



Wai Swachhta Mahotsav 2022



CWAS CENTER FOR WATER AND SANITATION

CRDF CEPT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

CEPT UNIVERSITY

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Wai Municipal Council (WMC) with support of Center for Water and Sanitation (CWAS) at CEPT University has successfully implemented its Faecal Sludge and Septage Management plan in the city. It is the first city in India to implement scheduled desludging of septic tanks and complete its first cycle of 3 years. It is also one of the few cities in the country to have a state-of-art Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) where all the collected sludge is safely treated before reusing. Wai has been declared ODF++ by Government of India and has sustained this status through regular revalidations. With this, Wai has emerged as a 'model town' for Citywide Inclusive sanitation (CWIS) and acts as light-house for many other cities which are in their journey towards safe sanitation.

In order to share this moment of pride with all the citizens, WMC with support of CWAS had organized a 'Swachhata Mahotsav' from 16th to 18th of February 2022. During these three days, different groups of citizens and stakeholders such as women SHG members, students, teachers, WMC staff members etc. were taken to the FSTP site and were explained the overall sanitation journey of the city as well as the operations of the FSTP. Large number of participants attended the 3-day Mahotsav and learnt about the achievements of Wai from its FSSM journey.

Day 1: The first day of the Swachhta Mahotsav was attended by women SHGs, teachers and students from ITI colleges. At the FSTP site, the participants were first received by the CWAS team who gave them a brief background about the sanitation value chain and Wai's FSSM journey. As Wai is one of the 8 global CWIS (Citywide Inclusive Sanitation) cities, the participants were also briefed on the various inclusivity related initiatives of the city and its progress. A movie on Wai's Inclusive Sanitation Model was also shown to all the participants. While discussing about the sanitation related initiatives, the SHG members were oriented about the gender inclusivity aspects of it. Future opportunities to get formally engaged with WMC were also discussed with them.





After this, the FSTP site in charge from Tide Technocrats took the participants around the FSTP and explained the operations in detail. The visit concluded with brief discussion with them to know their experience. The ITI teachers as well as the SHGs expressed that from this visit, they could understand the sanitation related initiatives of their own city for the first time and that these visits should also be arranged for their other students/SHG members.

Day 2: The second day of the Mahotsav received a great response from students and teachers of both private as well as government schools. It was attended by students (mostly from the 9th grade) and teachers. The CWAS team members explained Wai's FSSM journey to the participants and conducted an interactive discussion with them to know their views. During the discussion, it was found that the degree of awareness about FSSM amongst the students largely varied. While most of the students were not aware of where the Faecal matter and the water goes after flushing, few recalled that they have received the scheduled desludging service and that they know where their septic tank is located. Interestingly, students were found to be curious to know more about the reuse of the end product, energy consumption and air pollution as a result of the treatment, process of wastewater treatment, the chemicals used in the process etc. Most of the teachers as well as students found this tour informative and a different learning experience. They admitted that they had never ever visited a treatment plant (solid or liquid waste) before. The teachers inquired if they can also get their students from the other grades at the FSTP site for such a visit.





The organizers not only informed the students about Wai's FSSM journey but also encouraged them to pursue education and choose career options which would empower them to protect the environment.

Day 3: The third day of Swachhata Mahotsav was attended by officials from all the 7 departments of Wai Municipal Council and Rotary Club Members of Wai. The WMC officials from departments other than the sanitation department were aware about Wai's FSSM program but did not know about the technicalities and details about the implementation. After the visit, they appreciated all the efforts taken by WMC and its partners and the outcome achieved. They also had questions related to the impact of the initiative on environment, challenges in the implementation process, solutions for the same etc. They also suggested that the by-products from the Faecal sludge treatment should help them earn good revenues in the future. The rotary club members too appreciated the work and acknowledged that they had received the scheduled desludging services. They emphasized on efficient reuse of the by-products and some of them expressed interest to buy the biochar for their personal use. They suggested that more such event should be conducted to inform the citizens about city's achievements and future plans. The president of the Rotary club also expressed interest to work collaboratively for sanitation related activities in the future.





Wai's Swachhata Mahotsav provided a platform to the citizens to interact with the respective field experts on a one-on-one basis and understand their possible contribution to improve the citywide sanitation. For most of them, it was a first of its kind experience where they came to know many new aspects of city-level sanitation. The Mahotsav was also discussed in the city as it made a news in the local newspapers. WMC and all the key stakeholders take pride in the achievements so far and are motivated to sustain it in the future.



Key learnings:

1. Organizing such 'Swachhata Mahotsavs' is an effective way of citizens engagement.
2. It not only informs them about the different initiatives undertaken by the Municipal Council but also increases the possibility of them accepting the services through informed decisions.
3. Inviting groups of different age, background, occupation etc. is important as everyone can contribute as well as benefit differently from the visits.
4. Involving stakeholders like industrialists, community-based organization, local financial institutions, SHGs etc. can help in resource mobilization or create a prospect of future engagement.

Way forward: WMC is looking forward to host many such interactive and learning sessions at its resource park in the immediate future for different stakeholders of the city. These could be actively planned by the WMC or on request of schools, colleges, SHGs etc. Being a model town for many cities, WMC has also initiated to disseminate the work themselves and is inviting other cities of Maharashtra to visit Wai.



The Center for Water and Sanitation (CWAS) is a part of CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) at CEPT University. CWAS undertakes action-research, implementation support, capacity building and advocacy in the field of urban water and sanitation. Acting as a thought catalyst and facilitator, CWAS works closely with all levels of governments - national, state and local to support them in delivering water and sanitation services in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.