Collaborating to Create an Enabling Environment for Inclusive and Safe Sanitation in India
Dear NFSSM Alliance Community,

This year, we witnessed the sanitation sector evolve to the next level. Beyond implementation of FSSM across different states, the need for adopting it was mainstreamed through frequent articles in credible publications. The journey towards mainstreaming inclusive and sustainable sanitation, and its impact is a long one for us; we witnessed several learnings and enriching experiences, making it a memorable one.

In the last few months, the sanitation sector has seen commendable initiatives and developments in key focus areas like technology and innovation, safety of sanitation workers, infrastructural growth, capacity building, across various states. The 30+ member organizations of the NFSSM Alliance have worked in close collaboration with national and state governments, provided recommendations for policies and supported communities to ensure a dignified livelihood for them.

As we aim for inclusive, safe and sustainable sanitation, we are enthusiastic about overcoming our challenges and transforming them into valuable lessons. We believe this will help us grow as a collective voice in the sanitation space. While embarking on this journey, we are fortunate to be able to share with you through this newsletter all the progress that we have made in the last quarter while working in collaboration towards strengthening inclusive, sustainable and resilient sanitation service delivery.

**Priority Areas**

The members of NFSSM Alliance work in various sanitation champion states in the country on mainstreaming inclusive and safe sanitation and FSSM. In the last quarter, some common priority areas have emerged in the work they have led. Ground-breaking progress has been made in these priority areas and we have made an effort to effectively highlight it across states in this edition of the newsletter.
The Power of Collaborative Action: Journey of the NFSSM Alliance in India was curated to highlight the impact the Alliance has created across the country in policy recommendations, community-level interventions, infrastructural strengthening and inclusive sanitation, since its inception in 2016.

The Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) Primer developed by the NFSSM Alliance was released in collaboration with the MoHUA at the launch of the National Behaviour Change Communication Framework for Garbage Free Cities. The Primer aligns with the government’s vision of shifting from only IEC (information, education, and communication) tools to SBCC (social and behaviour change communication) and aids the on-ground implementation of behaviour change to achieve inclusive sanitation outcomes. The Primer will be further utilized as a resource for SBCC Capacity Building Workshops, aimed to equip the state Technical Support Units (TSUs) and Alliance members with SBCC tools and techniques, and support them to plan for, implement and monitor SBCC campaigns.

Imagine learning about better sanitation solutions through interactive board games and creative visualisations! The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) came up with this brilliant idea and created innovative models of training to build capacity of sector practitioners, facilitate and influence FSSM discussions and experiment with solutions at the city and state level. The result was an interactive board game SANCITY which helped practitioners to imagine and visualise real-world FSTP site layouts across diverse topographies. The game was launched during the Smart Cities, Smart Urbanization 2022 event by MoHUA, and developed with support from NIUA.
Odisha Lays The Path For Sanitation Workers’ Safety & Rights

Odisha’s journey has been nothing less than remarkable towards various key focus areas, specifically safety and rights of sanitation workers. The state worked collectively with a diverse set of stakeholders to build capacity of ULBs, integrate digital and innovative methods of data collection and strengthen sanitation infrastructure across cities.

In a pioneering step towards ensuring safer working environment for sanitation workers, the Government of Odisha reduced the working hours of Grade-I Core Sanitation Workers, who are involved in hazardous jobs, by two hours. The initiative is a part of the GARIMA Scheme launched by the Housing & Urban Development Department, Odisha, with active support from Urban Management Centre (UMC). UMC has been working in collaboration to integrate the sanitation workers registry, track work performed by sanitation workers, necessitate site audits by duty supervisors, etc. to ensure worker safety in the FSM system in the state.

Odisha reached a significant milestone of operationalising 100 Septage Treatment Plants in the State, reaching a total of 105 plants currently functional across 99 cities with a combined capacity to treat 1767 KLD of faecal sludge and septage daily.

To foster cross-learning, the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) in collaboration with the Odisha Water Academy (OWA) organised a two-day Twinning Programme & Exposure Visit for officials from Uttarakhand to learn best practices in Septage Management in Odisha. The attendees also visited the Septage Treatment Plants (SeTPs) to understand the treatment process and plant management, to be able to integrate the learnings in Uttarakhand.

With the intention of building capacities of local administrative officials, Odisha organized 2-day workshop for newly elected Mayors and Chairpersons on the functions and initiatives in water, housing, sanitation and FSM. As a way forward, the government has decided to hold annual convention for Mayors and Chairpersons.

