

Construction of Twin Pit Toilets, Ward 32

Ward: 32

Settlement: Sunder Nagar

Sunder Nagar, a 45 years old settlement on surveyed land in Jaipur. Since the settlement is on the surveyed land, there are a poor and at times no access to basic WASH services. Supply of water is one of the primary issues, the other being the households have insanitary toilets (single pit toilets) with no desludging done for years and there is no sewerage system in the settlement. The number of family members range from five to ten which makes the pits filled with sludge rapidly and at times the pits overflow on to the roads, since the pits are not desludged.

Majority of the population are auto drivers, rickshaw pullers, rag pickers, domestic workers and unorganized sector workers and they cannot afford for private desludging services (with the pits get filled quite often) and at the same time the ULB is taking years' time take a decision on constructing the sewer lines connected to treatment plan. There have been number of trials and pleas made, but they are all paused at the initial stage due to land issue as well as budgetary components.

These conditions in the settlement force the community to practice open defecation to slow down the process of filling the pits but most of the times the harmful practice pulls the women, children, elderly, adolescents, people living with disabilities into extreme safety issues, physical abuse, accidents etc. Especially for women and girls while they practice open defecation in the late evenings or nights and most of the times with this situation they force themselves to stop the urge of defecating till morning, which leads to extreme health issues.

The Community Management Committees and Single Window Forum, Male forum members of Sunder Nagar since 2020 have been conducting regular meetings and interactions with the Jaipur Municipal Corporation on desludging the pits for nominal price which they can afford and also with the community to sensitize them on not to practice open defecation and to get their pits desludged if the JMC agrees to do so with nominal price. With the continuous labour and efforts of the SWF members with the Deputy Commissioner - Motor Garage, the JMC has started sending cesspool vehicles to the settlement for desludging with a very nominal cost of Rs.100. Almost 80% of the households have availed these services in Sunder Nagar, which has been an another success story. However, with no hope of sewer line constructed in the settlement and the pits get filled rapidly and the threat in the monsoon, the SWF, CMC, Male forums need to know an alternate solution for this issue.

On 12 February 2021, the Single Window Forum with the Male and CMC members organized a small meeting at the settlement level to discuss an alternate solution as well as to plan on how the solution can be implemented with an action plan. CFAR has facilitated this meeting with local experts on sanitation.



SWF, CMC, Male Forum discussing the possible solutions on the sanitation gaps

“The pits are being desludged by the Municipal Corporation and it is a good sign. However, the pits get filled once in every month and we requested JMC to seek a solution. Mr. Pawan Kumar Lakhan, the Circle Sanitary Inspector mentioned that the land and the pits have become old and almost in the final stage of maintenance, which will be no longer of any use and keeps on filling every one or two weeks. The solution is that the twin pit system is introduced here and are constructed across the settlement so that issue of filling up and gaps in desludging can be addressed” – **Zubeida, SWF member, Amar –Male Forum Member.**

“There are technical issues too in the construction of the existing pits. People have dug 10-12 feet and constructed single pits but they are not concrete pits. They are just huge pits which are constructed with mud and did not follow any technical norms. People think if they dig for 10 feet, then there is no need to empty them which is a misconception. The sludge reaches the bottom of the pit and contaminates the soil, the ground water sources and most of the times the pits are broken, damaged due to the poor capacity and overflows” – **Rafiq Khan, Male Forum Member**

“Keeping the ill results of single pits and also day to day issues faced by the community, it would be better if we construct twin pits as the experts mentioned. It would involve some cost, but we need not to empty them every time, since the twin pit system turns the sludge to compost and also there is an arrangement for the waste water to be filtered and sent out. We have watched some information on the television and the CFAR team also provided orientation on the same. But what is more difficult is to sensitize the community on this technology, but we will do it for the betterment of the settlement” – **Zareena, SWF member, Abdul Shaheed, Male member**

“I have twenty members in my family. In which there are nine elder members and eleven children’s. My father is elderly and he stays at home, when the Single Window field team started working in Sundar Nagar area, I myself became part of the male forum and I sensitized other men to be part of the sanitation program. With Single Window Forum members, CMC members and fellow men, I have worked on the issue of water supply in my colony with the PHED and with the JMC in desludging the single pits of the entire settlement. As a member of the forum, we would take the responsibility of mobilizing the community through small group meetings and campaigns” – **Aslam Khan, Male Member**

The members have asked some questions on the twin pit toilet system:

- What is the cost involved in constructing the twin pit toilets?
Now that the IHHLs already been built, so we need to construct twin pit system and that will cost five to seven thousand per household
- What is the mechanism involved in twin pit system?
There will be two leach pits constructed side by side and are connected with each other and the toilet with a seal. While using the super structure, the seal is opened to first leach pit and once it is filled, then the seal is opened for the second leach pit.
- Do we need to desludge the leach pits regularly?
With the accurate measurements of 3x3 each leach pit is designed to get filled once in a year. While the second pit is getting filled, the sludge in the first pit decomposes to compost and is safe to remove which is used for agriculture and plants, following safe methods, the compost can be removed easily.
- Is the cost high to build the twin pits? Are there any operation and maintenance cost involved?
Initially, there might be little bit high cost involved, but the twin pits are effective and reduces operation and maintenance cost as well as the technique is highly reliable of maintained properly. One need not to desludge the pits as we do for single pits and in that case, it is user friendly and reduces the cost burden.

In the conclusion of the meeting, the SWF, CMC, Male forum members have collectively agreed that they will start the construction of the twin pits and as well as reach each and every household in the settlement and share their experience and knowledge on the technique so that the community in the settlement would come forward to adopt the system and free from desludging, O&M issues of the IHHLs. The members also requested if there is any model they can visit and see, and also to learn practically.

On 1 March 2021, the forum members visited the Jhalana settlement to see the twin pit toilets followed by one expert and masons to learn the technique and understand the system. The team also interacted with the community master trainers who have been trained on the twin pit toilet techniques.

On 3 March 2, 2021, Aslam, Rafiq, Zareena, Zubeida, Abdul Shaheed, Santosh have come forward to construct the twin pit toilets and started the process. The construction has been monitored by Mr. Lal Chand, trained mason from Jhalana settlement. This will be slowly scaled up to the entire settlement by the SWF and CMC members, however due to the lock down and pandemic restrictions the process has been paused and going in a slow pace. The process will be geared up once the locks down restrictions are lifted.



***Twin pits construction in
Sunder Nagar***

