



Project Sammaan

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Sammaan is an urban sanitation initiative dedicated to redesigning and improving facilities for slum communities across India. The initiative is being piloted in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack with the aim to replicate it in other cities, if successful.

The objective is to rethink the current models of sanitation facilities and design a new programmatic infrastructure and physical structure that instills a sense of dignity while addressing issues affecting sanitation practices in India and encouraging community members to stop defecating in the open.

Over 100 of the re imagined facilities will be built and a dedicated research team will analyze the qualitative and quantitative impact they have on the communities in which they're built. The results of this intensive research will be shared in an open-sourced toolkit that will allow for replication in cities across India and beyond.

Project Sammaan was born out of the research conducted for the Potty Project, an in-depth design research study focused on all aspects of the current sanitation models employed in urban slum communities throughout India.

FEATURE: ENSURING SAMMAAN'S CONSTRUCTION

The sanitation crisis is indeed a multi-dimensional problem - a realisation that gets reinforced and becomes more stark as we move through every new phase of the project. And I am not referring only to the behavioural, demand-led challenges in sanitation but to infrastructure development issues and the economics of it all.

Until now the biggest challenge for us was to get the tenders released - a task that required multiple, inter-dependent approvals and processes to be tackled starting with sites, design, sewage, financials, standard operating procedures of the Government, elections so on and so forth. One of the biggest achievements of the project team in the last six months has been the successful release of nearly all the toilets being proposed; 27 Public toilets of Bhubaneswar were released in early December 2013 and 32 community toilets of Cuttack in early Feb 2014. The remaining 60 community toilets of Bhubaneswar are due to go under the hammer any time in the next two weeks.

Unfortunately though, the Government has not received a single qualified bid on any of these toilet tenders. Both the public and community toilets had to be re-tendered and are currently on the e-tender system of the two municipal corporations. To be honest, we aren't very hopeful of a positive response this time around either and are trying to figure an alternative - something that will require brainstorming at a more strategic level.



The problem of a tender going unsolicited is symptomatic of a deeper problem especially when you look at the construction and engineering players that exist in smaller cities like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. While designing the tenders, we were careful not to leave it open to contractors who did not have the necessary technical competence to deliver these toilets at the level of quality that the project demanded. Toilets are, by no measure, a hi-tech piece of infrastructure and Project Sammaan designs have used locally available materials and building processes wherever possible. Even so the most common problems of failure in community sanitation are choked sewer lines, broken floor slabs, incorrect

floor levels and gradients - these are all minor technical aspects that, if executed incorrectly, can irrevocably and unfavourably impact the end user experience. The nature of construction activity is such that several of these technicalities can't be fixed by the book - site specific peculiarities require on the spot decisions to be made which will ensure that construction parameters are suitably modified so that some critical UX outcomes are not compromised.



Ensuring quality construction is therefore not a major ask - but one that relies almost solely on attention to detail and robust project management protocols. In our understanding and for the given project context, we believe it demands capable engineering and site supervision teams, rigorously implemented project management processes and an experience of managing construction activities that will be distributed over the length and breadth of a city. It must also be noted that the master-planning and design of Project Sammaan toilets has happened through lead architects and technical experts that are spread across the country. While the dependence on these agencies during the construction phase is minimal, it is reasonable to expect that several technical issues will be resolved real time and for which certain back and forth between the construction partner and these agencies will be necessary.

And that is where we believe we have faced problems in securing qualified proposals for construction. The level of competence of local contractors, who are also the players who most often bid for these tenders, is limited. Most infrastructure projects tendered by the Government, especially in the sanitation sector, are stand alone projects which are implemented by smaller contractors. Large sanitation projects are mostly beyond the purview of typical contractors who work in this sector.