The scheme was launched on 11th September, 2020, by the Government of Odisha to ensure the safety & dignity of core sanitation workers dealing with faecal sludge, septic tanks, sewers etc. It aims to standardize and regulate delivery of sanitation services, build an ecosystem of safe sanitation work, ensure social security of skilled sanitation workers, capacity building and behavior change of sanitation workers, service seekers and ULB officials across all cities in Odisha.
Uttarakhand took giant strides towards achieving sustainable and safe sanitation by strengthening existing infrastructure, and building capacity of a diverse set of stakeholders across the value chain.

Around 92 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) out of 100 constituted the Septage Management Cell (SMC) in alignment with the Uttarakhand State Septage Management Protocol.

50+ engineers across Ganga towns in Uttarakhand were trained on co-treatment of septage by the Sanitation Capacity Building Platform (SCBP). SCBP also actively supported in building capacity of 23+ faculties from universities across Maharashtra on Integrated Wastewater and Septage, and leading the education and research on non-sewered sanitation including Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM).

4 cities of Uttarakhand - Haridwar, Rishikesh, Srinagar and Devprayag have been sanctioned funds for co-treatment at existing Sewage Treatment Plants STPs by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

NIUA, Uttarakhand, in collaboration with Odisha Water Academy (OWA) organised a 2-Day Training Programme & Exposure visit to spread awareness on Odisha’s best practices in Septage Management and effective utilisation of Septage Treatment Plants (SeTPs).

Dasra in collaboration with BMGF conducted a CWIS Workshop to initiate discussions on what it takes for a city to implement CWIS with members of the NFSSM Alliance. The workshop focused on components of CWIS, identification of national priorities to scale it, goal-visioning for state-wide saturation, data systems for advancing CWIS goals and determination of indicators. 8 Alliance partners attended the workshop.
Telangana Focuses On City-wide Inclusive Sanitation Practices

Telangana adopted a holistic approach towards sanitation in the state, with a focus on implementing inclusive sanitation practices across cities. With collaborative action at the forefront, the state adopted a City-Wide Inclusive Sanitation framework, strengthened capacity of various stakeholders across the value chain and took pioneering steps towards promoting innovations and start-ups in the sector.

After Warangal’s successful implementation of the CWIS framework, the Government of Telangana State (GoTS), led by the Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department, adapted it for all 143 ULBs. Inclusion, safety, institutional strengthening, innovations & sustainability were prioritized. GoTS and the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), who are knowledge partners in this, collaboratively conducted an orientation program on CWIS for ESU members from the 20 ULBs, with over 100 delegates participating.

Over 225 city practitioners from India and Southeast Asia graduated from the Online Leadership Development Programme by ASCI in partnership with the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI). The course provides a step-by-step approach to safe, inclusive, and sustainable management of sanitation in South Asian cities and provides details on the CWIS. CWIS aims to ensure everyone has access to sustainable and safe sanitation services, focuses on service provision and an enabling environment.

The WASH Innovation Hub (WIH), a first-of-its-kind initiative to promote start-ups and innovators in water, sanitation, and hygiene sectors (WASH) launched by MA&UD and GoTS, in partnership with ASCI, currently has a network of 700+ innovators/start-ups; MoUs have been signed with 116 of them.

Beyond identifying and nurturing innovative WASH solutions, WIH also fosters the INK@WASH initiative. It is a unique platform to promote collaboration and partnerships between start-ups/innovators, mentors, academic institutions, non-profits, funders, and state/city governments.

To ensure the protection and welfare of sanitation workers who are exposed to high-risk situations, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB), in partnership with ASCI, initiated “Gauravam”: a diverse group of members for the laying down of inclusive and sustainable safety rules and SOP for ULBs.

The Knowledge Management portal ‘Swachh FSSM’ developed to meet the knowledge needs of ULBs and strengthen the CWIS framework in Telangana was launched by Shri. K.T. Rama Rao (Hon’ble Minister of Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department). The portal has been developed by ASCI with support from NFSSM Alliance and ACIES.
Tamil Nadu championed the efforts of ensuring a safe and dignified work environment for sanitation workers through various collaborative efforts, and continued to amplify the need for representation of marginalized communities in decision-making positions across the sanitation value chain. The state with its holistic approach initiated relevant, more focused dialogues on inclusive sanitation.

100+ elected women councillors of the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) attended an event on ‘Urban Sanitation & Gender’ organized by TNUSSP. The session focused on amplifying the role of women leaders in enabling inclusive sanitation, highlighting the need for collaborative action, building evidence for change across the state and framing policies to bridge the gender divide across the sanitation process. It was also attended by the Commissioner of GCC.

