newer ideas. so that they can continue to engage and negotiate with the service providers to ensure that they act on the demands raised by them.

Way Forward

- There is a need for in-depth and extensive engagement with community forums that are at a nascent stage in new areas, especially Ward 59. Regular visits and handholding by members of Alor Disha can help in strengthening these groups.
- CFAR has initiated discussions on the issue of faecal sludge and septage management (FSSM), but it has to be brought centre-stage at all levels. As suggested it would benefit if perspective building exercises are planned at the municipality level with active participation of the Councilors. This could be done through workshops and knowledge camps.
- The members of Alor Disha want to formalize and establish the forum as a CBO. There is a need to discuss indepth the readiness and modalities of forming a CBO including the advantages and disadvantages of this step.
- The involvement of men and boys in the newer intervention areas is an aspect that needs to be strengthened. Regular interaction with them would enable their participation in activities and help dispel the perception that urban sanitation was women's issue".
- A clear withdrawal strategy needs to be discussed at various levels so that appropriate mechanisms can be put in place at the community level to take the processes forward. This is required both within the organisation and in the intervention areas with all stakeholders.

Institutionalizing Community Engagement for Urban Sanitation: Towards a Transformative and Sustainable Model

Introduction

There has been a major focus on Sanitation at the national policy and programmatic level in the past two years. The government has given a high priority to make India open-defecation free by 2019. As part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA), access to sanitation facilities and services are being seen as a critical development goal at the national, state and district levels.

A three-year intervention on 'Sanitation, Water and Hygiene-Strengthening Community centred and Gender responsive provisioning' was implemented by the Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) in 2012 in three cities of Delhi, Jaipur and Kolkata with support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The end term evaluation report notes that the intervention was not only successful in generating awareness on issues pertaining to water, sanitation and hygiene; it also enabled women to emerge as community leaders who could identify needs and articulate their

WSH concerns/demands across various platforms. The intervention helped in building partnerships with several government organizations/departments to leverage their support in ensuring basic services (IHD/CFAR, 2017).

Subsequently CFAR, through the project 'Aligning with National Programmes and Policies on Sanitation: Enhancing Community Engagement and Demand Generation', has been involved in deepening community engagement and generating demand on issues pertaining to urban sanitation by addressing the extensive problems faced by women, men and children in underserved urban settlements and habitats in cities of Delhi, Kolkata, Jaipur, Kota and Jodhpur.

The thrust of the current WSH interventions being implemented in five cities is on making all sanitation priorities, services and solutions gender and community responsive by placing the unmet needs of the vulnerable and least served populations at the core of the interventions. The approach is to leverage the mandate of SBA by bringing providers and users into a constant dialogue in pursuit of common action for the benefit of underserved settlements. The effort is also to take the discussion around sanitation beyond constructing toilets, by raising consciousness on septage management and treatment issues.

It is evident that sanitation issues are closely related to cultural practices, attitudes and values; are highly gendered, and need to be addressed at various levels. The community engagement processes rolled out by CFAR has focused on mobilizing women and collectivizing them in a Women's Forum. They in turn have been engaging with multiple stakeholders. A series of public hearings were held in the intervention areas in April 2017. The public hearings facilitated a common platform where community members presented their concerns, needs and priorities around issues pertaining to water, roads, toilets, drainage and sewerage systems, garbage collection and disposal and public safety.

This mid-line assessment study attempts to understand the potential breakthroughs made and challenges faced during the course of the intervention to strengthen access to services, facilities and schemes in Kolkata.

The specific objective of the exercise is to arrive at a studied approach/model to community strengthening and engagement in the context of marginalised communities and urban sanitation by situating the multiple linkages, for furthering policy advocacy and future programming especially in the context of SBA.

Key research questions

The key research questions addressed during the assessment are:

Role and Functioning of Community Platforms

- What is the role and functioning of the Alor Disha and such women's groups? What are the challenges faced by them in mobilizing and engaging community women and men?
- What is the process of forming a women's forum and how are responsibilities assigned? Who is part of the committee? What processes are used to resolve conflicts? What are the successes and failures?
- How effective are the various platforms in ensuring regularity of services? What are the challenges faced in the interactions between community and service providers?
- What are the processes that enabled partnership with Department of Women and Child, Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), various Municipal wards of Kolkata and National

Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM)? How are the Plans of Action that emerged from the baseline study and public hearings being advanced?

- Are officials willing to engage with the priorities of the community in a sensitive manner?
- What is the nature of response to concerns articulated during the public hearing? Is there a differential response on different components?
- Are the community platforms and structures effective in influencing the quality of response?
- Do the representatives of the community have the capability to manage, facilitate, educate and motivate their peers and community?
- What inputs are required to strengthen the community engagement processes? And from whom?

Perception on role of men and boys

- What are the strategies used for ensuring male participation? What are the challenges faced in mobilizing them?
- How do men perceive and articulate their concerns around sanitation?
- Are there any cases of proactive participation of men?

Behaviour change at Individual and community level

- What is the nature of behavior change? Is there a gender difference?
- How many women and men have constructed toilets within their homes; how many are dependent on public toilets; how many still does not have access to toilet facilities?
- What are the barriers and how are they overcome?
- Is the process of change sustainable? Has it been facilitated appropriately? Is there enough participation, representation and ownership? How is ownership defined?

Approach and Methodology

This qualitative study was undertaken in the city of Kolkata, in the month of June- July 2017 and covered a total of four urban settlements. The final selection of the settlements was carried out in consultation with the CFAR team. The field work was carried out in:

- Two wards Uttaro Kumrokhali and Stadium Para in Rajpur-Sonarapur Municipality were selected where the women's forums are evolved and at a mature stage
- Two wards Addy Bagan Muchipara and Tiljala, Darapara (Ward 59) Park Circus where the community forums are at a nascent stage were also covered

The study has focused on understanding the perspective of all the relevant stakeholders. A desk review of project related documents i.e. the project plans, baseline data, reports of training and meetings, reports of public hearings, resolutions/orders, media reports and other documentary films generated through the project helped in locating and understanding the intervention processes. The review also helped in developing the tools for this qualitative study.

The study made use of tools like participatory focus group discussions and key informant interviews to understand the context, the intervention processes and the changes both at the individual and community level in the selected intervention locations. The response of the service

providers and action taken by them were ascertained through detailed interviews. Observation of meetings and discussions helped capture both the aspirations and issues of dissatisfaction among community stakeholders (women and men and adolescent boys and girls).

Focus group Discussions (20)

- Members of Alor Disha
- Alor Disha- Kishor and Kishori
- Dal Men

Key Informant Interviews (20)

- Councilors of KMC
- Pradhan and officials of Panchayat
- Official of Pollution Control Board
- Academics working on Urban Sanitation
- School teachers

Observation

- School in ward 59

Based on the findings, the study attempts to arrive at a model for institutionalizing community engagement in urban sanitation that can help in addressing gaps as well as collectively arrive at solutions in consultation with the government. It would also serve as a case for policy advocacy in the context of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

The report is divided into V sections. Section I presents the background of the project and the beginnings of community engagement on urban sanitation in the selected intervention areas of CFAR. Section II analyses the approach taken by CFAR in initiating community processes; Section III presents the perspectives of the various government officials in enabling partnerships; Section IV focuses on the gains and challenges of community engagement in CFAR intervention areas and sustainability concerns and the concluding section presents some suggestions and way forward.



Section I

Community engagement in WSH: The Beginnings

The mobilisation of communities on issues related to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene was initiated by CFAR in Kolkata in 2012. The CFAR team identified Ward 27 of Rajpur-Sonarapur Municipality as it was the most vulnerable, with a high density of population. It is in fact the seventh most populated municipality in West Bengal. CFAR began its intervention in six areas of Ward no. 27. The initial focus was on issues pertaining to reproductive health and building awareness and strengthening of the **Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)**.

