

International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies



ISSN Print: 2664-8652
ISSN Online: 2664-8660
Impact Factor: RJIF 8
IJAHSS 2023; 5(1): 98-103
www.socialstudiesjournal.com
Received: 22-04-2023
Accepted: 26-05-2023

Parveen Sultana
Assistant Professor and
Research Scholar, (OU)
Department of Mass
Communication and
Journalism, Govt. Degree
College for Women Begumpet,
Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Corresponding Author:
Parveen Sultana
Assistant Professor and
Research Scholar, (OU)
Department of Mass
Communication and
Journalism, Govt. Degree
College for Women Begumpet
Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Participatory communication and solid waste management: Siddipet ‘Swachh Badi’ efforts towards sustainable development

Parveen Sultana

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26648652.2023.v5.i1b.52>

Abstract

Swachh Badi is an initiative that has changed behavioral patterns among stakeholders of Siddipet Municipalities by implementing major communication strategies and awareness campaigns. A Swachh Badi is a step towards a larger, common goal of protecting Mother Nature by involving the current generation, especially the children, who are the future of tomorrow and strong pillars of any society. In order to alleviate the issue of solid waste management, the trio, led by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, the Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) department, and Councillor Ms. Gopalapuram Deepti, has outlined a series of communication initiatives and solutions to reduce, reuse, and recycle solid waste. This paper is based on understanding the case study and the concerted efforts of Siddipet Municipalities and the communication efforts and patterns used in creating awareness. Also, to throw light on the process and steps involved in protecting the environment by reducing waste landfills for future generations by evolving optimistic approaches. Hence, ensuring sustainable development for everyone.

Keywords: Swachh Baadi, solid waste, communication strategies

Introduction

Solid Waste Management is the process of controlling solid waste generation, storage, collection, transfer, processing and disposal. The menace of Solid waste continues to be a big challenge world wide. Though there are several policies, laws, frameworks to counter the problem still the littering and garbage is visible to us globally. To reduce the negative impacts of urbanization on rural areas and municipalities, SWM plays a vital role. In developing countries, SW generation has become a major environmental challenge due to the growth of economic activity and mass consumption. Generally, SWM systems in low-middle-income cities do not achieve their goals, perform poorly, and are causing adverse effects on sustainable growth and development. In view of the uncontrolled issues, the Telangana State government launched several initiatives such as Palle Pragati programme, overcoming Open Defecation issues, Haritha Haram programme to name a few. Siddipet District bagged first place in the Swachh Survekshan Grameen-2023 rankings of the third quarter of the 2022-23 financial year.

However, Siddipet District unfolds a unique tale of waste management strategies. The Siddipet municipal administration in order to sustain Solid Waste, launched Swachh Badi that enabled the citizens to understand the significance of SWM by bringing in a behavioural change and triggered in a whole societal transformation.

About Siddipet district

Siddipet district is carved out of erstwhile Medak district in Telangana with annexation of some parts of Karimnagar and Warangal districts. The latitude of Siddipet is 18.101904, and the longitude is 78.852074. The District Headquarters and Police Commissionerate is located at Siddipet town. It is spread over an area of 36.03 km² with 43 municipal wards. With 43 wards and 1.5 lakh population, Siddipet town has been generating about 60 MTs of garbage every day out of which 70% is wet garbage, as per the Municipal Corporation of Siddipet (MCS) official record state.

Review of Literature

(Nandini Lakshmikantha and Prashanth G Malur May 2014) states the world is now concerned about the better ecology for tomorrow. This has started to look to the best ways in managing the different kinds of waste and various methods of its disposal. Managing perishable waste thrown out by the households, chemical waste by the industries and the e-waste by the corporate entities has unfold its importance are nevertheless posing hazard to the human and the domestic animals in the society. It has been observed that many non-government and non-profit organizations have put in their continuous effort in spreading awareness; while few corporate entities too have contributed to an extent in this regard, yet, we find littering on both the sides of the road from a small chocolate wrapper to tetra packs piling up at the corner of the roads.