Bigger infrastructure projects, which span different sectors like roads, bridges, institutional buildings etc follow a more classical PPP (Public-Private-Partnership) model wherein the contractor is awarded the project on a

turnkey basis - of master planning, designing and operationalising the facility. Project Sammaan finds itself in the middle of this spectrum - wherein it is large enough to be beyond the ambit of local contractors and yet isn't at a scale that would merit the interest of more professional construction firms. On the other hand, it does not follow a PPP model either since Project Sammaan is commissioned only to provide technical assistance to the Government.

Given this conundrum, we have initiated a few measures that may throw up some viable alternatives. First and foremost is a brainstorm with the top Government bureaucracy to understand if there are workarounds or recommendations on how this gap may be plugged. We are soon to have that conversation and will keep the community updated of what comes out of it. The other has been to reach out to the top construction firms in the country - the likes of Larsen and Toubro, IL&FS, Jaypee Group and some other tier-2 but pan-India firms like GKCPL and others. The project size of approximately INR 30cr may not find favor with these firms most of whom have a threshold of approximately INR 100cr to be commercially interested in tendering for such projects.

However we believe this may be an opportunity to tap into the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) mandates of these firms. We have reached out to these firms with a request to consider bidding for this project through their CSR initiatives if not mainstream businesses. The case we are making is around the long term goal of Project Sammaan, i.e. to replicate a successful implementation of this model across other Indian cities. Enough has been said about the abysmal state of sanitation in Indian cities and villages alike. As a CSR collaboration, this may be one of the most significant contributions that a corporation can make towards India's development goals.

Scaling Project Sammaan is also one of the most important outcomes which has necessitated large investments by the donors in rigorous evaluation methodologies. If we can convince some of these corporations to look at the long term vision of the project, it may very well be the first step in galvanising a large private sector for which sanitation has mostly been a blind spot. This is also, potentially, an important advocacy task that faces the sanitation sector - for once not within Government corridors but within the private and commercial sector that is, in any case, invested in building the country's infrastructure deficit.



BLOG HIGHLIGHT:

“DEVELOPING SAMMAAN’S TOOLKIT” BY BABITHA GEORGE



While there has been a considerable amount of activity in the past few months on the tendering front for the toilet facilities in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, we have also simultaneously started working on the toolkit. The toolkit is an essential part of Project Sammaan, aiming to put together guidelines for effective sanitation interventions in low-income urban contexts, based on our own experiences and learnings from Project Sammaan.

Through the detailed design exercises and fine-tuning our understanding of what works and what doesn't work, an essential outcome of the project will be the toolkit, that will include a set of "blueprints" for future infrastructure projects that will be maximally effective and with minimal per toilet costs. In addition, the sanitation solutions determined to be effective through rigorous randomized controlled trial based evidence will be featured in the project's toolkit for policy-makers who might be interested in replicating a packaged model of successful interventions elsewhere in South Asia. This will act as a resource for sanitation stakeholders throughout South Asia and, where applicable, any urban developing country setting.

The toolkit thus becomes as important to the success of Project Sammaan, as the successful implementation and running of the facilities in the communities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, since the project also seeks to enable the building of scalable models that can improve the urban sanitation situation in other cities as well.

Shreya Chakravarty, who is currently pursuing her Postgraduate Diploma in Graphic Design at NID, Ahmedabad has joined us to work on her diploma project which will be around Version 1 of the toolkit. This version will focus on the work-streams that Quicksand is anchoring- namely the hardware aspects of the project, including converting user insights from the Potty Project

to design principles and product features, as well as learnings on Standard Operating Protocols in projects of this kind, gleaned from interactions with the government and experts, particularly during the hardware tendering process.

