

An aerial photograph of a settlement, likely a slum or informal housing area. The image shows several rectangular buildings, some with corrugated metal roofs, and a large, striped awning. The ground is mostly dirt and concrete, with some scattered debris. A blue semi-transparent overlay covers the right side of the image, containing text and logos.

# The TNUSSP Quarterly

*July - September 2023*

**iihs**<sup>®</sup>

INDIAN INSTITUTE FOR  
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS





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Since 2016, the IIHS-led Tamil Nadu Urban Sanitation Support Programme (TNUSSP) has been working with the Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN) to ensure universal access to safe sanitation in the state. TNUSSP has spearheaded the scaling of Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) in Tamil Nadu as a Technical Support Unit (TSU) to the government.

After successfully demonstrating the viability of FSM as a sustainable solution to scaling up urban sanitation, TNUSSP has now moved into its third phase of operations. In this phase, TNUSSP intends to strengthen the ecosystem by integrating inclusive sanitation in government systems and instituting knowledge repositories to create a self-learning environment for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and other sanitation stakeholders.

In this edition of The TNUSSP Quarterly, we present the highlights of our work from July to September 2023. We hope you enjoy reading it. Thank you for your continued support and interest in our work.



# PROGRAMME UPDATES

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# Scaling FSM in Tamil Nadu

## Currently,

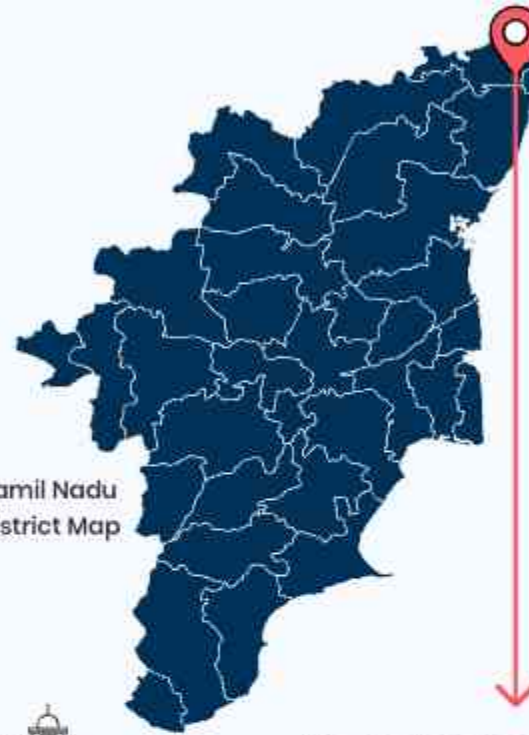
co-treatment of septage at sewage treatment plants is operational at

 **48**  
locations

 serving  
**11.7**  
million people




Tamil Nadu District Map



## In Chennai,

co-treatment is underway at

 **5**  
locations

 covering  
**6.6**  
million people

## Over the next 6 months,

the state plans to initiate co-treatment at another

 **24**  
locations

 covering  
**3.05**  
million people

The GoTN is set to provide FSM services to 25.24 million people in Tamil Nadu. Currently, there are 35 operational Fecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs) covering a population of 2.19 million. The construction of 16 additional FSTPs—with the capacity to cover 1.13 million people—is nearing completion. The GoTN has also initiated the installation of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)-cum-FSTPs in 12 locations, aiming to cover 0.47 million people.

The co-treatment of septage at sewage treatment plants is operational at 48 locations, with five of them being in Chennai. Over the

next six months, the state plans to initiate co-treatment in another 24 locations.

TNUSSP provides technical support, quality assurance and implementation support to make these initiatives possible. It has supported the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA), Directorate of Town Panchayats (DTP) and Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department (RDPR) with the State Investment Plan (SIP) and the Detailed Project Report (DPR) review for STP-cum-FSTPs and co-treatment facilities.