(E. Rajashekhar and *et al.* 2018) ^[2] explains that Solid waste management is a systematic process minimizing solid waste in an area. By this method to control of solid waste as well as alternative useful for solid waste as resources utilization. Municipal solid waste management (MSWM) is one of the major environmental problems of Indian cities. Improper management of municipal solid waste (MSW) causes hazards to inhabitants. Various studies reveal that about 80% of MSW is disposed of unsafely at open areas, creating problems to public health and the environmental pollution. An approach made to provide a comprehensive review of the characteristics, generation, collection and transportation, disposal and treatment technologies of MSW. Various treatment methods with their advantages and limitations. The study gives some suggestion which may be benefit to local people and researchers to work further.

(Sudarshan Kumar and *et al.* 2018) ^[3] provides that Solid Waste Management is a major concern worldwide. Inadequate handling of generated solid waste causes serious hazards to environment as well as living beings. This worldwide problem is also predominating in Jaipur city also. This case study is done to look out for obstacles and prospects of Solid Waste in Jaipur. A comprehensive study was done regarding collection, transportation, handling, storage, disposal and treatment of solid waste generated in Jaipur city. The data acquired related to SWM was collected through site visits and interfacing with people. This study discloses that there is no proper mechanism in the city for treatment of solid waste generated, this leads to dumping of waste in open areas which causes various problems to environment as well as humans living in that vicinity.

(Balbhim Chavan and Nandkumar Shivaji March 2013) ^[4] finds that Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) has become a serious environmental problem in major cities all over world. The problem of solid waste is also influencing the urban environment of Solapur city. Therefore, the present study was under taken to enlist the causes of solid waste generation and possibilities of associated problems. The study was mainly concentrated to investigate the present status of Municipal Solid Waste Management (MSWM) in Solapur city. In order to carry out the study a detailed survey was carried out on existing facilities of Solid Waste Management (SWM) such as manpower resources and management systems. A detailed study comprising the methods of practices associated with generated quantity of waste, collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of (MSW) in Solapur city was conducted. The relevant data was obtained from Solapur Municipal Corporation and

individual field visits. The study reveals that there are several lacunas in existing solid waste management system in Solapur city on the basis of Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) rules, 2000.

Theoretical framework and methodologies

We come up with many Solid waste management strategies, programmes, and policies. But it remains unresolved. Time and again it has been proved that technological innovations and adoptions merely address the issue of Municipal Solid waste management. To achieve sustainable development coordinated efforts of the Government, public mobilization and participation of various stakeholders should be ensured. The paper adopts a Case study methodology and employs a qualitative approach by having one-to-one interaction with the stakeholders of Swachh Badi and collection of data through primary sources. There are different people involved in the process.

1. Elected Representative (Ward Councillor)
2. Asha Workers
3. ANMs
4. Ward Members
5. Opinion leaders
6. Community Participation

Objectives of the study

1. To analyse the communication strategies
2. To understand the significance of participatory approach
3. To find out the role of elected representative and govt bodies in the process.

Swachh BADI: A step towards Sustainable Development

The District Administration of Siddipet launched *Swachha Badi* program, a first of its kind for Solid Waste Management (SWM) School at Subhash Road, Siddipet Town. It was formally launched on March 12, 2021 by Sri. T Harish Rao, MLA from Siddipet and Minister for Health and Finance.

The objective was to educate students and seniors about proper and efficient waste collection, segregation and composting at home. This is a unique initiative in the State and second in the country (after Bengaluru). *Swachh Badi* is basically a learning Centre that provides, educates motivates, creates awareness on solid waste management.

Swachh Badi with reference to Ward 39

For any new concept to be successful there are certain elements to be followed.

1. Effective leadership
2. Communication strategies
3. Participatory Communication
4. Self-monitoring
5. Goal Setting
6. Motivation

And all the above were followed by Ms Gopalarapuram Deepti, the ward councillor who is instrumental in bringing success to this Swachh Badi concept. This special cleanliness school was set up in her ward ie 39 and she has effectively managed the task of teaching the common public about the wet waste management by conducting classes time to time.

At Swachh Badi every Saturday training classes are conducted to till date on how an individual can make the wet waste into vermi compost at their home itself setting an example of responsible citizens and public partnership in reducing the dumping in the municipal waste.

