

Formation of gender forums and gender subgroups in Narsapur

Summary:

Narsapur, a town in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, has taken various innovative approaches to provide equal representation of women in the decision-making, planning and implementation of sanitation activities. Narsapur Municipal Corporation (NMC) with support of Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) passed a council resolution for equal representation of women in the City Sanitation Task Force (CSTF) and formed a gender sub-group under the CSTF to focus on gender-related concerns in the city.

The gender sub-group guides and takes decisions to support gender equality related interventions, including sanitation improvements such as menstrual hygiene, inclusive access to community and public toilets, user-centric facilities within them, safety, and privacy for women. Additionally, a gender forum (GF) has been created in each ward to integrate women belonging to poor and vulnerable communities. The GF serves the key objective of providing voice and agency to the needs of the community and informing the municipal body about their concerns.

Objectives:

- To provide equal representation of women in the decision-making, planning and implementation of sanitation activities in Narsapur.
- To establish gender forums in all slum and vulnerable communities.
- To sensitize the communities on gender inclusive sanitation through GFs, including key topics like Faecal Sludge and Septage Management, Menstrual Hygiene Management, hand wash, health and personal hygiene.
- To ensure capacity development in the Municipality for inclusive planning, implementation and monitoring of sanitation services.

Key Stakeholders:

- Narsapur Municipal Corporation (NMC)
- Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI)
- City Sanitation Task Force (CSTF)
- Inter-sectionality-Informed Gender Mainstreaming Framework (IIGMF)
- Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP)
- Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR)
- Sanitation workers
- Community Organizers
- Women Self-help Groups (SHGS)
- Gender Forums
- Citizens of Narsapur

Implementation strategy:

- A detailed survey incorporating gender lens and inclusive approach was undertaken to cover the 12,000 households/properties in Narsapur with an aim to understand access to sanitation infrastructure and services as well as the attitudes and behaviors related to sanitation and hygiene practices (Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), 2019).
- NMC with support from ASCI carried out gender audits of all the sanitation infrastructure available in public spaces such as CT/PT and in schools.
- The audit was carried out to understand and identify gender-related barriers and gaps in the sanitation infrastructure that lead to disservice to women and girls. The audit covered all the 16 CTs, 6 PTs and all 31 government schools.
- For the CT/PTs, ASCI developed a gender audit checklist (with 38 indicators) to evaluate essential features under six categories - safety and privacy, menstrual hygiene management and hygiene requirements, accessibility provision, operation and maintenance, provision for caregivers and parents, and design specifications and standard dimensions of toilet units for PwDs. The checklist for assessing water and sanitation infrastructure in schools comprises 14 indicators.

Resource Utilization:

Capacity enhancement needs assessment has been conducted and a joint agenda for training has been developed. ULB officials and elected representatives are being sensitized on FSM through trainings, workshops, exposure visits. Assistant Engineer (Environmental) in each town has been nominated as Nodal Officer for coordinating and monitoring FSM related activities. Sanitation workers, community organizers and women self-help groups (SHGs) are also being capacitated through initiatives focused on safety, well-being and livelihoods. A Gender Resource Centre (GRC) has been established in Narsapur and Kovvur to ensure gender mainstreaming in sanitation supported by GFs at slum level. With help of MEMPA women SHGs have been actively involved in sanitation activities and School Children, youth clubs, local NGOs, Bulk Generators, RWAs and ULB sanitation staff were involved (Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), 2019).



Impact/ Outcomes:

- The gender audit has helped NMC identify the key issues and take necessary interventions to ensure financial sustainability for gender initiatives in sanitation; like allocating a gender budget of Rs. 5,00,000 for the year 2019-20.
- Additionally, NMC is providing sanitary pads and incinerators to all schools with adolescent girls using the municipal and CSR funds.
- Narsapur has encouraged entrepreneurship in emptying and transportation services. It is the only town in India to have a woman entrepreneur providing desludging services.

Challenges/Lessons Learnt

- The initiative of formation of gender subgroups under the CSTF can be adopted by all the Municipal Corporations to support CSTF's decisions on gender-related aspects including sanitation planning and improvements in the city in alignment with the National Urban Sanitation Policy.
- Workshops to involve women self-help groups in addressing sanitation, related gender issues, extending funding towards construction of toilets and promoting livelihoods/entrepreneurship would be crucial to develop gender inclusive sanitation action plan in cities (Reddy D. Y., 2019).

Replicability & Sustainability:

- Mechanisms to identify opportunities to empower women, poor and vulnerable and to engage them in sanitation planning, decision making and delivery have been now institutionalised which can be replicated to other cities (Reddy D. Y., 2019).

Source: (Narsapur Municipal Corporation , 2019).

Fact Sheet:

Thematic area	Gender Inclusive Sanitation Action Plan
First-year of the program	2016
Responsible institution	Narsapur Municipal Corporation and Administrative Staff College of India
Target audience	Women Self-help Groups (SHGS) and sanitation workers
Coverage	Narsapur, Andhra Pradesh