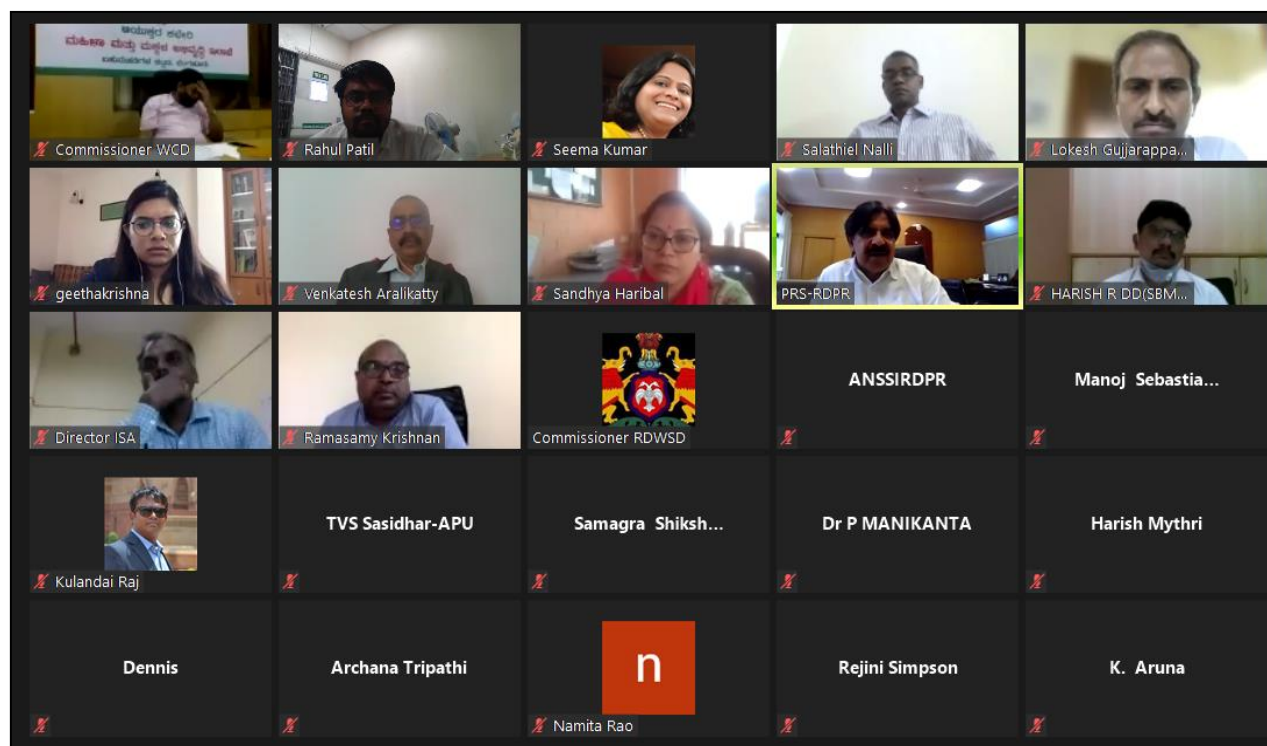


Report on Karnataka WASH Coalition Virtual Meeting

Background

In line with Government's commitment to achieve sustainable Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) outcomes and SDG Goal 6, many flagship programs like SBM-G Phase II, JJM are being operationalized in the state. In this magnitude of agenda to ensure safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all, there are many sectoral challenges in terms of capacities, change management, institution building, behavior change, technology, convergence, sustainability, etc. It is imminent, a critical mass is generated to address the sector challenges by engagement with all sector players.

There are several sector agencies and individuals working to make a difference in the WASH programs in their respective geographical areas and specializations. But, to achieve impact there is a dire need to come together on a platform of WASH players – Government, development partners, CSRs, CSOs, Private Sector and academia, and evolve a common minimum program to address the sector issues in collaborative and partnership mode, apart from being a think tank for the program. In this line, formation of "Karnataka WASH Coalition" was called for by bringing WASH sector players together on a platform. A virtual meeting was held under the chairmanship of **Mr. L K Atheeq, IAS, Principal Secretary to Government, RDPR on 10th March 2021, 3.00 to 4.00 PM**. The objectives of the meeting was to discuss arrangement of WASH Coalition, issues, challenges, areas of collaboration and way forward.