Journey of Swachh Badi

Mrs. Gopalapuram Deepthi was elected as a Ward Councilor for Siddipet Municipality in the year 2016 and serving the 2nd term from 2021.

This Swachh Badi is a coordinated and a trio based initiative as the MLA Sri T Harish Rao, MAUD department and the ward councillor put their concerted efforts to shape this special concept. The MAUD department of Telangana government provided the councillor an opportunity to participate at local and national level workshops, training that gave an immense knowledge about the waste management.

Back home, She shared and extended learnt experience and activities at her ward level and led to a huge success that was subsequently was followed in Siddipet town.

Setting up of Deeksha Organization is another remarkable initiative under this school. This organization works for expanding activities about reducing landfills at community level and it is presently closely associated with Siddipet Municipality. It generates employment to the women in the villages.

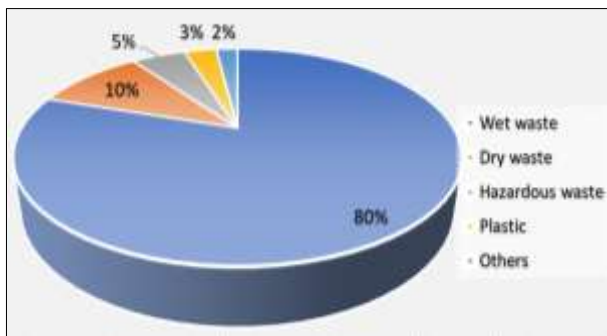


Fig 1: Waste generated

Brief description of the Activities



1. Participatory approach and campaigns

In an effort to reduce the land fill, 3-way segregation campaign was initiated in earlier 4th ward and presently in 39th ward of Siddipet municipality in the year 2018. The Swachh Badi team visited 970 above houses in her ward daily from 5: 30 am to 9:30 am to create awareness and importance of the reducing the wet waste and segregation. Though the public didn't respond in the beginning, later her team along with Asha workers, ward members personally trained the common people about the segregation of generated waste. Extensive interaction sessions, field level awareness programs house to house campaign were conducted vigorously. Awareness has been imparted to all Households to segregate waste generated in their homes into wet, dry and hazardous waste so that it will be handled safely. Shown Videos, conducting Street corner meetings, conducting workshops exposure visits etc. are the steps taken for make it success.



2. Educat0 ing Students – the future of tomorrow

The focus of the district administration was to bring awareness among the upcoming generations. The Swachh Badi team visited with their innovative ideas visited and educated students in several schools about RRR – RECYCLE, REUSE AND REDUCE by using ICT for effective teaching learning process as it has a digital classroom. The team has taught 1, 862 students from 27 schools and trained 1,143 officials and 3,329 citizens.



3. Enhancing infrastructure by setting up of composting yard

Successfully established ward level composting yard to convert collected wet waste into Semi compost and Vermi compost in the year 2019.



4. Swachh Badi

The ward councillor along with district administration was instrumental in playing a crucial role behind conceptualization, design, execution, construction and operationalization of *Swachh Badi* - a first of its kind of SWM School in Telangana in the year 2021. After the success of this concept, this model is followed in the several neighbouring wards.

5. Revenue generation

The composting unit at Swachh Badi produces 57 ton of Semi compost monthly and is sold at Rs 2 kg to farmers and Rs 10 kg to public as it is used as organic manure. The money is given back to the municipality. A channel of money generation.



6. Unique idea- divine compost

Not only the streets, the administration ensured that the sanctity of the holy places to be protected. Through Swachh Badi it started up divine composting process at Santoshi Mata temple for effective disposal of Temple waste in auspicious way in the year 2021, later the same concept was introduced at Munchital.

7. Lane composting

To encourage the common citizens and to propagate the idea of community composting, the portable compost units were placed in the lanes.



8. Expansion of activities through NGO

Co-Established an NGO called as Deeksha organization with a Vision and Mission to work in the fields of environmental friendly and sustainable waste management menstrual Health Management eco-friendly product making

and providing employment opportunities to the needy women in the above fields. The NGO created employment to women in the villages as they were trained to make organic leaf plates, Jute Bags, Environmental friendly bags. This NGO was set up with like-minded women and other individuals in the year 2021.



