

# UNDERSTANDING EFFECTIVENESS OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:

## Lessons from Sanitation Capacity Building Platform

### Part I: Journey of Urban Sanitation Capacity Development in India

*This is the first of a 3 part series on Understanding Effectiveness of Capacity Development. The Paper draws on the experience of Sanitation Capacity Building Platform(SCBP) work and other national capacity development initiatives in India in the last two decades. A Capacity Development Effectiveness Ladder Framework is proposed in the last part of the series.*

*SCBP is anchored by National Institute of Urban Affairs(NIUA). It is part of the NFSSM alliance that has more than 28 members. SCBP is supported by Gates Foundation.*



India is one of the fastest urbanizing countries of the world. There has been much interest in understanding how urban development and especially urban sanitation, has evolved in the last two decades in terms of government programs and priorities, and the evolution of capacity development initiatives during this period.

Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was launched in 2005. Launched for a seven year period (extended to 2014) and a dedicated funding for 65 cities for two sub missions, one on urban infrastructure and governance and the other on basic services for urban poor.<sup>1</sup>

*Mission statement: "the aim is to encourage reforms and fast track planned development of identified cities. Focus is to be on efficiency in urban infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms, community participation, and accountability of ULBs/ Parastatal agencies towards citizens."*

In 2012, the World Bank supported a Capacity Building for Urban Development (CBUD) loan in support of JNNURM that got extended into other MoHUA programs from 2014-15. "The Mission targeted ULBs that could access funds for investment and capacity building in return for a commitment to adopt the obligatory reforms over a period of seven years."<sup>2</sup> The CBUD investment of the World Bank materialized when the JNNURM program was ending, and the initial proposal was revised to match the new programs of MoHUA. CBUD had capacity building as its first objective that matched the sector reform agenda of JNNURM<sup>3</sup>.

*"This was a technical assistance (TA) project that included a range of capacity building activities in financial management, urban planning, service delivery, and governance that were expected to improve systems and skills of select ULBs in urban management and urban poverty reduction, as well as implementation various urban policy and institutional reforms. The original theory of change was premised on the notion that the above capacity building activities and support in implementation would lead to 20 ULBs having implemented (i) at least two urban management reforms; and (ii) urban poverty reduction strategies." (World Bank Independent Completion report)"*

The World Bank's completion report of CBUD mentions "A Training Needs Assessment was conducted and

an 'Integrated Capacity Building Framework' was prepared by the MoUD. The framework detailed training in four key municipal areas: (a) Finance and Revenue, (b) Engineering and Public Health, (c) Town Planning, and (d) Administration. The ministry short-listed 6 institutes across states to conduct training in these areas."

*There was a substantial engagement of CBUD with urban sanitation. "Reports were prepared for the following areas: (a) non-revenue water studies were completed for a total of 67 cities under the project in response to the demand; (b) city sanitation in 16 cities; (c) city wide drainage in one city; and solid waste management in 9 cities. Overall, 93 ULBs had prepared plans for service delivery- water and sanitation/drainage; this was significantly higher than the targeted 20 ULBs."*

Despite the substantial engagement in urban sanitation capacity development under CBUD, **no Program or Sector specific capacity development Perspective or Vision/Strategy ( for Water and Sanitation or Transport & Mobility, Housing, Planning, Finance etc.)** was either identified as a priority or initiated by CBUD.

In 2014-15 a series of new urban initiatives were undertaken by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**. **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Heritage Development (HRIDAY) and Urban Infrastructure (AMRUT) missions** were launched. These programs had an in-built capacity building component, usually as a percentage of the total budget outlay of the program.

The **Peer Exchange and Reflective Learning (PEARL)** capacity development initiative of NIUA was developed during the JNNURM (2005-14) in a network mode. It was launched by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India in January 2007 under JNNURM. The project "aimed to create manageable networks for knowledge sharing and cross-learning among JNNURM cities and make them more livable, economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable. The Cities Alliance (CA) Knowledge Support for PEARL Program under JNNURM was initiated in 2010."<sup>4</sup>

Under **AMRUT**, capacity building was prioritized through national nodal training institutes for the large and medium sized 500 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). It was to be delivered by an empaneled list of 35 national nodal training institutes. Based on a capacity Needs assessment by NIUA, a two phase capacity building initiative was organized.