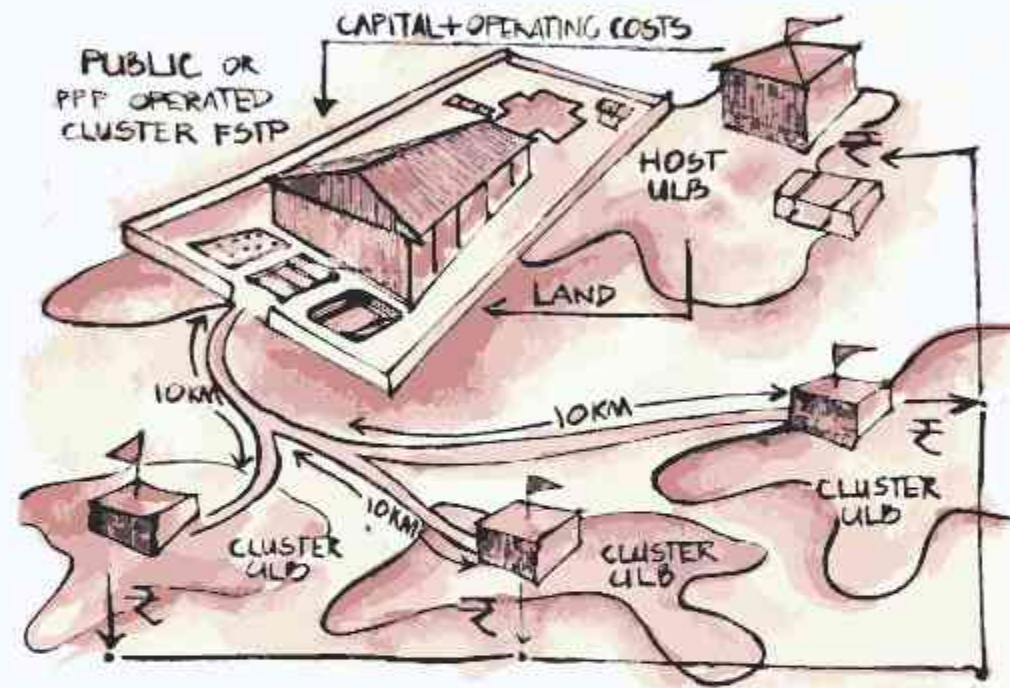


# Going Beyond the Urban: Update on Urban-Rural Convergence

TNUSSP introduced the clustering approach to increase the utilisation of treatment facilities while expanding the reach of safe sanitation services. This approach allows ULBs to link with other ULBs or village panchayats through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to share the services and costs of treatment facilities.

The GoTN aims to cluster 9,344 of the 12,525 village panchayats in the state with nearby treatment facilities, providing FSM services to 74 per cent of the rural population when completed. The clustering approach has been presumed to increase the utilisation of treatment facilities by 10–15 per cent.

Since March 2023, 1817 Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) have been linked to urban clusters with treatment facilities. 687 village panchayats have been covered through the clustering of ULBs and RLBs, as of August 2023. Through this approach, TNUSSP aims to scale access to treatment facilities in rural areas as well.



GoTN has plans to cluster  
**9,344 of 12,525**  
village panchayats in the state with nearby treatment facilities.



When completed, FSM services will be available to  
**74%**  
of the rural population.



The approach also increases the utilisation of treatment facilities by  
**10-15%**



**381**  
village panchayats have signed the MoU with nearby ULBs.



# CWIS UPDATES





# Solar Panel Installation at a Community Toilet

A 2 kW on-grid solar panel system has been successfully implemented at the Moolathoppu community toilet facility in Trichy as part of the IHS-led Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) initiative. This installation is anticipated to yield significant reduction in electricity expenses, given that the monthly bills have occasionally surged to ₹3,400. The operation and maintenance (O&M) of this solar panel system will be overseen by the Trichy City Corporation (TCC).

This implementation serves as a pioneering example and paves the way for scaling up and replicating similar sustainable energy initiatives across various community and public toilets (CT/PTs) across the state.





# Bookkeeping Training for Community Toilet Caretakers and Animators

A comprehensive bookkeeping training programme was conducted for a total of 35 CT caretakers and 14 Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) animators from two zones in Trichy. This training was designed to strengthen the caretakers' skills and streamline the O&M of Community Toilets, as well as to provide participants with a deeper understanding of proper bookkeeping practices.

Initiatives like the bookkeeping training programme and the installation of solar panels at CTs serve as crucial components in enhancing the O&M of CT/PTs. The bookkeeping training equipped caretakers and SBM animators with essential skills, enabling them to efficiently manage resources, keep track



of expenses and ensure the proper functioning of facilities. This would lead to improved financial management, which in turn contributes to better maintenance practices.

Additionally, the installation of solar panels at CTs not only promotes eco-friendly practices but also reduces operational costs by providing sustainable energy sources for these facilities. These combined efforts are gradually transforming the landscape of sanitation services for the urban poor.



# Institutionalisation of E-Centres

Twelve E-Centres located within sanitation worker settlements have successfully been registered with the Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency (TNeGA). These E-Centres play a pivotal role in making security and welfare schemes more accessible to sanitation workers.