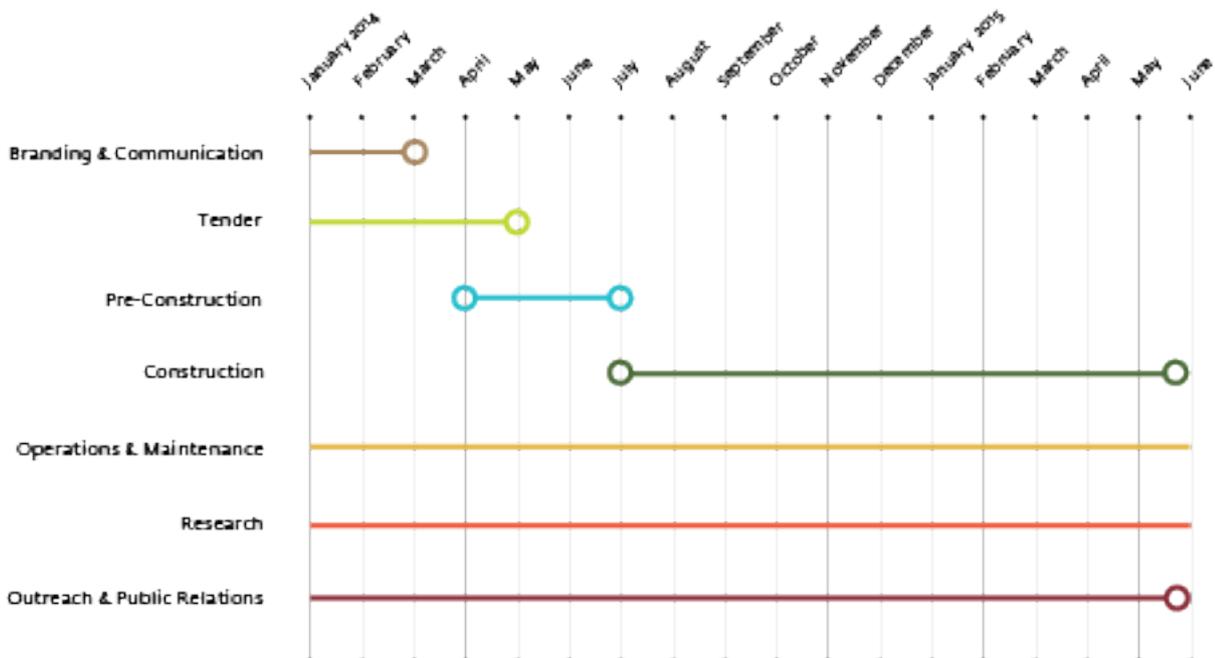
The intent is to build an effective decision-making tool, that will help government staff and private entities involved in infrastructure development projects of this kind, to be able to understand and consider the community users as key stakeholders. The toolkit would also help them evaluate various elements of the complex dynamics that are inherent to any attempt to solve the sanitation crisis and make optimal decisions.

Over the past couple of months, Shreya and other Quicksand folks have researched various other toolkits, decision-making tools, project management tools as well as product development tools. We have also built a detailed timeline as well as various phases of the project, as we felt that mapping out the various work-streams in detail would be immensely helpful for those responsible, to understand key activities and their scope, as well as identity current & required competencies to be able to carry out these activities well.

We are simultaneously working on converting user insights and design principles into a model that can aid further exploration and decision-making by stakeholders. We are also actively exploring and brainstorming around formats of presentation, ranging from print publications and decision-making cards to online tools that can help evaluate various scenarios. Shreya aims to finish at least a few phases of the toolkit in the next few months and we'll share more of our learnings and deliverables from this project in the months to come. By honestly examining and learning from the Project Sammaan journey, we hope that we'll be able to create this toolkit that can lead towards a sustainable model for urban slum sanitation and that will be helpful for the very diverse stakeholders who currently work in this sector.