<sup>1</sup>[http://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/1Mission%20Overview%20English\(1\).pdf](http://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/1Mission%20Overview%20English(1).pdf)

<sup>2</sup><https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/233511555421348699/india-in-cbldg-for-urban-development>

<sup>3</sup>Ibid page 6

<sup>4</sup><http://pearl.niua.org/pearl>

“Capacity Building Plan consists of two strategic interventions - Individual Capacity Building and Institutional Capacity Building. Institutional capacity of ULBs by using Consulting Firms and other entities. The purpose of individual training is to enhance the functional knowledge, improve the job related skills and change the attitude of municipal functionaries. The one-year training will be imparted to municipal functionaries in training institutes (classroom) followed by its application at their work place. Additionally, they will be mentored and provided coaching services at their work place during the one-year training period. The aim of Institutional Capacity Building is to improve institutional outcomes, as set out in the AMRUT Reform Agenda.

- Individual Capacity Building: Based on the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) the focus will be on the following four departments in ULBs.
- Finance & Revenue: Financial Planning and Management, Revenue Mobilization.
- Engineering and Public Health: Water and Sanitation, Drainage and Solid Waste Management.
- Town Planning: Urban Planning including pro-poor planning approaches.
- Administration: e-Governance, Computer and Soft Skills.<sup>5</sup>”

**Swachh Sarvekshan** was initiated in 2016-17 by the Ministry of Urban Development(MoUD). For motivating cities to improve their systems and outcomes for solid and liquid waste management, through a competitive national ranking process.

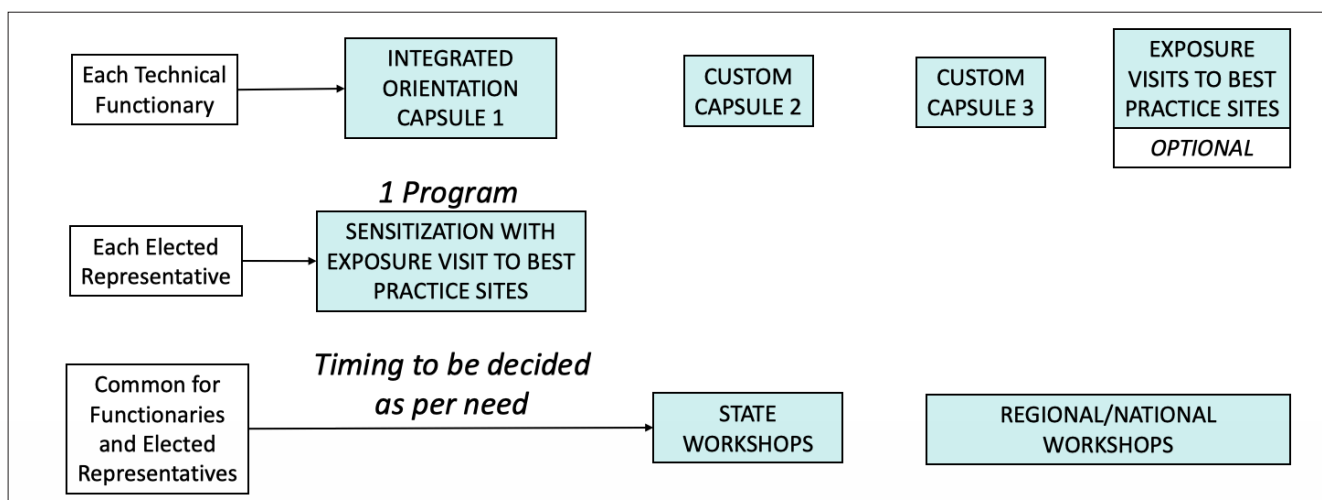
In December 2017, using the last tranche of funding from CBUD, MoHUA came out with a one year long **Integrated Capacity Building Program (ICBP)** covering

all the Missions of MoHUA (SBM, Smart Cities Mission, PMAY, NULM, AMRUT and HRIDAY). ICBP not only covered the staff of Urban Local Bodies, but also elected representatives.