Institutionalisation will lead to proper training and registration, marking a critical step towards the inclusion and welfare of sanitation workers within the purview of various social security schemes.





# OUR CAMPAIGNS





# We Speak Too, by Sanitation Workers: Delhi Edition



The sixth edition of the seminar series, We Speak Too, by Sanitation Workers organised by IIHS-TNUSSP and the Alliance of Indian Wastepickers (AIW), in collaboration with the Delhi Roundtable on Solid Waste Management (DRT), took place at Kunzum Theatre in New Delhi on 16 September 2023.

This event, centred around the theme, 'The City and Us: Our Rights, Our Recognition', featured five sanitation workers from the city who shared their professional and personal challenges and aspirations. The panellists included Jahani Begum, a door-to-door waste collector; Fatima Bibi, a PT caretaker; Jagruti Devi, a dry waste collector; Sonu, a contractual worker;

and Ved Prakash Bighel, a former labour union president. The session was moderated by Shalini Sinha, India Country Representative and home-based workers sector specialist at Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).

The discussion shed light on the desire of sanitation workers to be respected and valued for their crucial work. One of the panellists, Ved Prakash Bighel, highlighted the health risks faced by sanitation workers, especially those who clean sewers, and emphasised the dangers of exposure to hazardous gases like hydrogen sulfide and sulfur dioxide. He noted that even those without immediate health issues are likely to have reduced lifespans due to regular contact with sewer gases. Another panellist, Jagruti Devi, discussed the safety hazards involved in waste segregation, which includes handling harmful materials like glass and needles, posing risks of infection and injury.

## About We Speak Too, by Sanitation Workers

We Speak Too, by Sanitation Workers, initiated in June 2022, has travelled to six Indian cities so far, bringing together more than 20 organisations and over 700 participants. It has featured more than 40 sanitation workers as panellists, with a widespread social media reach of over 50,000, thereby increasing awareness about the rights and recognition of these essential workers. [\*\*\*You can watch previous sessions of We Speak Too, by Sanitation Workers here.\*\*\*](#)



# Women in Sanitation: Echoing the Stories of Women Sanitation Professionals

Women in Sanitation (WIS), TNUSSP's year-long campaign celebrating women professionals in the sanitation sector, is now in its fourth edition.

This year, the theme is #EmbraceEquity (aligned with that of International Women's Day), fostering a more intersectional and global campaign that captures the evolving nature of women's work in this industry.

WIS 2023 urges reflections on additional support required for women professionals to develop equity in terms of participation, visibility, representation and leadership within the sanitation sector. To highlight gender equity gaps within its sphere of influence, TNUSSP collaborates with organisations around the world to bring forth powerful stories of women sanitation professionals and hear, in their own words, about how we can all better embrace equity.

Films, featuring selected nominees, have been shared on TNUSSP's social and digital

platforms, showcasing women sanitation professionals and their allies from different contexts. They speak about their journeys, shedding light on the challenges they faced along the way and how they overcame them.

So far, the campaign has featured the stories of 12 women sanitation professionals. In the past quarter, the campaign covered Anjali, Leader of the Velachery Tamil Nadu Housing Board (TNHB) Area Level Federation (ALF), Chennai, who spearheaded the maintenance of a clean and accessible toilet, enabling behaviour change in hundreds of users. It also featured Krishna Maya Karki, Chairperson of Batawaraniya Sundar Nepal Pvt. Ltd., a waste management company which currently employs 400 workers, including approximately 200 women. [\*You can watch their stories here.\*](#)

## About Women In Sanitation

Women in Sanitation is a campaign that amplifies the often-muted voices of women working in various capacities across the

sanitation chain in India. By creating a platform where these individuals have a voice, TNUSSP strives to foster year-round conversations on gender issues and promote equity within the sanitation sector.

## Join the Campaign

If you know a woman sanitation professional deserving of recognition for their contribution to the sanitation sector, TNUSSP invites you to nominate them to be featured in the Women In Sanitation 2023 campaign. [\*Follow this link to submit your nomination.\*](#)





# Sanitation 101: Addressing Sanitation Basics

TNUSSP recently launched a new social media campaign called Sanitation 101. The campaign is designed to simplify sanitation concepts and provide insights into the complicated world of the full cycle of sanitation (FCS).

Through #Sanitation101, TNUSSP hopes to educate its digital audience and bring awareness to the fundamentals of sanitation. This information is being disseminated across TNUSSP's social media platforms through short, bite-sized content.