Post Quicksand's work on the toolkit, J-PAL will be responsible for converting learnings from the software phase of the project into the toolkit for use by stakeholders, as well as disseminate learnings from the Randomized Control Trial experiment

TIME LINE



MILESTONE OVERVIEW

To date

- Public Toilet tender release in Bhubaneswar
- Community Toilet tender release in Cuttack

Upcoming

- Tendering of Community Toilets in Bhubaneswar
- Contracts for the Cuttack Community Toilets and Bhubaneswar Public Toilets to be awarded
- Pre-construction dialogues with communities in Cuttack to commence
- Pricing model and O&M framework finalized

April calendar of events

- Opening of the re-tenders for PTs in Bhubaneswar and CTs in Cuttack
- Pre-construction dialogues with communities in Cuttack to commence
- Site surveys in Cuttack complete
- Finalization of the Sammaan facility identity and logo

WORKSTREAMS

A. Liaising & Capacity Building

There were two bids for the CMC tender and the bid documents will be opened after the model code of conduct due to election is lifted. Selection of preferred bidder will depend on their technical capabilities to handle the project as per requirement. Once its been checked and whoever qualifies will be given the work order to start the construction work. The tender for CT in BMC will be released in the next month.

Activities in April include:

- Facilitating technical sanction and tender release for Bhubaneswar's Community Toilets

B. Research/Operations & Maintenance

On the O&M front, we have continued working on finalizing the Management Framework. We have created drafts of various sections of the O&M Management Framework and are in the process of validating and refining them with on-ground inputs.

Discussions with various organisations operating in the sanitation space were held around sustainable O&M models. We are following up on the discussions by visiting project locations for understanding working models. Key insights from these models will be incorporated into our O&M framework. In the light of the recent challenges in construction tendering, we will have to re-look the tendering plan for private management of toilet O&M. We will look at revising the tendering criteria and the clustering of sites.

Activities in April include:

- Detailing out the implementation of the various pricing and habit formation experiments.
- Begin baseline data collection activities in Cuttack.

C. Tender & Construction

There were no bidders for the CTs in Cuttack of PTs in Bhubaneswar, and the tenders were refloated. Permission of land use for construction of 14 PTs and 28 CTs in Bhubaneswar was accorded by GA department. Site survey and soil testing of 21 sites in Cuttack was completed. Correction of 60 CTs BoQs with final packages complete.

Activities in April include:

- All the tenders will hopefully be complete and work awarded to contractors
- PMC will be in position to supply drawings and supervise the work

- All design of structures and plumbing will be completed and drawings issued

D. Architecture & Design

The month of March was exceptionally busy for the Architecture & Design team. The data from the site surveys in Cuttack needed not only to be reviewed, but the findings also needed to be incorporated into the drawings, which led to a lot of revisions.

The month of April will be spent finalizing these revisions, while also formatting and checking signage drawings submitted by Codesign. The team will also need to finish the electrical and plumbing take-offs for Bhubaneswar's Community Toilets and complete all of the working drawings for the facilities in both cities.

Activities in April include:

- Revising plumbing dwgs and structural dwgs for CTs Cuttack
- Submitting Working Drawings 3 for review

E. Outreach & Public Relations

The month of March was largely spent preparing for, and participating in, the "Reinvent the Toilet Fair" hosted in Delhi by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Similar to its predecessors, the fair gathered practitioners working on grants from the foundation in the Water & Sanitation sector to share their work. The Quicksand team designed the space and also spent the three days at the fair discussing Project Sammaan with a bevy of grantees and other invited VIPs.

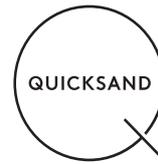
The case study footage for Yale University was finalized and the last of the interviews transcribed. The team at Yale can now move forward with finalizing the case study so that students of the School of Management there can study the Sammaan experience.

Now that both of these activities are completed, the focus can shift back to the basics: adding content to the blog, creating print collateral and videos to promote the initiative.

Activities in April include:

- Adding content to the project blog
- Creating additional videos and print collateral promoting Sammaan





The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is a network of 70 affiliated professors around the world who are united by their use of Randomized Evaluations (REs) to answer questions critical to poverty alleviation. J-PAL's mission is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is based on scientific evidence.