The **SMARTNET portal**<sup>7</sup> engaged in **creating an online repository of knowledge and a platform for engagement for** practitioners and officials. Here they could find relevant contract documents, bid formats and a repository of other standardized content. Launched as a platform by NIUA to support all the six new Urban Missions announced in 2015-16 (Smart City Mission, HRIDAY, Swachh Bharat, AMRUT, NULM, Housing). SMARTNET enabled city officials, independent experts and private sector professionals to access an online repository knowledge material : formal government mission guidelines, reports, tender documents, case studies, and online learning/training modules. It also allowed portal users to contribute to the portal with their work and documentation, to create and deepen the repository of knowledge.

National Policy on Faecal Sludge and Septage Management(FSSM) 2017, paved the way for the creation of septage management infrastructure and systems, including a thrust on capacity development for FSSM. **The Sanitation Capacity Building Platform(SCBP)**, a capacity development program for FSSM anchored by NIUA, developed a national capacity development framework for FSSM, developing original learning content and training modules as well as a broader capacity development mandate( developing technology guidance, research and policy advocacy). Resulting in an effective capacity development outreach at national and international level.

### Integrated Capacity Building Program(ICBP) 2018<sup>6</sup>



<sup>5</sup><http://amrut.gov.in/content/innerpage/capacity-building.php>

<sup>6</sup>[http://www.mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Operational\\_Guidelines\\_29 December2017\\_Final\(2\).pdf](http://www.mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Operational_Guidelines_29 December2017_Final(2).pdf)

<sup>7</sup><http://pearl.niua.org/pearl>

**The City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain (CITTIS) program**<sup>8</sup> had a direct link with the Smart Cities Mission. Sponsored by European Union and AFD France, anchored by NIUA, it had at its core a nine month long “**Maturation Phase**”<sup>9</sup>, that is a framework for capacity building of cities, to help cities prepare themselves better for planning and implementation work.

**Mission Karmayogi and iGoT platform** is the most recent and most ambitious initiative of Government of India that is aimed at creating a digital learning and decision making platform to transform the Human Resources development for the entire bureaucracy of India. “An entirely new state-of-the-art digital platform, iGoT-Karmayogi platform will be created by a Government of India owned SPV. The platform will bring together civil servants and curated training content generated by best-in-class institutions, start-ups and individuals.”<sup>10</sup>

The digital iGoT platform is conceptualized as a comprehensive set serving competency, career development, learning, discussion and networking requirements. It is aimed at providing an opportunity

for the government staff to demand the best capacity development support available in the market and a mechanism for competency assessment that links it with their long term skills and knowledge requirements.

**USAID funded FIRE-D project (1994-2011)** was a long term project that has transcended urban reforms and WASH sub sector engagement. “It partnered with India’s central, state, and city governments to develop sustainable urban environmental services and to ensure the poor have access to those services. FIRE-D provided varied technical assistance at the national level and in 16 states across India. It worked to expand WatSan access to the poor in particular by integrating their perspectives into project planning processes.”<sup>11</sup>

**Performance Assessment System(PAS)**<sup>12</sup> (2008 till date) of Centre for Water and Sanitation(CWAS) at CEPT University has spanned across the timeline of sector wide and sanitation specific interventions as a mix of scaled up performance assessment, performance monitoring, planning and capacity building interventions for urban sanitation in India.