The first interaction with the community members in August 2013, elicited a lukewarm response as only five women participated in it. When CFAR team inquired about the problems and concerns in their area and how they were addressing them, Rupa Bibi, a resident, remarked, *“There are problems in our cluster. But who are we to address them? There are men in our community, they will look after them. We have no role to play.”* The only suggestion came from Suriya Bibi, an older resident, who said that CFAR team should speak to the local leaders and men at the youth club. At the meeting the club members raised a number of queries about CFAR. *“Why are you speaking to the women? Are you trying to instigate them against us,”* they asked. They also made it clear that they would support the initiative only if CFAR got formal permission from the Municipal Chairperson and the local Councillor to carry out the intervention. However, the men did add that they had no objections to CFAR members reaching out to the women in the clusters on issues of health and hygiene. However, they cautioned CFAR that women should not interfere in men's work.

In the subsequent interaction in Stadium Para, 30 women from the area joined the meeting. The first issue they raised was related to garbage collection and disposal. Unanimous decision was taken to approach the Municipality on this issue. But a long-time resident of the area, Sajiraaskar, cautioned them that the Municipality may put the blame on the women that they were not using the garbage vans.

Nevertheless, the women went ahead. Within a month of submitting of the petition to the local MLA, the garbage van was sent to the community. But the women's struggle was far from over. *“We got the garbage van but many of the households were not disposing their garbage in the van. They thought it was a paid service and they did not want to give money. We held another meeting to tell them that it was a free service”.*

Discussing the intervention with the assessing team, CFAR members said they had first attempted to understand the experiences of people living in the area and heard their issues and concerns. It was only after they had gained the confidence and trust of the community that they began to talk about WSH issues. A baseline survey and social mapping was carried out in Ward 27 of Rajpur-Sonarapur Municipality. The survey revealed the following:

- Reproductive tract infection was rampant among women and girls in the area but women were unaware of the adverse impact it had on their health and life; Women and girls bathed in the nearby ponds during menstruation and did not realize the implications. The information regarding menstrual health management was poor.
- Basic sources of water in the area were ponds or tube well. Pond water was used for bathing/washing and domestic purposes and a few tube wells in the area provided water for drinking purposes.

The team realised that it was not enough to reach out to women and give them information. Three health screening camps were organised in the ward. A total of 297 women and girls participated in these camps and majority of them were diagnosed with symptoms of reproductive and urinary tract infections.

Women's health issues became a rallying point as well as an entry point. In the first health camp men, especially the political foot soldiers, kept a close watch. We had to be careful. The women were hesitant to come to the Club for meetings as it was always seen as a space where only men gathered and discussed issues. The adolescent girls were also not allowed to attend meetings. It took almost two years to build a rapport with the municipal officials and for them to give permissions. The biggest challenge for us was how to strengthen and legitimise the intervention.

Discussion with CFAR team, Kolkata, July 2017

A series of small group meetings, one to one interactions and training and orientation programmes were conducted. During the meetings, many women came together and those who had been proactive later created a forum called Alor Disha. With support from CFAR the community/women filed a petition with the municipality for providing sources of clean drinking water. The first reaction of the municipality officials was: *Mahilaon kohamare against mat bhadkao!* (Do not instigate the women against Us).

In 2013, CFAR organised the first orientation of Resident Community Volunteers (RCV) of Ward 27 of Rajpur-Sonarapur Municipality on WSH issues. The issues that were focused upon during the orientation included: personal hygiene, cleanliness and sanitation of homes and surrounding areas, clean drinking water, garbage collection and waste disposal. After the training, health screening camps were organised with support from Bangar hospital.

The issues related to construction of toilets involved a lot of trial and error. While majority of households had toilets in their homes, discussions were also initiated on connectivity to septic tank or sewerage and disposal of children's excreta in drains and ponds. In areas where community members were dependent on shared toilets, discussions on cleanliness and upkeep were initiated.

In 2015, an intervention was started with government primary and secondary schools to impart sanitation education to the students and parents through workshops, discussions and brain storming on how to improve the overall sanitation conditions of the community. The other issue that was addressed was menstrual hygiene management. During the course of their work in the Rajpur-Sonarapur municipality and through the base line survey it was evident to CFAR that there was a lack of understanding among girls and boys on puberty related changes. There was no platform to discuss or clarify issues related to menstruation and menstrual hygiene. The baseline survey also pointed out that girls does not attend school during menstruation. Many taboos and misconception persisted. The need to initiate a dialogue both in schools and community became self-evident.

During the course of the project several partnerships were established with different departments and local bodies. The formal partnership with Department of Women and Child for working with ICDS helped in establishing links between ICDS workers, mothers and community for improving the delivery system in select Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) in Rajpur-Sonarapur Municipality. A series of workshops/trainings were organised for ICDS supervisors, workers and helpers of 73 Anganwadicentres. In turn the women's forum created a monitoring committee to supervise the functioning of the AWCs. In collaboration with the department of WCD, CFAR also published booklets and posters on food hygiene, personal hygiene and mother and child health related

issues. Several activities were also carried out in collaboration with NHM and Department of Education/SSA.

The end-term evaluation of Phase I of the WSH intervention notes that CFAR also played a significant role in generating awareness on the role of various service providers and enabled communities to raise their demands. In Kolkata too, the women's forums were aware of whom to approach in case they encountered a problem. The groups lodged several complaints with the appropriate authorities (IHD, 2017).

In the current project, CFAR scaled up its efforts of deepening community engagement from six clusters of one municipal ward to 11 clusters across three municipal wards. These are Ward 59 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Ward 21 and 27 Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality. The work with adolescent girls in government schools has also been expanded to 21 government schools. A resource group of girls from the community has been formed. This group accompanies the CFAR team to these schools.

In this phase, CFAR is intensively focussing on creating awareness on WSH especially on issues related to solid waste management and faecal sludge and septage management as well as strengthening the community groups i.e., Alor Disha /Women's Forums, Adolescent boys' and girls' groups and men's groups. Plans are afoot to register Alor Disha as a CBO.



Section II

Approach and Process of Community Engagement

The approach to community engagement in Kolkata, while being similar to those adopted in Delhi and Jaipur, has taken into account the specific socio-political context of the area and communities residing in these areas. The localities largely dominated by Muslim minority residents, have their own challenges. Breaking through restrictions on women's mobility and public interaction has required sustained effort. The strategies have also taken into consideration the location of the clusters- one peri-urban area and another in the heart of the city. In both the areas the WSH agenda has gone beyond just ensuring that people use toilets. The emphasis has been on addressing various aspects of sanitation and septage management and making it a community issue that requires collective effort.

CFAR has enabled a process, where each community sets their own agenda and arrives at solutions specific to their needs. The concerns around sanitation have integrated the aspects of dignity and privacy as well as implications on health and well-being. The process of collectivization, however, has had both positive and negative outcomes.

To enable community engagement in intervention areas, CFAR has worked towards strengthening the various forums and platforms. In the process of building collectives, many women have emerged as "leaders" and are now confident to tackle the issues faced by residents of the slums.

This section examines CFAR's approach to deepening community engagement for urban sanitation. It details the roles and functioning of the various forums established within the project:

1. Women's groups (Alor Disha)
2. Adolescent boys and girls' group
3. Men and youth groups
4. Public Hearings

Emergence of Alor Disha/ Women's Forums

The coming together of community women under the banner of Alor Disha (Ray of Hope) has been a major step in community engagement in Kolkata. It has emerged as the first respondent group and contact point for women in the community. Alor Disha was formed in 2014 and has 22 members across various wards and all clusters have women's forums. Women members from all clusters are represented in Alor Disha.

The discussions with Alor Disha members in Uttaro Kumrokhali and Stadium Para in Ward 27 of Rajpur-Sonarapur Municipality gave an insight into the emergence of the Women's forum Alor Disha and the various activities initiated by them. Many of the members are well educated and are economically independent. Some are also involved in government programmes like Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY). A few are also ward members. Some members are working as Residential Community Volunteer (RCV) for Municipal Corporation.

The women's groups shared their journey of group formation and involvement in generating awareness on sanitation in their community and placing their rightful demands to the concerned authorities and service providers.

In Uttaro Kumrokhali, the women members recalled that when the CFAR team members started interacting with the community, women were hesitant to talk to them or participate in the meetings. Women faced many restrictions especially attending meetings and talking to strangers.

Initially CFAR made door to door contact and carried out a mapping exercise to identify the problems faced by residents in the area. Some of the main problems identified by the women pertained to safe drinking water, drainage system, roads, cleanliness of community ponds etc. After a series of discussions, they decided to contact the administrative officials of different government departments.

