

A Brief Note on Clean My Transport Terminal

Background - Municipal Waste has been one of the most severe environmental problems of urban conglomerations. In India like many other countries, cities and towns are generating million tons of municipal waste every year and major portion of this waste is being dumped in the fringes occupying water bodies, wetlands, forests, hills and rivers. Such dumping produces huge amount of methane from biodegradable waste, contributing towards green house gases. Such dumping also undermines recycling of dry waste and accelerates climate change. DISHA advocates Zero Waste and takes effort to implement the principle of Reduce - Reuse - Recycle. DISHA also opposes incineration based technologies in the name of Waste to Energy which ultimately destroys social wealth, causes deadly pollution and global warming. DISHA tries to implement community based low cost waste management system depending upon source segregation, composting and bio-methanation of wet waste, recycling of dry waste and formal involvement of waste pickers in waste management system. DISHA's involvement with the issue of municipal waste started since birth of DISHA in 1995.

Introduction - Since August 2016, DISHA started a project in Dhulagarh Truck Terminal in Howrah District, around 20 Kms away from Kolkata. The project got



support of Apollo Tyres Foundation under Corporate Social Responsibility. Dhulagarh Truck Terminal is one of the major transport hubs in West Bengal covering 42 acres of land surrounded by well constructed wall. The Terminal is capable to accommodate and ply 6,000 large trucks per day. The Terminal was set up in 2004 in a private public partnership model. The objective was to reduce movement of large trucks inside Howrah and Kolkata

cities. Large number of transport offices, warehouses, on-load and off-load facilities, shops for daily needs of the truckers, eateries, tea shops were set up there. Additionally a huge whole sale vegetable market grew up at the back side of the compound. Thriving human activities take place throughout the truck terminal.

Problems - Till first part of 2016, there was no waste management system inside the terminal. People used to throw their waste anywhere and everywhere. Garbage used to be accumulated here and there and only in occasions the terminal authority used to remove a portion of those. Due to rotting of the waste, the whole area was stinky, full of

rodents, mosquitoes and stray animals. The drains were choked by garbage and waste water was stagnant. Public toilets were broken and dirty. People were habituated to open urination and defecation. Due to broken roads as well as cement and other industries in the vicinity, the whole area was full of dust.

The Initiative – Clean My Transport Nagar Project was launched on 19th August 2016. A six member team of DISHA, consisting one coordinator, one supervisor and four

waste collectors started to set up a waste management system in the truck terminal with the support of Apollo Tyres Foundation. Later one gardener also joined the team. Initially 1,20,000 Sq. ft of the area was taken up for daily sweeping. Workers engaged in sweeping always use personal protective equipments like mask, gum boot, gloves and dust proof glasses. Gradually,



along with expansion of the coverage area, door to door collection was introduced. Two rickshaw vans with coloured bins were engaged for door to door collection. Increasing door to door collection ensured less garbage accumulation and less requirement of sweeping in the street. Garbage was cleared from the choked drains. Though broken, the drains after being cleaned, allowed flow of the stagnant waste water.



Campaign – Raising awareness among the truckers and other shop keepers, workers, traders in the truck terminal was a definite challenge. General request to them to stop throwing garbage anywhere and everywhere did not yield result initially. Though some large bins were placed at different corners of the terminal, those remain unused or misused. Still the campaign was continued and stress was given on one to one interactions. Around 2 hours of every day was

spent by the team members to talk to the people coming from different states. Moreover DISHA team opened dialogues with the shop keepers association, transport companies and terminal authority. A committee named *Paribesh Mitra* (Friends for Environment) consisting of important stake holders was formed. Ground level campaign was ongoing. With the support of the *Paribesh Mitra* committee, DISHA team started holding several public awareness programmes like Swachhata Diwas, Earth Day, World Environment Day etc. in a regular manner. Local Dhulagarhi Panchayet was also involved. Panchayet Pradhan and Executive Officer attended some of the programmes. People in the terminal regularly attended these programmes. Students of two schools of the locality have also visited the project and enjoyed the demonstration. They all got involved in quiz contests, talking doll show, street play, mime show, psycho-behavioral games etc. on waste disposal and hygiene practices.

One of the most important aspects of the ground level campaigns was language communication. Normally in West Bengal, Bengali, Hindi and English are usually communicating languages and campaign materials are prepared based on these languages. But most of the rank and file truckers in the terminal come from southern states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. They do not understand these languages. So communication became a huge problem. However DISHA team consulted with the truck owner companies to identify some fairly literate persons knowing Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. The campaign materials were translated by them and simple, low cost placards were prepared. These placards with other body languages of the campaigners during one to one communications helped the truckers to understand the issue. Now they got interest and started cooperating.



Source Segregation - After the initial phase, DISHA team emphasized on source



segregation of waste. The rickshaw vans used for door to door collection were equipped with coloured bins so that dry waste and wet waste can be taken separately. Collectors repeatedly remind the truckers and shop keepers regarding necessity of segregation during on-ground collection. After a few weeks, separate collection timings were fixed for collection of dry and wet waste so that separation becomes more effective. The shop keepers were encouraged to

separate their waste before disposal. The workers and truckers were encouraged to dispose of their dry waste including packaging, pitch board boxes and even liquor bottles separately. The valued recyclable wastes, which earlier were soiled, could be collected in dry and clean condition. These are being sold at fair price to the secondary collectors.

Remaining portion of waste are collected daily. Identifying bio-degradable waste, which can be composted, has become easier. These are being processed separately. Residual inert wastes like broken earthen pots, ash and drain silt are sent to a desolate corner of the terminal. Panchayet service, on request, collects these from time to time.



Composting and vermin-composting - The wet biodegradable waste, collected from eateries and left out fruits and a small portions of vegetables brought by the trucks,



were initially deposited for composting in drums. Regular monitoring, addition of cow dung, leachet removal are being performed. The processed material is taken into two vermin-compost pit at one corner of Terminal. Compost produced in the pits has been tested by a reputed and accredited laboratory - SGS. Thereafter the compost is now being packaged and sold. However till date a very small amount of compost could be produced as

it took a long time for the initial processing. However the production will increase if more waste is taken for processing. Availability of vegetable waste is abundant in the adjacent market.

Garden - a space of around 1000 Sq ft in the main road has been identified for developing garden. District Agricultural Officer visited the place and encouraged the team for developing the garden. He arranged execution of the soil test in the departmental laboratory. On receiving the results he gave some valuable suggestions to develop the garden.

Community Involvement - Apart from the members of *Paribesh Mitra* Committee, a good number of shop keepers and truckers regularly keep in touch with the day to day activities. They even suggest introducing collection of contribution from all the

beneficiaries. But the Truck Terminal authority has some reservations regarding such direct collection. As such the terminal authority has been cooperating through various ways. So DISHA team has not introduced any collection of contribution. However the stake holders have been encouraged to contribute in kind. Some of the stake holders have taken care of repairing the broken toilets. Some have contributed large waste bins.

Behavioral Change - Major achievement during this short period of one and half years' project may be noted as behavioral change in the shop keepers, truckers and workers. Sense of hygiene has been improved. Open defecation and urination have reduced a lot. Shop keepers and Truck offices have been keeping dry waste separately. Though large number of trucks ply through this terminal and everyday a new bunch of people are coming in along with the earlier visitors, littering has reduced considerably.



Plan - It has been planned that another 1,00,000 Sq. ft area of the terminal will be taken up for daily sweeping in 2018 -19. It is also planned that 145 new shops will be brought under coverage. Collection of vegetables from the vegetable market will be increased 10 times as the composting facilities are now in place.