So far, content related to toilet structures, sanitary toilet requirements and containment systems has been shared. To stay updated on the campaign, follow TNUSSP's social media handles.





# EVENT SPOTLIGHTS





# Dialogue on 'Unlocking Economic Viability: Paving the Way to Inclusive Sanitation for All'

On 23 August 2023, the National Faecal Sludge and Septage Management Alliance (NFSSMA) organised a dialogue on the financial sustainability of inclusive sanitation solutions. Mahima Vijendra, from TNUSSP, was one of the three speakers at the session.

Mahima highlighted how private sector engagement can make sanitation services (such as regular desludging) more accessible, providing insights into the financial models that have worked on-ground in Trichy and other parts of Tamil Nadu.

Mahima and the other speakers also spoke about the challenges in ensuring the financial sustainability of sanitation services, and the approaches to scale successful models, and replicate them in other contexts.

The poster features logos for NFSSM Alliance, Urban Management Centre, EY, ihs, and CWIS at the top. The main title is 'UNLOCKING ECONOMIC VIABILITY' in large green letters, with the subtitle 'Paving the Way to Inclusive Sanitation for All' in a green box below it. The text 'Join the conversation with' is centered above four circular portraits of the speakers. Below each portrait is their name and role. At the bottom, the date and time '23<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST 2023 | 4:00 PM' are shown next to the Zoom logo, and a blue button contains the text 'CLICK ON THE REGISTRATION LINK IN BIO'.

**NFSSM ALLIANCE** | **Urban Management Centre** | **EY** | **ihs** | **CWIS**

## UNLOCKING ECONOMIC VIABILITY

Paving the Way to Inclusive Sanitation for All

— Join the conversation with —

**XERXES RAO**  
Head - Urban Planning,  
Urban Management Centre  
MODERATOR

**AASIM MANSURI**  
Senior Program Lead at C-WAS  
SPEAKER

**MAHIMA VIJENDRA**  
Senior Consultant at IHS  
SPEAKER

**SARITH SASIDHARAN**  
Senior Manager at EY  
SPEAKER

**23<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST 2023 | 4:00 PM** zoom

**CLICK ON THE REGISTRATION LINK IN BIO**



# SIWI Webinar on 'Women for the Future of Water' at World Water Week 2023

The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) organised a webinar on 'Women for the Future of Water' on 23 August 2023. Kavita Wankhade, Head of IIHS Practice Programme (Governance and Services), and Associate Dean of the IIHS School of Systems and Infrastructure, was part of the webinar.

The latest review of the water and sanitation sector shows gender imbalance with less than 20 per cent of women having paid jobs in the field. The recently concluded UN Water Conference resulted in 830 commitments aligned to gender. As the sector works towards the fulfilment of these commitments, women's voices and participation cannot be diminished.

Representing the International Water Association (IWA), of which IIHS is a member,



Kavita spoke on 'Empowering Young Women and Youth Engagement Network IWA'. Her talk elaborated the challenges young women professionals face and the need to recognise and take inspiration from women professionals in the sector.

She highlighted IWA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy, and stated that a focus on gender-balanced leadership and awards, provision of access to mentors and sector experts, improvements in the representation and visibility of Low- or Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), and forums like Young Water Professionals are some practices that can support women and gender minorities in the sector.



# IIHS and CREA's Learning Visit for BMGF Partners on Gender and Sanitation in Trichy



On 4 and 5 September 2023, IIHS and CREA organised a learning visit for 11 partners associated with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to showcase gender-focussed and inclusive sanitation practices. The visit demonstrated successful approaches and strategies in effectively integrating gender perspectives into sanitation projects and implementing CWIS initiatives in Trichy.



Participants interacted with a member of the TCC's Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) internal committee. They met a woman mason, a woman NGO leader, women desludging operators (DSOs) and self-help groups (SHGs) from the micro-compost unit to understand their challenges and engagement with the community.



They visited a CT at Kora Theru and interacted with the women-led SHG that maintains the toilet. They also visited Sengulam Colony, a predominantly sanitation worker settlement, and saw various TNUSSP initiatives including the community-led E-Sevai centre, Youth for Sanitation (YS) clubs, welfare scheme linkage initiatives, vocational skill training beneficiaries, and National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) groups. They witnessed a Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) programme for pre-menarche and adolescent girls.



The partners reflected on these good practices for integrating gender in sanitation, and on how this can be replicated or adapted in their respective states.



# Waterlinks Water and Sanitation Regulatory Conference for South Asia

Waterlinks, an international non-profit organisation, hosted the 'Water and Sanitation Regulatory Conference for South Asia' in Kathmandu, Nepal on 7 and 8 September 2023.