One of the main issues was the availability of safe drinking water. The cluster previously had only one tube well to provide drinking water to the entire cluster. The residents were using pond water which was not clean. However, with the help of CFAR, the women wrote applications to the municipal corporation. They met the officials and regularly followed up their application. As a result, more taps were installed around the cluster. The area is now provided with an adequate supply of drinking water which helps in preventing water-borne diseases.

FGD Uttaro Kumrokhali, July 2017

The other matter was related to women's reproductive health. The baseline survey indicated that women and girls mostly used the local pond for bathing. This led to various problems including reproductive tract infection. CFAR organised a health camp and invited women doctors but women were shy to attend the camp. The women were counselled by CFAR and encouraged to speak openly regarding their health issues, even if it had to do with reproductive health. Diagnosis by doctors revealed that as many as 80% of the women who attended the camp suffered from RTI. Through this health camp CFAR was able to reach out to a total of 89 women and adolescent girls. Of them 58 women were diagnosed with reproductive Tract Infections (RTI)/ Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)/ and Urinary Tract Infection (UTIs). Alarmingly, 25 women/girls were diagnosed as 'critical' and referred to the nodal health facility at the M.R. Bangur Hospital. This led to a greater awareness on maintaining personal hygiene. A change is visible as more and more women have started participating in public meetings, visiting health camps and discussing their problems.

The initial apprehension of the community gave way to a relationship of trust with CFAR as the women realised that they were working towards making them aware of their rights.

In the course of discussion, it was evident that many women faced domestic violence but they did not recognize it as a violation of their rights or as violence. The CFAR team realised that they could not ignore the issue if they were addressing WSH. The issue also came to the forefront when one of the members of Alor Disha confided with CFAR her plight at the hands of her violent husband.

Sabina the founder member of Alor Disha group in Uttaro Kumrokhali area had been suffering domestic violence over a long period of time. However, with the support of CFAR she was able to raise a voice and protest against the violence meted out to her. She filed a case and an arrest warrant was issued against her husband. She also filed a case seeking alimony from her husband. Along with struggling for her own rights she also helped other women to fight for their dignity. She began building her career again. She also works as an Area level Federation livelihood member and is a CFAR Ward Developer. She is currently pursuing her education and wants to complete her schooling. Sabina has emerged as a role model for many other women in her community and has also formed a forum for Violence Against Women. She has also received an award from 98.3 Red F.M.

According to Sabina, when she initially talked about health and hygiene issues with her community members, they ignored her and were also indifferent to her. She also faced the same

attitude in the municipality. But she did not give up and relentlessly persuaded the community on the importance of maintaining basic health and hygiene. She spoke to them regularly, individually and in groups, and thus made inroads into their lives. The community gradually started listening to her and thus began the journey of their coming together and forming 'Alor Disha'. Today, the forum is working as a Community Response Unit looked upon as a problem-solving unit for the community on violence against women

In Stadium para cluster too, women said they were not allowed to speak to strangers and did not go out of their homes. The mothers remarked that if their *girls attended meetings, no one would marry them*. The women said that initially when they visited the homes of community members to talk about sanitation issues they were even suspected of being thieves. But slowly, the perception changed and the community members began to accept and listen to them.

The CFAR team visited the cluster and also formed an SHG under SJSRY. The women started contributing Rs. 20 each per month. When CFAR motivated women to be part of the SJSRY and began conducting meetings with the other women, there was a discernible change.

Marufa, a resident of Ward 27, started her journey as a member of (SJSRY). She recalled, "We used to conduct community meetings with 20-30 women who were SHG members. We also observed that CFAR team members were discussing issues related to hygiene and sanitation in the area. They also asked us to share the problems faced by community members. Gradually, we associated with them as they were equally concerned with our lives and problems. With their help we started communicating with our women and realized that they faced many health problems but did not speak about them openly. During discussions, we learned about the Reproductive Tract Infection (RTI) and Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) and organized a Screening Camp in our locality. We encouraged women to participate in the camp and also helped them visit the government hospital. We encouraged women in our community to speak out about their health-related issues and not to ignore the symptoms.

The women are ensuring proper sanitation and hygienic environment in their community which was absent earlier. They have also undertaken a signature campaign and submitted numerous petitions to the municipality to ensure basic amenities like proper roads and safe drinking water.

Surya Bibi, a Ward Committee member, says, "domestic violence and bigamy is common in our ward. The forum members decided to provide support to the survivors of violence. They have intervened in several cases and tried to build a community response to stop such acts of violence. Once, a woman who was thrown out of her house by her husband and in-laws in the late evening hours, was rescued by our support group and a complaint was lodged in the local police station against the family. The family had to apologize to her for their actions and thereafter began treating her with honour and dignity.

The FGDs in the Uttaro kumrokhali and Stadium Para also highlighted the numerous changes that have been brought about in the cluster through collective work and support of CFAR. These include:

Collection and Disposal of Garbage

Earlier, women would throw the garbage outside the house in nearby ponds, or streets, making the surroundings dirty. After the intervention by CFAR, women have greater awareness regarding the importance of cleanliness and sanitation. They throw waste material in proper dustbins within their homes. If the garbage is disposed outside their homes it is in the dustbins placed within the locality or in the corporation vehicle that collects waste. Since the area has open drains, the water tends to overflow and pollute the water in the ponds. The women were continuing to use this contaminated water for daily use, thus exposing themselves and their families to health risks.

However, following CFARs intervention in the area, women from the cluster have started cleaning the drains and streets to prevent water-logging.

Ajmira bibi played a central role in managing garbage removal from the area. Under her leadership the group collected signatures of 150 community members. After several follow ups when she noticed that no action was forthcoming, she confronted the government officials in one public meeting. She took the stage and spoke of the problems faced by the community members. The officials were compelled to take prompt action and arranged for the disposal of garbage. Later the drivers of the garbage vans were reluctant to take away the garbage of all the households but she negotiated with them and along with her group members convinced them to remove the garbage, thus resolving the problem. She also took the initiative to motivate every household to use dustbins and spread awareness regarding segregating organic and inorganic garbage by making use of the rejected pots in their homes. With the support of community members, she has also succeeded in buying big dustbins to collect waste.

The focus on solid and liquid waste management also began in 2015. After the initial training in Bangalore, the CFAR team decided that the Bio Drum Composting would be a suitable method to manage waste in the peri-urban areas of Kolkata. Several meetings were organised and members of Alor Disha in Uttaro Kumrokhali took the initiative and five households came together to install a Bio Drum Composting Unit. This was a low cost and effective method for generating organic fertilizer from household organic waste. The Forum members also invited the MLA and Councillor for the inauguration of the composting Unit (CFAR, undated).

Menstrual Health and Hygiene

Over a period of time, the Alor Disha group members have played a major role in generating awareness regarding menstrual health among women and adolescent girls. Previously they would use cloth during menstruation, but now most of the women and girls use sanitary pads during periods.

The forum members made door to door visits to advise the women to save money for buying sanitary napkins. Since some of the women/girls were continuing to use cloth, and were hesitant to buy sanitary napkins from the market, they were counselled to not use the same cloth every month. The women of the cluster became conscious of practices necessary for living a healthy life. Now, women not only buy pads on their own but also send their husbands to buy pads for them.

Construction of Toilets

In Uttoro kumrokhali cluster, group leader Marufa played an active role in the construction of toilets. The members selected Marufa as a leader because of her dedication, confidence and ability to communicate their problems. Marufa with the help of the group members constantly pressurized the municipal officials and managed to get 303 toilets constructed for the households. Earlier these households had no option but to defecate in the open. Now 5000 families of this cluster have individual toilets at home.

Violence against Women

The Alor Disha members are actively engaged in addressing the issue of violence against women. Many of the forum members who were facing violence at home decided to confront their partners and have taken recourse to legal action. They are now aware of their rights. In some cases, male members of the family have begun to respect their partner's views. The local administration is interacting with community members and SHGs women are also working towards strengthening the collective.