Mr. Venkatesh Aralikatty, WASH officer, UNICEF set the context for the meeting by bringing in the concept of SYNERGY, purpose, and objectives of this meeting. He outlined the agenda and requested participants to share their reflections on formation of WASH coalition.

Dr. Vishal R, Commissioner, RDWSD, GoK, shared about "Water and Sanitation" programs in the state. He narrated efforts to provide 55 LPCD drinking water to all rural households in a sustainable manner through a sustainable source under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). In case of sanitation, he comprehensively provided key update on solid and liquid waste management including grey and

black water management. He also mentioned about menstrual hygiene management. Regarding institutional structure at village level, he highlighted the need to bring synergy and proposed that both VWSC and VHSNC be clubbed together as VHSNWC (Village health, sanitation, nutrition, and water committee). In the districts, there are Implementation Support Agencies (ISAs) engaged along with the Engineers to ensure project cycle. He also mentioned the importance of water quality monitoring.

Referring to WASH coalition as a very important platform for the government to understand what NGOs are doing and at the same time for stakeholders like NGOs and corporate to understand what the government priorities are. This will help all stakeholders to plan relevant and significant interventions in line with the plans of state.

Ms. Deepa, IAS, State project director of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyana, GoK, shared about WASH in schools' programs initiative in the state. The State's Education Department in partnership with the 'Centre for Environment Education – South' and with support from UNICEF is implementing a project entitled 'Strengthening of Swachh Vidyalaya Initiatives' in all government and government aided schools in selected districts of Karnataka. The districts which have more than 150 one star and two-star schools will be chosen for the intervention. The project aims at supporting the State Education Department in developing need based strategies in raising the school water and sanitation status from 1 star (WASH status is poor and needs considerable improvement) and 2 stars (WASH status is fair, but needs improvement) to 3 stars (Good, but there is a scope for improvement) level by improving water and sanitation facilities in schools. It also aims at bringing about an attitudinal and behavioral change among school children on better health and hygiene practices.

Reflections on formation of WASH Coalition shared by Participants:

- A platform for the government to understand what CSOs and NGOs are doing at the same time all the CSOs and NGOs need to understand the priorities of government. According to that it will help the stakeholders to plan the significant interventions in line with plans of the state. **(Mr. S. R. Nalli, WASH Specialist, UNICEF Hyderabad)**
- It is very important to putting right habits in school children at very young age to achieve sustainable goals. **(Ms. Harika, TERI, Bangalore)**
- Ensuring functionality of VWSC in ODF sustenance phase and beyond is key area needing focus. **(Mr. Shriram Anant Narayan, United way Bangalore)**
- While working on the grassroots level now it is a good time for the partnership with like-minded institutions along with the government. Also, it is good to share the experience of expertise with all the members of this coalition (mutual learning and sharing platform). **(Ms. Rejini Simsim, CEE South)**
- Synergy is important along with the common messaging platform on the various aspects of WASH. **(Ms. Archana Tripathi, SAHAS, Bangalore)**
- WASH is not just about awareness creation, it needs new innovations, new technologies, financially it should be sustainable so that multiple aspects playing into the sector. There is a need of working on multiple subject specialty, engineering aspects, and financial aspects. **(Ms. Sandhya Haribal, CDD Society, Bangalore)**

- This coalition is a platform for all overlooking forward to WASH as a core are collated across. This is the opportunity to learn and share each other under the umbrella of government flagship programs. **(Ms. K. Aruna, Child Fund India)**
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the importance and preventive power of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) to human health and well-being. This coalition is the opportunity to synergize all the forces across the sector and sharing knowledge with each other's. **(Mr. Rajesh Rangarajan, WaterAid India)**
- "If we are we there is nothing and if you are you there is nothing" all have to get together for achieving common goal otherwise it will just a material part of the thing. **(Mr. Dennis, SVYM, Bangalore)**
- Creating asset and facilities is one form and giving sense community ownership other one in overall WASH context. Coalition will give platform for all the organizations get together and bring more innovations in the WASH sector. **(Mr. Harish, MYTHRI, Bangalore)**
- Communication and Social Behavioral change are important in WASH programs which needs to be focused on a continuous basis. **(Ms. Seema Kumar, C4D specialist, UNICEF Hyderabad)**

