A FUTURE LAID TO WASTE

An introduction to inclusive sanitation
Imagine walking alone through the dark of night, finding your way through the narrow by-lanes of the slum, entering an open dumping ground and hurriedly looking for a nook to answer the call of nature. Menacing shadows dance around you and danger lurks around every corner. Tonight, you finish what you need to do and return unharmed. But tomorrow, you may not be as lucky.

50 million men, women and children in urban India, experience this fear everyday, with women and transgender individuals being affected disproportionately.

30% of marginalized women are violently assaulted every year while fulfilling their sanitation needs.
23% of young girls in India drop out of school every year due to lack of toilets.

For girls around the country, bright promising futures are extinguished as they come of age because their schools lack the right sanitation infrastructure to support their journey, forcing them to throttle their love for education and stay at home.

Those who do graduate and successfully enter the workplace are rewarded with no or extremely poor sanitation infrastructure making every day a nightmare. This is the depressing reality for women, transgender individuals, and the differently abled in India and where social inequality is intensified and reflected in access to basic sanitation facilities.
Though women are 50% of the entire urban sanitation workforce, nearly 100% of them are relegated to mostly cleaning jobs.

Women and transgender individuals in sanitation are restricted to underpaid, menial labour where they perform dangerous tasks every day with little training and inadequate protection.

Their role in the actual process of decision making, design, implementation and planning for services and facilities is minimal. This leaves them with limited option for growth or increase in income generation.
HOW CAN WE GET ONE STEP CLOSER TO MAKING INCLUSIVE SANITATION A REALITY?
Clean and usable toilet infrastructure is a basic human need. Access to sanitation services can be significantly improved if public and private entities come together to support the needs of the communities.
State governments & Urban Local Bodies

Individual Household Toilets (IHHTs):
Greater focus needs to be put on working closely with local governments on innovative construction methods which ensure IHHTs can be constructed even in clustered slum areas which have limited sewage system connectivity.

Affordability:
Developing innovative financing options ranging from subsidies, pay-per use, etc. to make sanitation affordable for all.

Private Sector & Funders

Construction and maintenance finance:
Private sector organizations, banks, NBFCs can provide short-term loans to community groups, such as SHGs or even individuals. However, the terms associated with these financial tools need to be conducive for the economically restricted households to payback.
Swachh Bharat Mission has taken large strides towards eliminating open defecation. Though there has been remarkable progress in the right direction, there still remains problems in the areas of architecture and usability, that arise from ignoring the needs of vulnerable communities.
State governments & Urban Local Bodies

**Infrastructure for the most vulnerable:**
It is critical to ensure availability of infrastructure in workplaces, public places, schools and other critical premises – in form of bars, handles, ramps and railing which ensure safety and access for the differently abled, the elderly, caregivers among others.

**Provisions for menstrual hygiene access and waste management:** Ensuring access of menstrual hygiene products for women, young girls, with an equal emphasis on adequate infrastructure in terms of separate and well-maintained toilets for women & girls and proper menstrual waste disposal mechanisms.

Private Sector & Funders

**Sustaining inclusive infrastructure and Systems:** Invest to shape and sustain an inclusive sanitation system in partnership with local governments – so that toilets can be safely and independently accessed by all.
In India, most of the sanitation workers are involved in low-grade, labor-intensive, and hazardous work. The need of the hour is to bolster women and transgender leadership and entrepreneurship to equip them with requisite skillsets and help them achieve increased income.
State governments & Urban Local Bodies

Creating inclusive livelihood opportunities: Create dignified livelihood opportunities and encourage entrepreneurship in women and under-represented communities across the sanitation value chain, ensuring that they feel empowered, involved and safe.

Social security and financial protection: Develop policies for the protection of sanitation workers which lay down clear guidelines for rights, promoting usage of gender inclusive personal protective equipments, wage structures, entitlements, restoration and rehabilitation measures.

Representation in decision making bodies: Improve women’s representation in city forums and encourage women’s leadership in urban local bodies. Facilitate community platforms like the City Sanitation Taskforce or Shehri Sehighbagita Manch where women can participate in decision-making.

Private Sector & Funders

Training and Skill development: Bridge the urgent need for skill and business training along with support to pave the way to scale up the model of community-based platforms like the SHG model in sanitation services.

Supporting women’s leadership: Champion the need to have women representation in local governments; routing support to programs in city/state governments with more women city leaders like mayors, counsellors, and presidents.
The National Faecal Sludge & Septage Management Alliance builds evidence and influences policy to ensure that the sanitation needs of women, the urban poor, persons with disability and other socially and economically marginalized groups are met across the sanitation value chain.

The Alliance is committed to amplify the voices of the vulnerable by understanding their challenges and proposing solutions based on robust research.

To understand how you can contribute to making inclusive sanitation a reality, write to us at secretariat@dasra.org and visit www.nfssmalliance.org.