## Summary

**Urban sector capacity development initiatives in India**, can be summed up as follows :

- **Urban sector-wide capacity development initiatives.** A combination of urban reforms(financial and administrative) and sector wise capacity development, linked with the National Urban Sanitation Policy and the JNNURM since 2005
  - PEARL
  - CBUD
- **Program Specific** capacity development initiatives linked with the SBM, AMRUT, Smart Cities and NULM from 2015
  - SMARTNET – linked to SMART Cities Program
  - Integrated Capacity Development Program(ICBP) – linked to AMRUT and later to all the national programs
  - CITTIS program
- **Sanitation Specific** capacity development initiatives linked with specific sanitation initiatives like the FSSM and the National FSSM Policy 2017
  - Sanitation Capacity Building Platform(SCBP) – a Capacity Development Normative Framework(of process and training modules) and implementation for non sewerred sanitation systems.
- **Scaled up urban sector wide digital capacity-competency** initiatives using digital platforms since 2020
  - National Urban Learning Platform(NULP)
  - Mission Karmayogi and iGoT Platform

<sup>8</sup><https://citiis.niua.org/content/our-approach>

<sup>9</sup>Maturation Framework : <https://citiis.niua.org/maturation-framework>

<sup>10</sup><https://hcindiatz.gov.in/pdf/Mission%20Karmayogi.pdf>

<sup>11</sup>Evaluation Report. <https://www.globalwaters.org/sites/default/files/FIRE-D%20Final%20Evaluation%20Report-508%20Compliant,%202018.pdf>

<sup>12</sup>[https://pas.org.in/web/ceptpas/home?p\\_p\\_id=HomePage\\_WAR\\_Portal&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=1&p\\_p\\_state=normal&p\\_p\\_mode=view&p\\_p\\_col\\_id=column-1&p\\_p\\_col\\_pos=1&p\\_p\\_col\\_count=3&actionVal=Retrieve&SkipAccessChecking=false](https://pas.org.in/web/ceptpas/home?p_p_id=HomePage_WAR_Portal&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_pos=1&p_p_col_count=3&actionVal=Retrieve&SkipAccessChecking=false)

## Capacity Development : Emerging Trends and Concerns

### A. Capacity development as a temporary/complimentary requirement, for national programs and missions.

Various capacity development interventions that have happened, have been as a response to national programs and missions, and are dependent on a few donors and bilateral agencies support (USAID, EU, GIZ, World Bank, BMGF, ADB, AFD, etc.). These have been discontinued as the Missions/Programs have ended in 2020. There is a weak linkage of capacity development for a medium to long term urban planning/vision and policy for a the country, state or town planning.

There is no long term financial commitment to support for urban sanitation capacity development from the central or state government level, leave alone from Urban Local Bodies budgets(that are unable to meet their operating expenses).

The focus of current trainings is excessively on program implementation(essentially infrastructure and CAPEX investments), preparing DPRs for new projects and schemes. Measurement and monitoring requirements are also a priority, but not developing new perspectives, or learning and re-learning core concepts and their creative applications to different contexts and requirements.

While importance of training government officials for meeting program and project delivery requirements is self evident, restricting it to immediate priorities and specific projects will be shortsighted. Given that sanitation systems thinking and technology solutions change rapidly nowadays, having core conceptual knowledge of the subject(water, solid waste and waste water management) and an empowered logical thinking mind to figure out appropriate local solutions, in addition to program and project level implementation skills trainings is required.

### B. Absence of formal institutionalized learning and knowledge leadership : case for academia-research-citizens engagement

Urban water and sanitation is not just a technical challenge. It is a governance challenge for most developing countries, it requires political will

to invest in development and maintenance of a mix of centralized and decentralized water and sanitation infrastructure, composting and reuse of solid waste and treated waste water. The content, thrust and approach of capacity development has to be long term and institutional.

Developing a long term learning agenda, original learning content(not just PPT based trainings), development of innovative and appropriate learning material, exercises, evaluation, effectively delivery – are key to all learning and capacity development work in any field.