Mr. L K Atheeq, PRS, RDPR, GoK shared his experience of working in the sector and specifically incites on the things which were stands out in the previous sanitation program was lack of sustainability and lack of proper behavior change and communication. SBM has an emphasis on the usage of toilets in rural areas and toilet coverage has reached a much higher level at around 75%. Still, there have critical gaps, there is a need to find that in north Karnataka the extent of coverage of toilet is comparatively low. While talking about ODF and ODF+ but even when it comes to a reality check, we are not anywhere near 100% ODF. We covered the baseline and therefore declared the ODF but in fact, we are not. So, therefore, what do we do for those hard to reach pockets. Sometimes it is not hard to reach pockets say as 30% of the population still doesn't have access to a toilet.

In context with SLWM, there is an issue with behavior change and the issues of dealing with solid waste, wet waste and composting, dealing with dry waste and enabling collection centers in villages but what do we then from there for the material recovery. There is a need to act in terms of knowledge, in terms of ideas and in terms of how to upscale and spread this knowledge and these ideas to a larger number of populations.

In RDPR, PRI plays a very crucial role in both the terms water and sanitation, in fact throughout the country and throughout the state it is the decentralized institutions. These institutions must deal with capacity issues etc. The difference in Karnataka when compared to other states is the PRIs are very active. They are the ones supposed to do things in Karnataka. Whether the VWSC under the GPs is functioning or not, the answer is GP will function all the subcommittees. How do we really handhold the GPs, what are the capacity issues, these are the issues we are tackling with all.

When it comes to liquid waste management, it is finding that when GPs asked to deal with greywater, so they build the drain. A drain that has no proper disposal of wastewater, which doesn't really drain water outside the village into a soak pit or waste stabilization pond, sometimes they build the drain flat without providing any slope. So, there are issues in capacity building, in designs

and these issues are known to us, how do we really implement this is the real question. CDD is working with the government, so they must plan design plans, templates, etc. but how do we really take these plans to all the 6000 panchayats. So that every GP should develop their own plans.

He also explains why this is the right time to act. In context with this, he incites on the age of pilot is gone; this is the age of really upscaling everything. So how do we quickly upscale, therefore lot of communication issues are referred to. How do we train people at scale, say as we have to train 60000 panchayats at a time inclusion of technical people who are there at GPs. (MGNREGA Engineer, Jalsurakshak, Swachhtakarmik, etc.) How do we transmit knowledge to all the stakeholders at GP level so that the earth scale simultaneously greywater management work happens in most of the GPs. Because they have the money, they need not wait for 100 GPs to complete first and then go to the next 100.

The enduring point which is common to all is how do we communicate, change behavior, provide the technical person, access whether quality work is done, and how do we close the loop. In his final remarks, for the next meeting, he asked every member for in person meeting rather than virtual one.

Mr. Dinesh S thanked all the dignitaries and the participants for their participation in the meeting and shared their valuable inputs and reflection on the Karnataka WASH coalition formation.

Participants

1. Sri. L K Atheeq, IAS, Principal Secretary to Government, RDPR, GoK – Chaired
2. Dr. Vishal R, IAS, Commissioner, RDWSD, GoK
3. Ms. Deepa, IAS, State Project Director, SSA, GoK
4. Sri. R.S. Peddappaiah, IAS, Commissioner, WCD, GoK
5. Dr. Bhanumurthy, Joint Director, Health and Family Welfare, GoK
6. Sri. Salathiel Nalli, WASH Specialist, UNICEF HFO
7. Ms. Seema Kumar, C4D Specialist, UNICEF HFO
8. Sri. Venkatesh Aralikatty, WASH Officer, UNICEF HFO
9. Sri. Dinesh S, State Consultant - WASH, Supported by UNICEF, RDWSD, GoK
10. Development partners, NGOs, CSOs, CSR and UNICEF Hyderabad WASH Team