



Mazhi Galli Swachh Galli!



An interesting initiative was held by Shelter Associates with the agenda of promoting cleanliness and to achieve long term goals of waste management and water conservation. There was a competition conducted in Shramik Nagar, an urban slum in Navi Mumbai. The competition was localized to the 'galis' of each of the slum. The gallis were chosen based on the maximum number of houses which had household toilets not only facilitated by SA but even under Swachh Bharat Mission. Each gali had about 40-45 houses. 11 such gallis were competing.

Before the competition started Shelter Associates identified the key members of each gali and called for a meeting where the members were briefed by Shelter's onsite members about how each should monitor their lanes. Followed by this corner meetings were held for each and every lane where people were briefed about the competition, its rules and on what basis they would be assessed.

Awareness programs through social songs, street plays, etc were held to instill in them the agenda and motivate them to work hard towards the same.

The rules discharged were very simple- no wastage of water, no open defecation, the gutters running along the lanes should be free of waste and garbage, the lanes should be kept clean and the individual toilets built at home should also be kept clean and hygienic and any other initiative taken up by the members would fetch them extra marks.

The competition spanned for almost 10-12 days and each gali was judged by a member of SA, a member of the ward office who carried out daily rounds along with an unbiased member from the slum whose identity was hidden from the participants. Alongside the competition, the residents were also motivated daily through movie screenings, corner meetings and various activities conducted like musical chairs, drawing competitions, etc. to pump them and build up the awareness.



Rekha and her sons

“Every morning I wake up at 5:30 am and clean my house, wash my bathroom and also the lane outside my house. I have kept two separate polythene bags, one for dry waste and one for wet waste which I later throw in the dustbin. The entire gali has come together, we help each other in seeing that the rules and regulations are met and duties of each are carried out. I believe this initiative taken up by Shelter Associates is a good one; we can actually see people working towards keeping the gallis clean and even their houses. This will also lead to a reduced incidence of diseases. At the end of the day whoever visits my house praises it for its cleanliness,” comments Rekha Vijay Ingole.

Farzana Sheikh feels “Unity of thoughts is required to bring about a change.” Every day I have to either clean the gutters or my eldest daughter does it. I am tired of making these people understand the essentials of cleanliness. There is a family who lives opposite my house. Every morning the mother makes her child sit on the gutter and uses it as a toilet. All this along with garbage thrown ends up clogging the gutters and they start to overflow.”



Farzana with her eldest daughter



Gutter opposite their house

Despite these challenges Shelter Associates has been successful in bringing about a change in the mind-set of most people, an end product that SA desired. It is often through such challenging tasks that such desired outcomes are achieved. “Majhi Galli Swachh Galli” is hence a small start towards a revolutionary change amongst the communities.



Musical chairs



Rangolis drawn by the families