A first aid training was conducted for 23 Desludging Operators (DSOs) in Trichy. The training highlighted high-risk workplace scenarios, practical sessions on preventive and safety methods, and effective first-aid safety measures. The Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS) led CWIS programme facilitated the training, and the DSOs were also provided with exclusively designed first-aid kits.

Another part of the CWIS programme focused on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) with representatives of 50 Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The session highlighted key focus areas such as information on menstrual disorders, nutrition deficiency, choices of absorbents and linkages between menstruation and overall reproductive health.

An orientation programme on FSM, safe disposal of faecal sludge, and the process to obtain their licence for desludging operations was also conducted for 17 DSOs by TNUSSP, under the guidance of the Municipal Chairman and Municipal Commissioner.

City Wide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) aims to ensure everyone has access to sustainable and safe sanitation services and focuses on service provision and an enabling environment. It promotes a range of solutions—both onsite and sewered, centralized or decentralized—basis the growing needs of cities across the world. Currently, India is home to 4 out of 8 CWIS cities in the world – Narsapur, Trichy, Wai and Warangal.
Cities are in an unenviable position as when it does not rain, we cry because of drought and when it rains, we cry because of floods.

- Sunita Narain
  (Director, Centre for Science and Environment, India)

With more than 50% of the country’s population moving to urban centers in the next decade, it is crucial that cities are ready for this influx. One key parameter of equipping our cities is to warranty safe sanitation facilities along with a plan for disaster resilience keeping in mind the realities of climate change.

Dasra, in collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation hosted a roundtable discussion on 'Climate Change and Sanitation' to initiate relevant dialogues on building resilient cities. Brian Arbogast (Director of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Program, BMGF), along with key thought leaders from the NFSSM Alliance such as Sunita Narain (Centre for Science and Environment, India), Yamini Aiyar (Centre for Policy Research), Hitesh Vaidya (National Institute of Urban Affairs), Anju Dwivedi (Centre for Policy Research), Anindita Mukherjee (Centre for Policy Research) and Kalimuthu Arumugam (WASH Institute) and Srikhant Viswanathan (Janaagraha) came together to mainstream the discourse around climate change and sanitation. Additionally, representatives like Nitai Mehta (Praja) and Abinash Mohanty (Council on Energy, Environment and Water), also joined in to share their perspectives on the interlinkage b/w climate and sanitation, leveraging the learnings from the WSH space to build collaborative action towards climate change and utilizing visual tools to sensitize and initiate relevant conversations with policymakers.
Social Media Amplification Aimed To Build Visibility

6 Targeted campaigns & 30% New followers gained across social media platforms.
Engaged with 20+ Alliance members & 100+ Stakeholders.

#Sabkahaqswachhta Campaign
Calls For Inclusive Sanitation

It is an ongoing campaign that aims to amplify and mainstream narratives on city-wide inclusive sanitation through elaborating on technical aspects and community voices. The campaign was launched with a video created to understand the various components of inclusive sanitation, along with the impact of actioning on inclusive sanitation on other SDG goals such as gender, climate action and livelihoods.

Media Spotlight on Mainstreaming Inclusive Sanitation and its Interlinkages

70+ media stories on mainstreaming sanitation were published in top-tier national and regional publications like Forbes India, Firstpost, NDTV, Times of India, Business India, Dainik Bhaskar, Dainik Jagran, Lokmat- Hello Mumbai, Kesari, Adab Hyderabad, DNA etc. Priority narratives like Inclusive Sanitation, interlinkage between sanitation, gender and climate change, importance of technology and innovation, sanitation workers safety etc. were covered. Highlights from the coverage are:

Why private philanthropic funding needs to urgently shift focus to sanitation

Forbes

- Neera Nundy
  Co-founder and Partner, Dasra

Integrated Urban Water Management

- Krishna Rao
  Advisor, Program and Management, WASH Institute

Wai’s phenomenal work in scheduled desludging

covered by 19 regional publications including

Opinion: The importance and need for citywide scheduled desludging

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- Assim Mansuri
  Senior Program Lead, Center for Water and Sanitation (CNAS), CEPT UNIVERSITY
- Dhruv Bhaskar
  Senior Program Lead, CNAS
- Arwa Bharmal
  Senior Program Lead, CNAS

Opinion: World Environment Day Special - Engendering Climate Change Action

NDTV

- Anju Dwivedi
  Associate Fellow, Center for Policy Research
- Dhruv Bhaskar
  Senior Research Associate, Center for Policy Research