9. Encouraging individuals for organic farming

“SUSTAINABLE ZINDAGI” “BHU-MITRA” are the latest initiative for providing 360° solution for rooftop kitchen Gardens and providing solution to all farmer’s day-to-day needs and encouraging organic farming. Carbonlites, a bio-enriched organic manure a 40-kilo bag for ₹300 to the farmers of Siddipet

10. Steel bank

Presently Steel Bank has been established to provide sustainable cutlery solutions to household with a view to reduce the generation of waste. (Disposables)

11. Ruthu prema

The Badi team is working in close collaboration with “Ruthu Prema” initiative for propagation of idea of alternative to menstrual hygiene there by reducing the generation of sanitary waste.

Impact and results

All the initiative taken up by the Swachh Badi have given good results.

1. There is a behavioural change among the public. All the households follows 3-way segregation. Waste generated in their homes has been segregated into to dry, wet and sanitary wastes by themselves making handling and disposal has made very easy because of it.
2. With the help of ward compost Centre, established within the vicinity of neighbourhood entire wet waste

generated has been converted into compost generated compost has been used for plants households’ rooftop kitchen garden etc. it is true testimony of circular economy.

3. Swachh Badi has got acclaims from many sections of the society. As a key instructor of it, and with effective leadership skills the team has played a crucial role in expanding the idea of SWM to various sections of the society.



4. International delegates from 18 nations visited Swachha Badi to know how and gain hands on experience about SWM activities. Scores of officials from various district level belonging to departments like Municipal, Panchayat Raj, EPTRI etc. from different states visited to study the successful implementation of waste management strategies. St Francis Degree College along with the students visited the Swachh Badi. The college has invited the Councillor as guest of honour and delivered a lecture on the SWM initiatives.
5. Activities from Deeksha organization resulted in employment opportunities for 23 destitute women’s for making Eco sustainable solutions like jute bags, cloth bags, cloth menstrual pads etc. Deeksha organization activities have expanded to Hyderabad and other places.
6. “Sustainable Zindagi” initiative has been propagating the culture of eco-friendly living in Siddipet by making solutions available readily to the citizens.
7. Bhu-Mitra initiative working towards identifying farmers and converting them to practice organic farming. Also propagating the practice of rooftop kitchen Gardening.

8. With the help of the Swachh Badi, there is a huge elimination of Blackspots from 23 to 4 and the Siddipet municipality aims at Zero landfills.

Sustainability and replicability

All the initiatives taken up are easy to replicate elsewhere as all of them are very low expenditure involved and more citizen centric in nature. The infrastructure was set up with the support from local body funding.

Initially 3 ways aggregation has some resistance but Swachh Badi has changed the game as they have witnessed the usefulness of the practice in terms of compost generation. After this initial success there is no see back for subsequent initiative. The Participatory approach and communication strategies have helped in changing the mind sets of the common public and taking part actively in the process of protecting the environment.

Any initiative in waste management field to get success and to deliver results 'sustainability' is the key. Keeping this in view all initiative have been designed in such a way to bring in behavioral change in the stakeholders so it will be sustained for long.

The results of works have been proved to be sustained as citizens involved in practicing them for last 3-4 years without going back and constant monitoring and implementing IEC activities resulted in building up positive mind sets

The ward composting center at Swachha Badi are self-sustainable in their regular activities.

Once we could be able to bring in behavioral change it will be sustainable with regular follow ups. so, it is the case with all of these initiatives.

Conclusion

Municipal Solid waste management remains a complex issue. The study finds out that the issue cannot be addressed isolated by requires a proper mechanism involving pro political approach, support from the local bodies and active role of elected representatives, involvement of NGOs, well trained and equipped ground level workers (contingency staff) to bring a behavioural change among the stakeholders with proper communication strategies and community participation to achieve the sustainable development. Further to the launch of Swachh Badi, all the multiple stakeholders including the residents acted responsibly and the ward councillor played an important role in addressing the solid waste management. The Swachh Badi can be emulated by various municipalities to promote sustainable development and protect Mother Nature and thus providing upcoming generations with a beautiful and non-polluted environment.

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