Challenges exist in any sphere of work, but if one is motivated, aware and enthusiastic about achieving the goal then there is no stopping.

Manumakonda Gram Panchayat (GP) is again trying to restore the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status after slipping back into Open defecation post achieving Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP). This GP is situated in Bhamini Mandal in Srikakulam District, encompassing seven habitations within it and it is in the middle of the dense forests with little or no transport facility due to the non-existing roads.

**Manumakonda Gram Panchayat**
- Bhamini Mandal
- Srikakulam District
- Photo Credit: E. Manikanta Reddy, Program Officer, PRIA

**Manumakonda GP profile:**
- Households 525
- Home of “Savara” Tribe.
- The GP was awarded NGP in the year 2008.

The story of Manumakonda is not of NGP slippage, but of incomplete sanitation and the struggle to complete it ever since. However, in the last 8 years that passed, many changes have taken place in the village such as depleting water, increase in population etc.

**Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Interventions:** The Panchayat took up work on sanitation related aspects again. A survey was conducted to toilets need of households at the village. Since last year 63 toilets have been completed and 37 are under process with remaining 126 toilets that need to be constructed.
Challenges

Toilet construction is not only a time intensive activity in regions like Manumakonda but is also cost intensive. Due to lack of proper roads for transportation, increasing material costs when they have to be delivered in such conditions. In some cases not many people readily agree to deliver raw material and the ones who showed interest to deliver try to quote high rates which the populations cannot bear.

The tribe who largely depends on selling forest produce, with low income have no financial capacities to pay for transportation of construction material. Few households who initiated construction by digging pits were also observed to halt construction due to lack of capacities to procure material. This is both an economic as well as material availability challenge.

Manumakonda like many other GPs depends on the incentives that the Govt. is providing and delay in disbursement of incentives for around 3-4 months affects further stages of construction, either the construction gets halted until payments are received or other families would not willingly initiate construction.

Severe water scarcity is a major concern for this GP. There is a tank in the village which dries up completely in summers and not more that 2 buckets of water is available for a household even after walking long distances to fetch water.

What went wrong: Mis directed awareness was another factor affecting most developmental activities in this village. As narrated by field assistants, “in 2008 under the leadership of one person, construction of toilets was completed to some extent. At that time people agreed for developmental activities and assisted wherever possible. Issues between different group’s internal politics etc. have increased a lot”.

What next in Manumakonda?

The GP team is working to ensure both quality and quantity of toilets in the GP additional to planning for water sustainability, which is crucial to human existence in general and usage of toilets in particular.

Manumakonda GP being a tribal village is trapped in many issues that hinder the success of sanitation. Very low income families which have no funds for construction and increase of transportation costs which further increase the price of raw materials.

Rural Marts if made functional could lessen the price burden.