According to Monila Laskar, a member of the forum: “I was battered by my husband for 20 long years. I took the beating and suffered in silence. But not now....If my husband will try to torture me, I will not take it. The members of Alor Disha have been supporting me since the last few years”.

Apsari Ustaga is a member of Alor Disha. She established her identity after facing many assaults and insults from her husband. Her husband, a drug addict, would beat and torture her and forced her into having sexual relations with his friends. Even her paternal home refused to support her. With the intervention of CFAR she has tried to gain some financial independence by working at the ICDS centre. She also runs a shop of imitation jewellery and bears the entire expenditure of her son's education, and supports the entire family. She is also fighting the case against her husband.

The members of Alor Disha are articulate and confident. They told the assessing team they were now able to approach the local administration for their needs related to civic amenities like repairing of roads, garbage disposal and other cleanliness related issues. Recently, a few members of the group had visited Delhi with CFAR team for a sharing meeting. They were excited to learn about the experiences of other women's groups and similar work going on in other parts of the country.

However, community mindset did not change overnight. It was a fairly long struggle and with the support of CFAR who helped in collectivizing them into a group that they were able to achieve success. Today men in their cluster listen and are attentive to the views of the women and often abide by their decisions. The women are now able to demand their rights for a dignified life. Besides, they also have the courage to speak up against all forms of domestic violence.

Alor Disha-Kishor and Kishori Dal (Adolescent Group)

The assessing team carried out interaction with the adolescent group- Alor Disha Kishor and Kishori Dal in Uttaro Kumrokhali. According to these boys and girls the group was formed in 2013. Both boys and girls were actively involved in creating awareness around sanitation issues in their community. They stated that the motivation to form the Kishor/ Kishori Dal came from the activities carried out by Alor Disha members. They had seen their mothers (who are members of Alor Disha) work hard, visiting every household in the cluster to make people aware and conscious about health, hygiene and cleanliness. They were inspired by them and wanted to help them in this endeavour.

The girls said that no one had told them or forced them to form a group. They realized the need to form a group on their own. The adolescent boys and girls said that they realized early that people would not listen to them if they approached them in their individual capacity. However, people would listen to the voice of the collective. They said, “*Forming a group has strengthened our mission.*”

The group members said that initially they conducted many small group meetings with their peers, women, men and boys to understand the level of awareness regarding basic health and hygiene. They soon found that garbage disposal needed immediate attention and was a major cause of water clogging and contamination of drinking water. The group developed a resource map of the area through 'transect walk' and mapped the facilities of water, toilet and garbage dumping. They then undertook a 'Safai Abhiyan' (cleanliness drive) in the community to generate awareness on basic health and hygiene. Though their locality has taps, still women had to fetch water in buckets and keep it for use throughout the day. This work was mainly done by women and girls. Before CFAR's intervention, boys and men would rarely participate in fetching water buckets but now they also participate.

The girls also shared their experience of the training on menstrual hygiene and management. They said that initially they were shy to talk about menstruation. The training on Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) organised by CFAR helped girls shed their inhibition and shyness. At first the mothers resisted their girls joining the DMT classes but later agreed. However, though the group started with 20 girls, later the number reduced. Four girls obtained the DMT (Dance Movement Therapy) certificate.

The adolescent girls reported that the awareness sessions organized by CFAR had been beneficial and helped in understanding the biological process and hygiene management during menstrual period and difference between good and bad touch. They also shared their concerns on menstrual waste. They spoke freely regarding the issue, even in the presence of the boys of the Kishor Dal. They had also enacted a play regarding menstrual hygiene, in which both girls and boys had participated. Various myths and misconceptions about menstruation were broken during the play. Through their participation in the play, the boys became more sensitive towards their sisters' needs during menstruation.

The Kishori Dal also performed a dance show on March 8 to celebrate International Women's Day and communicated the message of women's empowerment.

The adolescent groups were also involved in taking out a monthly newsletter. They had plans to secure permission from the Municipality, so that they could paste the Newsletter on the wall inside their club- and school.

A few adolescents had been to Delhi with the CFAR team in February 2017. They got an exposure to the activities of adolescents in other cities and an opportunity to share their experiences. They were inspired by their visit and became more actively involved in various activities for the benefit of their community.

The adolescent boys and girls were involved in the following activities:

- Surveying the households in their locality for dustbins and arranging for the same in case they did not have them. Where dustbins were not available they converted old paint tins into dustbins.
- The girls accompanied their mothers to the municipality offices several times and also followed up on issues to ensure that right actions were taken by the municipal corporation. The Kishori Dal now knows whom to contact in case there is a problem.
- The adolescents who had gone to ASCI Hyderabad, had learnt about the twin pit toilets, and they wanted the same to be implemented in their areas as well, because even though most of the homes had toilets, they were not twin pit.
- The Kishor Dal reported that they knew the procedures for removing garbage from their vicinity and asserted that if the municipal workers do not remove the garbage strewn in their locality, they do it themselves.
- They also observed 'Environment Day' in the community by organizing rallies, and performed street plays and created wall paintings. They had carried placards and organised rallies on Women's Day and Anti-drug addiction day.

Addressing drug addiction was an important issue because substance abuse is common in many homes leading to domestic violence

It was observed during the discussions that the girls were articulate, active and outwitted the boys in their responses. They all aspired to lead better lives themselves and expressed their concerns for

the community. The girls stated that they wanted to become graduates and get employment. Some girls were already enrolled in college. They wanted to work as policewomen, teachers and social workers. They reported that child marriages did not take place in their area and majority girls got married after completing 18 years of age. It is only girls who want to marry out of their choice that end up marrying before 18 years. They said their parents were supportive and motivated the girls to study. If a girl wanted to marry, it was the parents who tell them to complete their studies first. The girls are now aware that they should marry boys who are employed and earn a livelihood.

Adolescent boys also felt that they should have a job before they got married. All of them knew how to work on computers, and some of them had also attended courses to equip them as telephone operators.

Students of George School Park Circus spoke about their experiences as change agents. According to them when the CFAR team first visited the school, they were asked to fill a questionnaire on health, hygiene and menstruation. They were shy and were not comfortable with the discussions on menstrual health. It was for the first time that they were openly discussing issues that were taboo. Gradually, through several workshops on Menstrual Health Management (MHM) the girls learnt about the mental and physical changes during adolescence and menstrual cycle. The initial sense of shame faded away and many misconceptions about the female body were addressed. Today, the girls are confident and can talk freely about their menstrual health and bodily concerns with their peer group, mothers and sisters.

Discussion with Girls St. George School, Park Circus

Promoting participation of men

An effort has also been made to engage with men in the intervention areas on concerns around sanitation. The FGD with the men in Uttaro Kumrokhali, Stadium Para and Muchipara in Park Circus gave an insight into the nature of male participation and their understanding of issues. The men were in the age group of 21 to 57 years. Majority of the men had completed middle and high school and a few were graduates and post graduates. Their main source of livelihood included petty trading, cycle repairing shop, auto driving, painting contractor, fish trade, masonry and working in private companies. Some of the men of Muchipara worked in factories. The monthly income levels ranged from Rs. 7000 to 15000.

Uttaro Kumrokhali is a Muslim dominated area, with Muslims comprising 95% of the population and Hindus 5% but as discussions here indicated, these two social groups had been living together in harmony for a long time. They participated in each other's religious festivals and activities. The men felt that the intervention by CFAR, had led to an increased awareness on personal hygiene, cleanliness of the locality, women's health and education and had persuaded people against early marriages. But lack of time prevented them from attending the awareness programmes organized by CFAR regularly. They said that they did not stop the girls/ women of their families from participating in the programmes. They also appreciated the role of local administration in recent years in ensuring civic amenities.

Unemployment was a major challenge faced by the educated youth in the area, the men said. They felt that skill training for the youth could be of immense benefit. They also spoke in favour regular health camps.

In Stadium para the men were of the view that the drop-out rates of boys was higher in comparison to girls. Due to poor economic conditions, many boys began working early, mainly in the unorganised sector, to contribute to the family income.

The men expressed an interest in forming a group like 'Alor Disha' for the betterment of their locality and community.

In Addy Bagan, Muchipara, most of the families are migrants from outside Bengal though they have been residing here for over several generations. The area is extremely congested with most families living in rented accommodation. The rooms are cramped (usually 6ft/ 6ft) and the average family size is 6-8 members.