This conference was held in cooperation with BMGF; the governments of Bangladesh and Nepal; the state government of Odisha; UN-Habitat Nepal; UNICEF Bangladesh; the Asian Development Bank (ADB); and the World Bank (WB).

It featured speakers and representatives from the Eastern and Southern Africa Water and Sanitation (ESAWAS), Malaysia's National Water Service Commission (SPAN), and the Philippines' Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office (MWSSRO).

P K Anand, from the IIHS Practice programme, participated along with Dr. T Manivannan, City Health Officer, TCC; and Dr. S Chitrasena, Deputy Director (Health), DMA.



The discussions at the conference provided an overall picture of water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) regulatory arrangements available in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Eastern and Southern Africa. This enabled participants to become familiar with effective regulatory arrangements and the organisational structures in place to improve WaSH services.



# TISS- CPRG and CREA's National Symposium on 'Challenges and Opportunities in Urban Sanitation'

On 7 and 8 September 2023, the Centre of Policy Research and Governance (CPRG) and CREA jointly organised a National Symposium on 'Challenges and Opportunities in Urban Sanitation', as part of an international collaborative research project, Towards Sustainable Sanitation in India and Brazil (TOSSIB).

The symposium intended to take stock of opportunities and challenges, and arrive at possible solutions through a dialogue among an expanded set of stakeholders: communities, civil society organisations, sanitation entrepreneurs, technical support organisations, municipalities, state and national policymakers, corporates, researchers and academics.

Niladri Chakraborti, Senior Lead, IIHS Practice and Team Leader, CWIS, was part of the plenary session on 7 September 2023, 'Towards Dignity and Safety for Sanitation Labour', where he presented the approach and work around sanitation workers in Tamil Nadu.

Abhilaasha N, from the IIHS Practice programme, and TNUSSP, was part of the plenary session on 8 September 2023 on 'Engendering Sanitation', where she presented the gender integration approach and key initiatives in Tamil Nadu.





# SuSanA's Water Women's Day

The Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) organised a virtual Water Women's Day programme on 26 September 2023. One of the sessions, 'Meet Women Sanitation Champions', featured Amutha Palaniandi, a mason from Trichy.

Amutha defied societal norms and overcame numerous challenges to pursue her career. Orphaned at a young age and deprived of formal education, she took various jobs, including assisting in construction work. After marriage, she sought financial independence due to her husband's alcohol addiction.

Amutha encountered resistance from men in her field who were reluctant to teach her essential masonry skills, and her husband, a mason himself, discouraged her from pursuing the profession. However, Amutha's determination caught the attention of a supportive engineer who provided her mentorship and guidance.



The poster features a red circular logo with a blue water drop and the text 'WATER WOMEN'. Below the logo, the text reads 'Water Women's Day Stronger Together'. It lists the event details: Date: 26 Sept. 2023; Time: 13:00 - 14:00 CEST; Online Platform: MS Teams. The background is a light green grid pattern.

Through IIHS, Amutha received masonry training, which helped her advance her career and earn a stable income, ensuring a better future for her children. Amutha's journey serves as an inspiration, showcasing the importance of upskilling for women engaged in traditionally male-dominated roles in sanitation.

sustainable sanitation alliance

## Session 3: Meet women sanitation champions

Engage with women working in the sanitation sector in a safe space to learn about the importance of sanitation and how to build a career in the sector. Our guests will share their stories working in government, private sector and academia.



**Nompumelelo Ntshatintshali-Motso**  
(Former national WASH Forum Chairperson, Kingdom of eSwatini)



**Amutha Palaniandi**  
(Mason from Trichy, India)



**Konstantina Velkushanova**  
(IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, Netherlands)



# About Us

The Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) is a national education, research, practice and capacity development institution committed to the equitable, sustainable and efficient transformation of Indian cities and settlements.

A proposed Institution of Eminence (IOE), IIHS aims to transform the current nature of urban education as one of the most important drivers for India's national development and sustainable global futures. Its interdisciplinary approach to research and practice helps build new global knowledge and train urban professionals.



Since 2016, the Tamil Nadu Urban Sanitation Support Programme, a consortium led by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, has been proactively supporting the Government of Tamil Nadu in making improvements along the entire urban sanitation chain in cities. We work towards strengthening septage management as an economical and sustainable complement to network-based sewerage systems and aim to scale Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) across 649 towns in the state, covering a total urban population of 30 million.

Visit our [website](#) to know more about our work

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*in association with*