J-PAL is the primary grantee and the project's principal investigators and are designing and conducting the monitoring and evaluation for the facilities:

- » Business model development
- » Operations and Maintenance modelling
- » Project evaluation

A multi-disciplinary innovation consultancy that places user-centered design principles at the core of every innovation effort. The studio has successfully delivered on several new services, products, brands and developmental strategies, creating both measurable social and business impact.

Quicksand is responsible for project management as well as anchoring the hardware design process for the project:

- » User-experience research and corresponding hardware design
- » Design, branding and communication project management
- » Project toolkit and website development



The municipal corporations of the pilot cities Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. These entities are tasked with providing services in sectors such as Health & Sanitation, Slum Development, Urban Planning, and Waste Management to improve the quality of life of their respective citizenries.

The local municipal corporations are key partners in the project and aid in the facilitation of its various components:

- » Provide funding for construction and infrastructure
- » Site selection assistance
- » Identify contractors for construction
- » Ensure regular water, electricity, and sewerage facilities for the toilets
- » Manage sewerage and waste treatment systems
- » Oversee functioning of facilities through a PMO until capacity-building with the BMC is complete
- » Provision of temporary sanitation facilities
- » Ensuring long-term sustainability of the project

The Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) is an Indian organization committed to working and partnering with marginal communities. It has expertise in conducting research, process documentation, capacity building and strengthening advocacy by leveraging media and networking to shape and impact policy issues related to urban poor.

CFAR is actively involved in facilitating community interactions in the field:

- » Social mapping of each slum
- » Community engagement and dialogue during design and construction phases
- » Facility management training for community members



CTRAN Consulting Manages large, complex development projects, providing the right mix of program management and technical assistance.

They are the one-point contact for interfacing with various government agencies:

- » Establish a Project Management Office within the two municipal corporations to ensure continued, and future, use and grievance redressal of the facilities
- » Facilitate meetings with government representatives
- » Assist in land approval process
- » Set up and operate the help line that ensures proper functioning of the facilities

An award-winning consultancy internationally recognized as amongst the top emerging practices in the world with a commitment towards delivering innovative, context specific designs that encourage sustainable lifestyles. Anagram Architects is a full spectrum spatial design consultancy firm that offers expertise in urbanism, architecture, interior design, and research.

They are leading the architectural design of the 119 facilities:

- » Provide site-specific architectural designs
- » Consult on waste management issues
- » Oversee facility construction

CODESIGN

A brand and communication design studio whose expertise lies in bridging the gap between product and service offerings and what end-users really care about, with communication that is meaningful and relevant.

Codesign is the communication and brand consultant for Project Sammaan.

- » Ensure facility related branding and communication is contextually relevant and encourages behaviour change and adoption
- » Develop the facility identity and corresponding collateral that promotes larger goals of sanitation and health for better life
- » Creating facility signage that is functional and facilitates access and experience

CONCLUSION



The light at the end of the tunnel continues to grow larger as work on the construction tenders in both cities nears completion. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the contracts for the PTs in Bhubaneswar and the CTs in Cuttack may very well be awarded by the time the next newsletter is released, with those for Bhubaneswar's CTs not too far behind.

This leaves a great deal of work to be completed by all partners: site-specific working drawings need to be finalized and reviewed, a Project Management Consultancy firm needs to be brought on board to oversee construction, pre-construction dialogues with community members need to be conducted, facility identity and associated signage needs completing, and, all the while, the non-government and government teams need to be in constant communication to ensure everything goes smoothly and on time.

At the risk of sounding redundant, it is imperative that those working on the project approach their work with the understanding that they are not working in a vacuum; each person's efforts impact the overall progress of Sammaan and any delays in one stream will negatively impact all of the others. This has been a long, arduous journey, but construction will commence soon and the communities that so desperately need them will finally have functional, hygienic facilities.



QUICKSAND