The men recalled that CFAR team had first organized an awareness camp regarding the significance of 'hand washing' which was very successful amongst the residents of the area. Then CFAR began to create awareness in the locality using various modes of communication like puppet shows, drama and street plays.

One of the main problems in this area is lack of toilets. As the density of population is very high the problem is acute and in most cases two to three households share a toilet .In one lane, there were four toilets, shared by 65 families. Many of the households are dependent on community toilets also. The community members had requested the local Councillor to intervene. As a result, the old toilets were repaired and some new toilets were constructed. Paucity of space and high real estate costs are some of the reasons why enough toilets are not constructed. Thus, the problem of open defecation persists although there has been some improvement.

Poor or lack of proper drainage was another problem in the locality. Waterlogging was common as there was no outlet. The men in the locality however acknowledged the supportive role of CFAR and the administration in resolving the problem. The KMC was also trying to provide better services and a project to construct a drainage system has been initiated just outside the Ward. They were also more confident now when dealing with government functionaries.

One of the members of the group who runs a school in the area said he had raised the demand for separate toilets in his school. The officials carried out a survey and approved his demand. This has had a positive impact in the locality. As a result of the public hearing carried out in the area 72 dustbins have been provided by the councillor for better hygiene. Dustbins have also been approved for local schools, markets etc. Clear instructions have also been given for maintenance of community toilets. A user fee is charged. A doctor had been visiting the locality from a local health centre to conduct health check-ups .Free medicines are also distributed two to three times a month. Other than CFAR, NGOs like- Smile Foundation have been organizing mobile health camps at regular intervals to create awareness among the local community.

Public Hearings

Public Hearings were organised by CFAR in Mallickpur and Park Circus wards before initiating the work. This provided an opportunity for community members to raise their problems in front of the officials and arrive at collective solutions. As a first step, group discussions were conducted in the various Wards around WSH issues.

In Mallickpur, 26 group discussions were conducted. Three teams comprising Alor Disha members and CFAR team conducted the discussions. The entire process took approximately 20 days. The most critical concern of the residents of the cluster was the lack of proper drainage which was resulting in acute water logging during the monsoons, lack of sufficient tube wells, absence of individual toilet facility, poor sewage system, lack of garbage collection facility and lack of health services. Since the area is at a relatively lower level than the adjoining places, water logging during monsoons is acute. Most of the toilets are makeshift, built by the families themselves with outlets in the nearby open fields or *kachha* drains. During monsoons the problem is compounded as the drain

and open fields become submerged and faecal sludge enters into the rooms making it a health hazard for the inhabitants.

In Mallikpur the Public Hearing was organised by CFAR and Mallikpur Panchayat. Several residents presented their problems. The Pradhan of the area responded to each of the issues raised.

Drainage and Drinking water facility

In Dakshin Hindupara excessive use of plastic and its improper disposal caused severe problem of choking drains and water logging. The panchayat members asked the residents to dispose garbage and plastic in the bins but due to irregular garbage collection facility they are compelled to throw outside their locality. The residents demanded the facility of a regular door step garbage collection service. Just a day of rain could result in knee-deep water in the area for a week. Similarly, in Balarampur people suffered from scarcity of drinking water.

ICDS

In Ganeshpur, the AWC had no provision of fans which made people reluctant to send their children to the centre as the centre seemed to turn into a furnace during summers. The quality of food was poor and drinking water was not available. The centre provided one egg a week. There was no provision of toilets and children have to defecate in open fields. Similarly, in Jugnu Club Para two centres functioned from one unit -- as AWC centre in the morning and a Sishu Siksha Kendra in the afternoon. Women demanded a separate location for the ICDS Centre.

Ponds

People complained that the ponds in the area were very dirty as household waste was thrown in the ponds. Also, people bathed in the contaminated pond water. Conditions were so bad that the pond had a bad odour. They requested the Pradhan to get the pond cleaned.

In response the Alor Disha members recounted their experience on the issue of cleaning ponds. They said there were many ponds in the localities where they lived. They have formed groups for cleaning the pond every week by rotation. The community members contribute money to buy bleaching powder and sprinkled it around the pond. In Rajpur-Sonarapur they had taken a big pond on lease from the municipality and cultivated fish. The ponds were kept clean. . After a few years they sold all the fish and bought two boats. Now they give the boats on lease to the parks in various places.

In response, the Pradhan and the ICDS official said

- Solid Waste Management unit had started functioning, though the entire Panchayat was yet to be covered. Services would be extended in all the clusters. He also asked the Engineer to look into the matter and update him regarding the actual position.
- Respondents need to submit an application mentioning the issues. Necessary action would be taken to improve the infrastructure of the ICDS centre by providing a toilet and drinking water facilities
- Although there were attempts to improve the infrastructure of schools shortage of space was a big issue. She also said that there was a need to increase the number of ICDS centres to match the population density of the community. • The Pradhan appreciated the innovative ideas of Alor Disha members and requested the women of Mallikpur Gram Panchayat to initiate such processes in their community.

Source: Report of the Public Hearing in Mallikpur, Baruipur Block of 24 Paraganas (South) April 11, 2017

In Darapara and Muchipara clusters of Ward No 59 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation CFAR conducted 37 group discussions. The main issues that were identified and needed to be addressed by the ULB were lack of toilets, shortage and low pressure of water, lack of garbage collection facility at the doorstep, drains, private bathing places, health issues and ICDs services.

Public Hearing Ward No 59 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation

In Ward 59 KMC the Public Hearing was jointly organised by CFAR and Ward Committee of 59 ward and was held at the Community Market Hall of Ward no 59. This area is in the heart of the ward. The meeting was attended by 250 community residents of Darapara and Muchipara, government officials, social workers, educationist, and representative of NGOs. Several people spoke about their problems.

Garbage Collection

The problem of garbage collection was acute in many areas. The residents complained that there is a vat/container placed outside some of the houses and a few days back the Corporation replaced the vat with another one which was bigger in size. Now due to its larger size not only the residents of the locality but also the outsiders throw waste in the vat. The vat is cleared but it gets dirty and filthy in no time. In Muchipara area too, the garbage collector comes and collects garbage but due to lack of a vat people throw waste outside the locality making the area dirty.

Water

One of the residents from Tiljala Road had carried a sample of dirty water in a bottle and placed it in front of the Engineer of KMC. He asked whether he would allow his children to drink that water. He said the children of the area were suffering from water borne diseases. In Darapara cluster too, water scarcity was a serious problem. The residents said that the water pressure was very low and they had to wait in long queues to fill one bucket of water. There is one tube well but it was inadequate. Besides the number of stand posts and tube wells was negligible. Drain

In Darapara had no proper drainage facility. Drains were narrow without proper outlet for water. As a result the drains remain clogged throughout the year. The situation worsens during monsoons. In Tiljala Road the Corporation had dug the road to make the drain but construction had not started yet. Toilets

In Darapara four bathrooms/toilets was shared by 12 families. People had to wait in a queue.. Moreover, there was no tap water facility in the bathrooms.

Health

Residents of Darapara also complained of lack health facility. Pregnant women as well as older residents found it difficult to visit health centres which are located far from their locality. People suggested that a health centre could be opened in any of the clubs that were in the cluster, so local people can benefit.

Based on the depositions the following commitments were made by the officials:

- The Assistant Engineer (AE) gave assurance that he would visit the area to check the drainage system and also address the problem related to water. He said he would initiate the construction of drains in Tiljala Road at the earliest. He also promised to look into the matter of constructing toilets in the nearby school.

- Medical Officer of KMC promised to organize monthly health awareness camps in these clusters.

The following decisions were taken by the community group members:

- Greater awareness among community members against disposing plastic bags in open fields and drains
- Ward committee, Alor Disha and CFAR would organize monthly awareness camp to reduce the use of plastic

It was decided to hold another meeting in three to four months to review the progress on the action points and improvement initiated in the community.