So far the focus has been on strengthening institutional management of capacity development – of intermediary capacity development and training institutions in India including the national nodal training institutes or National Institute of Urban Affairs(NIUA) and some regional institutes(ASCI, CWAS-CRDF, RCUES, ATIs, etc.). The evaluation of the FIRE-D project of USAID in 2018 also recommended the same. “USAID could explore ways to strengthen the National Institute of Urban Affairs or other institutions’ capabilities and roles in nationwide training.”<sup>13</sup>

In our federal structure, water and sanitation are state subjects. There is no independent statutory institutional capacity development mechanism at the national level or in any state, that has experts from academia and research institutes, to define the agenda of urban sanitation research and development and to advise the national and state governments.

Most of our urban sanitation manuals and guidelines use European and US standards of treatment of waste water and solid waste. Committees are usually formed for developing or updating manuals and technical guidelines. There is a multiplicity of central government institutions ranging from CPHEEO<sup>14</sup> and Pollution Control Boards, that deal with complimentary aspects of water and waste water standards. However these bodies are not empowered to undertake independent research and capacity building. Courts intervene from time to time, asking our IITs and other academic institutes to make assessments and recommendations on critical matters.

<sup>13</sup>Evaluation Report – WASH Ex-post evaluation page xii.

<https://www.globalwaters.org/sites/default/files/FIRE-D%20Final%20Evaluation%20Report-508%20Compliant,%202018.pdf>

<sup>14</sup><http://cpheeo.gov.in/cms/about-cpheeo.php>

Indian universities and academia need to be engaged in capacity building as well as in developing standards relevant to Indian context and re use of treated waste water and solids. Old pedagogy and teaching centralized water and sanitation systems borrowed from the last century European and US context, remain the mainstay of our technical universities education system as well as the re-training programs of government officials.

### **C. Opportunities and limitations of a digital capacity development approach**

It is true that online and digital learning platforms reduce the cost of delivery and save the trainee, time and money, in terms of undertaking a training at their convenience. Yet not all type of learning or capacity development, specially deeper level knowledge and learning courses, can be delivered easily on digital mediums. Most online digital content has become an overloaded PPT based presentations that pack facts and information more than learning and teaching. The experience of SCBP in identifying and developing digital learning content and format relevant to priority stakeholders, will be share in the next part of this series.

The challenge of digital online learning is not just the difficulty in explaining complex things online or undertaking exercises and project work. Even the best of digital platforms are dependent on technology, internet connectivity and the orientation and time of a trainee. At a more fundamental level, digital learning is constrained by an absence of a physical learning environment where body language, interjections and questions, open ended discussion and debates, are hampered by the medium itself. The core aspect of learning and teaching as a two way process where the teacher and trainee both learn from an active direct exchange – is constrained in the digital platform.

Can learning and capacity development be left to a digital platform? Digital dissemination is just

a medium of delivery of capacity development. Developing pedagogy, undertaking research and developing capacity of teachers and trainers – can this be left to individual organizations or consultancy firms who will sub contract out the learning agenda?

Knowledge portals were earlier seen as repositories of knowledge and information, to be used by individuals and organizations for their learning needs. What is wrong in visualizing digital online portals as open free market transaction platforms, where buyers and sellers of capacity development can engage like an Ola Uber experience? It certainly has the advantage of bringing together different stakeholders – but surely there is more to learning and capacity development, than just market transaction for delivering training. Who will conceptualize learning requirements for a medium and long term, develop learning agenda and content, develop a pool of trainers, undertake quality assurance?

*Strengthening a robust, well funded institutional academia-research-citizens engagement mechanism, should be a capacity development priority for India as we urbanize at a rapid pace in the 21st century.* Digital platforms can certainly be useful if matched with this investment in institutional capacity development. Despite huge investment in urban sanitation, our mountains of solid waste dump sites and untreated sewage and septage flowing into our rivers and ground water, is a testimony that time is short.

In Part 2 of this series we will look at the experience of Sanitation Capacity Building Platform(SCBP) work and lessons therefrom. Leading to a development of a Capacity Development Effectiveness Ladder(CDEL) and concluding remarks in the third and final part of this series.

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