Source : Report of the public hearing in Park Circus, April 2017, CFAR



Section III

Community Engagement for WSH: Perspective of Government stakeholders and Academia

The CFAR team has been closely working with various government agencies in an effort to strengthen and ensure delivery of services in the intervention areas. These have included Kolkata Municipal Corporation, Rajpur-Sonarapur Municipality, the Department of Women and Child Development, National Health Mission, Department of Education, State Pollution Control Board, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

An effort was made to understand the issues of WSH from the perspective of the officials in several departments and the role of CFAR in furthering community engagement. These are presented in the following section:

Rajpur-Sonarapur Municipality/Mallickpur Panchayat and Kolkata Municipal Corporation

As discussed in the previous section, CFAR has been working in Ward no 21 and 27 of Rajpur-Sonarapur municipality and Ward 59 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation. The research team met with several officials in charge of these areas.

Discussions with the Pradhan of Mallickpur Gram Panchayat who oversees the Rajpur-Sonarapur area informed that were funds available for the development of his municipality; According to him, he had used the funds for creating public awareness on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. He said that the Mallickpur Gram panchayat had been declared the best ODF (Open Defecation Free) GP in the district of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. In his Panchayat all the villages had been declared ODF. However, the main challenge currently was the maintenance of sewer lines and solid waste management. The Government of India and the State government had allotted Rs.20 lakhs to each gram panchayat for the construction of solid waste management units. However, this amount was not adequate.

The Pradhan was appreciative of the efforts made by CFAR in generating public awareness on SBA and Nirmal Bangla Mission (NBM) as it was difficult for the government alone to completely stop open defecation and create awareness on waste management. He accepted that it was necessary to make community members aware and responsible for keeping their environment clean. He reiterated that the collaboration between the Panchayat and CFAR had been positive and requested that CFAR continue its focus on segregation of waste at the household level and on solid waste management.

The Chairman in Council of NULM in Rajpur-Sonarapur Municipality was of the view that CFAR had engaged with the community on a range of issues i.e. health, legal rights, sanitation and hygiene in the various clusters of the municipality. The members of Alor Disha had a strong presence in the area and were handling issues effectively. They had been raising issues with confidence and demanding regular civic services from various authorities. The members of Alor Disha were also supporting the activities of NULM and had helped in forming SHGs in the various wards of the municipality. Currently there were 1100 SHGs functioning in the area. The repayment rate was high. Several women had started their business of cloth trading, fish trading and so on. It was commendable to see adolescent girls' groups in performing plays on menstrual hygiene in schools and in communities.

The Nirmal Sahayak of Mallickpur Panchayat was of the view that CFAR's activities in the Panchayat had generated awareness on health and hygiene, garbage disposal and solid waste management. CFAR was involved in motivating village community and regular health check-ups

were also organised in collaboration with the Baruipur Sub-divisional Hospital. Initially only 10 to 15 residents would come for the health check-up. But gradually the number increased. Medicines were also distributed with the help of teachers, ICDS functionaries and Asha Sahyogini. The public hearings organised by CFAR had also helped the government functionaries to get first-hand information on the problems in the different clusters.

He felt that it was difficult to bring about behavioural change in a short period of time, but constant efforts by CFAR had indeed helped in bringing about change in practice among residents. People had started segregating waste at the household level.

The officer also pointed out that given the density of population in the area (the GP includes 28 *gram sansads* and has a population of 45000) the problem of drainage and water logging was acute, made worse by the use of plastic bags. The matter was raised by CFAR regularly. Now the panchayat has started to focus on waste segregation into bio-degradable and non-bio-degradable waste. The GP provides 2 coloured buckets (red and green), to the residents to segregate the garbage at home at a subsidised rate. The pair of bins cost Rs.170/-. Each household pays Rs.100/- and GP provides Rs.70/-. Till now they have distributed 8000 buckets to 4000 households. For schools and ICDS centres, they have provided 50litre drums free of cost. For garbage collection, service each household is charged Rs.30/- per month. The GP has included SHG members to collect this money against a receipt and for this they get 20% share of the collection. Van pullers are also appointed from among the SHG groups as are some of the unemployed male members. The SHGs' also take responsibility of cooking mid-day meals and waste management in their area. The cost borne by the public is published in the annual meeting register of the GP and they also propagate this through public announcements. GP after collection of waste products further segregates the inorganic waste and sells it to the vendors to generate income. But complications arise due to the various demands placed by the villagers and their reluctance to pay. He acknowledged the positive role of CFAR in spreading awareness among the villagers, organizing health camps and helping the villagers to be conscious and aware.

Recently, a Solid Waste Management Unit had been set up in Mallickpur Gram Panchayat. In this unit the organic and inorganic waste is segregated. There are 23 van pullers, 15 women segregate the garbage, 2 security guards and many other people work at the Unit. Organic waste is turned into vermi-compost. The waste is heated for 15 to 45 days. The total cycle takes 72 days. The vermi is sourced from State Institute of Rural Development in Kalyani to transform the garbage into compost. The inorganic waste consists of plastic bottles, the caps and the bottles which are sold separately so that they can be recycled and used.

The breakup of cost incurred by the Panchayat towards solid waste management activity is as follows- Rs.30 per month for the waste van collector. Out of which, Rs.6 is charged by the Self Help Group, and Rs.24 goes from the panchayat office. SHGs are engaged in collecting wastes. If they collect from more than 5000 households then they receive a 20% commission.

CFAR has also initiated work in Ward 59 of the KMC. The population in this ward is close to 5 lakhs and Muchipara, Darapara and Topsia are included in this ward. The ward has a woman Councillor. Discussions were carried out by the research team at the office of Ward councillor. Since the Councillor was away in a meeting, few party members joined the discussion.

One of the members informed that in the past 8-9 months several programmes had been organised by CFAR. A public hearing was organised wherein people came and presented their problems. One of the main problems in the area is related to the drainage system. Another problem was the availability of clean drinking water. While tap connections have been extended, this continued to be a problem. Meetings had also been organised in different lanes to address this issue.

They said the adolescent girls' group had performed a street play on MHM in the ward. This had a positive impact on women and girls. They had requested CFAR to organise camps in schools on MHM. The party members also felt that automatic vending machines for sanitary napkin should be installed in schools to facilitate girls' access to sanitary napkins. Already, two incinerators had been sanctioned for two schools in the area. The research team was informed that the woman Councillor of the ward also planned to organise a rally with the students on sanitation issues. She was worried about the indiscriminate use of plastic. She was of the view that there was a need to change the behaviour pattern of the children so that they could also influence their parents' behaviour. Public announcements were also being used to spread awareness on sanitation issues.

The Councillor had provided dustbins to the households. She had also requested the KMC for sanction of semi-automatic dustbins and two compactor machines. But these could not be provided due to resource crunch. The party members felt that since the challenges in Ward 59 were extensive, organisations like CFAR should come up with more interventions.

State Pollution Control Board

Discussion with the Chief Engineer, State Pollution Control Board revealed that a number of sewer treatment plants had been constructed in the State but they continue to be underutilised. Waste was collected but dumped along the canals. However the presence of numerous wetlands was a boon for the city as they were had natural mechanisms to treat the sewerage. One of the roles of the pollution control board is to monitor the wetlands. However, faecal sludge and septage issues needed to be addressed on priority. He also felt that sullage management needed to be understood by all the concerned departments and there should be a convergence in addressing the issue.

Department of Panchayat and Rural Development

CFAR has been closely collaborating with the Department of Panchayat and Rural Development (PNRD) in an effort to ensure better sanitation services in their intervention areas. A consultation on Faecal Sludge and Sullage Management (FSSM) was organised in November 2016 by CFAR in collaboration with PNRD, to provide an interface between community representatives, government officials and WHS experts.

Consultation on Faecal Sludge and Sullage Management (FSSM) November 25, 2016 Kolkata

The main objective of the Consultation was to break the silence on FSSM and develop an understanding on various aspects of the issue. Representatives from PNRD, Block Development Office, Additional District Magistrate, engineers from Pollution Control Board and municipalities, panchayats, academicians, consultants, NGOs and representatives of Alor Disha participated in the consultation.

The Commissioner PNRD informed that in West Bengal, the PNRD department was focussing on installing Solid Waste Management (SWM) units in those GPs that had achieved the ODF status and were located in peri-urban areas. These units were catering to both rural and urban households. In the interior villages the plan was to use MGNREGA scheme to enable composting structures to be built for every 10 households in order to treat all bio-degradable waste.

However, currently there was no discussion on the issue of FSSM. In rural areas in the case of households with twin leach pit toilets it was assumed that faecal sludge need not be taken out and in the case of households building toilets with septic tank the issue of faecal sludge was yet to be addressed. Even in urban centres, the government did not have the mechanical facility to

suck out the waste from septic tanks and manual scavengers had been doing the job. This was against the law that prohibits manual scavenging. Therefore, there was an urgent need to promote FSSM. He stated that in the absence of a FSSM treatment plant, this posed a challenge even in a city like Kolkata. The Consultation on FSSM was a significant step towards learning and strategizing on this issue.

The key note speaker raised several concerns. He pointed out that the definition of waste itself was problematic. The term sanitation was mostly associated with municipal solid waste, not liquid waste or human waste. In any Municipality in the country the sanitation department only dealt with solid waste. In other countries, far greater priority was accorded to disposing off human waste. He pointed out that many villages declared as ODF under Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan had not been able to sustain the ODF status due to factors such as, scarcity of water, technical failure and poor motivation within the community. Another major concern was that large parts of urban India were not connected to the municipal sewer system, making people dependent on septic tanks and insanitary toilets. Therefore, the key question was how to deal with the practice of 'institutionalized open defecation'?

Some of the key suggestions that emerged from the discussions were

- Initiatives to be taken at policy level to introduce FSSM Units in new settlements and new apartment complexes
- Organize follow ups to consultations and involve policy makers and rural and urban government bodies
- Reach out and share information with the community on FSSM and organize consultations at the district, sub-district and village level.
- Recognize the need for creating spaces for communities in such discussions as co-owners in the process of change.
- The SBM and NBA have provisioned for toilet construction and SLWM unit. In rural areas the government is concentrating on SWM unit but since solid and liquid waste needs to be managed properly, FSSM should be introduced as an integral part of SWM
- Gram Panchayats should search for resources to set up FSSM units and move the agenda from f ODF to ODF+
- Strengthen public engagement with the concept of BUMT (Build, Use, Maintain and Treat) to make common people as well as stakeholders aware of it.

It was also pointed out that since people were not aware of the health hazards of faecal waste, there was a need for such discussions and deliberations to be facilitated at the district and sub-district level and CFAR's support in organizing such consultations at the district level was sought.

Source: Report of the Consultation on Faecal sludge and Sullage Management(FSSM): An interface with the community: A Report, CFAR, November 25, 2016

Linkages with Department of Education and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

CFAR has made consistent efforts to work closely with the Education department to introduce MHM classes at the school level. This had begun with a proposal that was submitted by CFAR to the authorities and discussions were also held with the Principal Secretary, Education GOWB and officials of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. In September 2016, CFAR received formal permission from SSA to commence classes on MHM in selected schools in South Pargana district. The intervention was started in six schools. Workshops have been conducted with 97 teachers. A total of 702 students

have been covered across six schools. A gradual change has been noticed in terms of knowledge and practice around MHM behaviour.

Linkages with Department of Women and Child Development and ICDS

CFAR has been working closely with the Department of Women and Child Development by implementing a participatory model for strengthening the ICDS centres. The main focus has been on ensuring better functioning of the ICDS centres. A survey was carried out by members of the Women's forums in their respective areas. The findings of the survey were then shared with the various officials CDPO, ACDPO, Supervisors and Municipality representatives. The officials also sought support of CFAR in improving the services. CFAR is regularly been sensitising the ICDS staff on the importance of hygiene and its relationship to child survival and development. Alor Disha members are monitoring 91 ICDS centres. They are also observing the Mothers' Day at these centres.

Perspective of the Academia on FSSM

In an effort to understand the various dimensions of FSSM, CFAR also had interactions with academicians. Discussions were held with Prof. Arunava Majumder, Jadavpur University, Kolkata on the issue of faecal sludge and sullage management. He pointed to the several issues that need to be considered when talking of FSSM. Firstly, the practise in most towns is to construct toilets with a septic tank. However, these towns do not have an efficient sewerage system. The septic tank is an anaerobic system. The waste water management and specifically human waste generated reveals that while off-site sanitation solution through STP, takes 28-30 days for sludge digestion, the on-site solution of septic tank and anaerobic treatment system takes about 70 days' time for the sludge digestion. Therefore, if one cleans a septic tank today, the most recent sludge would not have been treated and would contain huge amounts of pathogenic organisms and undigested human excreta. This is the reason this sludge needs treatment. The sludge digesters in West Bengal were not generating any bio-gas and possibly sludge lagoon or trenches could be a better alternative. In terms of solid waste composting, he pointed out that there was not enough land to undertake it, particularly in the Kolkata Metropolitan area. It was recommended that 50% of organic solid waste be composted, 15% recycled and rest disposed in a sanitary manner.

It was also pointed out that the excreta was disposed at the same point as the garbage, which is as good as open defecation. There is a need for KMC to take measures and give more importance to sludge management.

Some Facts about FSSM

- FSSM is about strengthening the containment, transportation, emptying, disposal and recycling of waste
- One truck of latrine sludge carelessly dumped equals 5,000 people defecating in the open
- One gram of faeces may contain: 100 parasites eggs, 1000 Protozoa, 1,000,000 Bacteria and 10,000,000 Virus
- The nutrients in the fecal sludge increase algae in surface water and lead to the death of aquatic organisms (like fish)
- Fecal sludge smells and leads to drinking water contamination (surface water or groundwater)
- Faecal sludge attracts vectors, such as flies and rats

Source: Report of the Consultation on Faecal sludge and Sullage Management(FSSM): An interface with the community: A Report, CFAR, 25 November, 2016

Section IV

Assessing Gains and Challenges in Community Engagement for WSH

Community engagement in Ward 21-27 of Rajpur-Sonarpur Municipality and Ward 59 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation has been facilitated through Alor Disha Women's Forums, adolescent girls and boys' groups and emergence of platforms such as public hearings and knowledge camps. In all the intervention areas, community women and men have been leading the discussions on WSH issues and have been raising demands with service providers. They have also gained confidence and are interacting with government functionaries across departments and other stakeholders. While WSH remains the central focus, in more evolved Women's Forums the members have addressed other social issues in the community such as reproductive health, education, menstrual hygiene, domestic violence and other rights and entitlements. CFAR has now initiated focus on FSSM.

This section discusses some of the gains and the overall impact of the project, challenges faced in engaging communities for WSH as well the issue of sustainability.

Gains and Impact of the project

Enabling an understanding on WSH issues

Field level interactions show that the intervention has created an awareness and understanding on a range of WSH issues and practices i.e. water usage, sanitation, garbage disposal, solid waste management, FSSM and MHM. The community members have started voicing their demands to service providers. The emergence of various platforms like Alor Disha Women's Forums, Adolescent Girls and Boys' groups and Men's Groups have facilitated discussions in the various localities.

The members of Alor Disha in Uttaro Kumrokhali and Stadium para recounted their journey of forming a group and how after having gained knowledge and information on sanitation, they had raised awareness in their community. This had helped them in placing their rightful demands to the concerned authority and service providers. Through their involvement in Self Help Groups (SHGs) under National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) they had also collected applications for toilet construction for the families. They said they had learnt about treatment of household and solid waste only after they had got involved in the project. They were conscious of not using the pond water for washing and bathing. They have also learnt about the treatment of fecal sludge. Alor Disha in fact has gained a reputation of being a strong force to reckon with.

There is also a growing realisation that sanitation is not only about managing solid waste, construction of toilets and proper hygiene practices. Collection and containment of faecal matter is also equally important. The need for a comprehensive Faecal sludge and Sullage Management needs to be introduced. When the concept of BUMT(Build, Use, Maintain and Treat) was introduced there were several issues that were raised by the women:

- We have toilets at home but we never thought about what happens to the waste
- When the soak pit fills up; we call the cleaner; he dumps the sludge in the nearby pond; we never thought it contaminates the water bodies
- Our area is very congested and due to lack of space the cleaner dumps the sludge from the pit just outside the latrine space; there is no other option

The functionaries of the various municipalities are also at a loss as treatment systems are not in place.

CFAR Report undated and field discussions

Promoting behaviour change

One of the key elements of community engagement in Kolkata has been the impact on individual behaviour and practices. The members of Alor Disha and adolescents' groups were unanimous in their opinion that there was not only a change in practice but also that they were more confident and could interact with any official without fear.

Some of the key areas where change is discernible are:

- **Personal Hygiene:** The women did not have information regarding RTIs; after attending the health camps and meetings they started maintaining proper hygiene. They were now conscious about personal hygiene during menstruation. Many of them had stopped using unclean cloth during menstruation. Washing of hands had become a normal practice.
- **Garbage disposal:** Earlier most households would throw the garbage in open areas or in the nearby pond. Now, the; households took care to segregate their garbage and disposing the garbage in dustbins.
- **Maintaining clean toilets:** all the forum members said that they kept the toilets at home clean. They also used slippers while using toilets.
- **Since CFAR is working closely with the ICDS centres, mothers are aware of maintaining hygiene while washing vegetables and cooking food. They also have greater awareness regarding cooking without destroying vitamins and the importance of nutritious food.**
- **The adolescent girls reported that they have shed their inhibition and could talk about menstruation in public. They no longer threw the sanitary pads in the open. They were now wrapping the pads and disposing them in dustbins or directly in the municipal van.**

Ensuring Infrastructure and services for WSH

Discussions with members of Alor Disha, adolescent boys and girls' groups and male groups indicate the efforts made to improve infrastructure and services for WSH have been successful to an extent

Toilets and Sanitation

- In Muchipara, the community demand led to the repair of existing community toilets and construction of some new toilets.

Cleaning of Ponds

- In Rajpur-Sonarapur area, the members of Alor Disha were active in maintaining cleanliness of the nearby ponds. The ponds were cleaned on a weekly basis by the groups. The community members contributed money for the purchase of bleaching powder. In addition, they had taken a big pond on lease and had cultivating fish. Later they sold all the fish and bought two boats. Now they give the boats on lease to the parks in various places.

Collection of garbage

- The members of Alor Disha have also streamlined the collection of garbage in their respective localities. They have been campaigning for waste segregation at source and use garbage bins.
- The adolescent groups surveyed households in their locality for dustbins. They converted old paint tins into dust bins and distributed them to houses which did not have dustbins.

The overall gains need to be assessed in the context of the efforts made by CFAR in gaining trust and carving a space for community led advocacy. The processes have focussed on encouraging women to question but not to take on an adversarial role. The continuous discussions with community women and men have enabled them to establish a rapport with the service providers. All the members acknowledged that if they have a problem they give petitions and follow them up till their problems are resolved. The government functionaries are also familiar with the initiatives taken by the forum members and are willing to support them.

They have also initiated discussions on FSSM and building an understanding on how to make the SBA sustainable.

Challenges in engaging communities on WSH

The challenges pertaining to community engagement for WSH in Kolkata cannot be separated from the political landscape and interests. In addition, there are several big organisations like the Missionaries of Charity and Ramakrishna Mission who have been working on similar issues as CFAR. The discussions at various levels also revealed the various challenges they were facing:

One of the challenging aspects of community engagement was establishing trust among the community in the newer areas. While in Rajpur-Sonarapur/ Mallickpur municipality, Alor Disha is well recognised, even so it has been challenging for the forum members to initiate work in newer localities and is often viewed with suspicion. Many of the women said that theirs was a similar experience. They recalled how they had taken a long time to trust the CFAR team members when they had conducted meetings in their area initially. In the Park Circus wards the issues are complex and community engagement has been facilitated through continuous interaction with the KMC Councillors. CFAR has to tread carefully and often negotiate with political interests for community good.

The adolescent groups supported by CFAR have emerged as a strong forum. Their understanding about their bodies and MHM has been strengthened. They have also been able to play a pro-active role on issues of urban sanitation in their respective areas. However, to sustain the interest of the adolescent groups, continuous engagement and interaction with CFAR is necessary on new issues and skills that impact adolescent lives.

While male participation has been elicited within the project, it is often difficult to engage with them on a regular basis due to their livelihood concerns and lack of time. Unemployed youth have also demanded tie ups with programmes for skill generation. CFAR has tried to organise discussion with the men in the various "clubs"(community centres for social activities promoted by political parties) and tried to draw them into discussions. However, taking the club members into confidence has not been easy. It has had both a positive and negative impact as they often acted as **gatekeepers** to interventions in the community.

A key component of the intervention has been the partnership established with a range of government departments and service providers. It is evident that a healthy relationship between community and service providers/government is central to sustaining change. However, the process of building rapport with collaborating agencies is time consuming. The officials also get transferred frequently and this has an impact on the progress of work. Constant follow up is also required to ensure that the commitments made by the officials are implemented at the field level.

While an understanding on solid and liquid waste management has been built, the issue of FSSM has received limited attention among the government functionaries. It is evident that substantial amount of funds are required for effective FSSM. CFAR has been in discussion with all the relevant stakeholders to bring the issue centre stage within policy discourse.

Violence against women is a crucial issue which is being taken up by members of Alor Disha. They are providing support to many women survivors of violence. In many cases the forum members have to face the wrath of community members. In addition, the police are often not supportive and it takes a long time to resolve the issues.

Besides, CFAR needs to look at a exit strategy, with focus on mechanisms that will sustain the change. It is necessary that this is clearly articulated by CFAR and understood by community members.

Sustainability of the Intervention

Discussions across the intervention areas indicate that community engagement has a stronger base where Alor Dishais working and the forum members have been able to raise many issues. In the newer areas, the forums are yet to be strengthened and steady work is required to enable community members to raise demands. The role of Alor Disha in taking the work forward in these areas is crucial.

The members of Alor Dishawant want their group to be registered as a CBO on similar lines of Mahila Pragati Manch in Delhi. However, the members would need to be clear about their objectives and the role the organisation would play, especially if it has to emerge as an apolitical group.

The issue of sustainability of the various interventions in Kolkata would depend on strengthening the knowledge base of the women's forums with exposure to newer ideas, so that they can continue to engage and negotiate with the service providers to ensure that they act on the demands raised by them.

Section V

Conclusion and Way Forward

This mid-line assessment of the CFAR intervention in Kolkata has focused on understanding the key processes that have enabled deepening community engagement on WSH issues, the successes and remaining challenges.

Primarily the intervention has centred on strengthening various community forums and platforms. Sustained engagement with government stakeholders and service providers has also been facilitated through various activities. The discussions also indicate that processes initiated by CFAR have been well received and the mature groups like Alor Disha have taken up many issues. There is evidence of strong leadership among women. They have negotiated gender boundaries and have worked collectively towards improving their surroundings. Women also acknowledge that they have gained knowledge and experience by being part of the forums. In the newer areas, continuous inputs on different aspects of gender and WSH are required. The response of the various government partners and officials has been extremely positive and can be seen as strength of the approach adopted by CFAR.

Further, it is envisaged that the discussion on FSSM would help in moving beyond the narrow focus of just building toilets without the necessary consciousness for its treatment.

Given the intensity of the work and continuing challenges, some of the recommendations that flow from the midline assessment are:

- There is a need for in-depth and extensive engagement with community forums that are at a nascent stage in new areas especially Ward 59. Regular visits and handholding by members of Alor Disha can help in strengthening these groups.
- CFAR has initiated discussion on the issue of FSSM but it has to be brought centre stage at all levels. As suggested in the National Consultation it would benefit if perspective building exercises are planned at the municipality level with active participation of the Councilors. This could be done through workshops and knowledge camps.
- The members of Alor Disha want to formalize and establish the forum as a CBO. There is a need to discuss in depth the modalities including the advantages and disadvantages of this step as it will require taking several responsibilities.
- The involvement of men and boys in the newer intervention areas is an aspect that needs to be strengthened. Regular interaction with them would enable their participation in activities and help dispel the perception that urban sanitation is a 'women's issue'.

Finally, CFAR needs to discuss the withdrawal strategy both within the organisation and in the communities in which they are working so that appropriate mechanisms can be put in place at the community level to take the processes forward.



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