Fruits of hard-work didn’t last long

Introduction:

Sustainability of any initiative requires a proper planning that is exclusive of any political party, increase in population, change/modification in schemes, etc… and be able to accommodate any changes that are likely to happen. Lack of vision and planning will impact on sustenance. Kunchanapalli Gram Panchayat (GP) once a Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) village is slipped back as there is no plan for future maintenance.

Kunchanpalli is a major Gram Panchayat in Tadepalli Mandal of Guntur district. In the beginning of 2009, the GP has been working on sanitation issues such as 100% construction and Utilization of toilets, Solid and Liquid Management practices, etc… The GP “Shubhram” award, a prize money of Rs.30000, by the then State Government in 2010; and the Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) award in 2012 for achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status. The village is however still waiting for the funds sanctioned as award money under Nirmal Gram Puraskar.
Reasons for Slippage:

The exact reason of slippage of Kunchanapalli cannot be pointed towards any single change rather this shift can be seen as a result of many changes in the GP such as change in elected representatives, governmental programs, policies, lack of follow-up, lack of planning for sustaining the efforts and lack of co-operation from residents, replacement of efforts for new programmes in place of old programmes. In addition, sprouting of new households in the GP and lack of toilets in those houses put the GP back on the track of Open Defecation.

With the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) coming into existence, once again the GP has been concentrating on building toilets and reduce Open Defecation. A baseline survey conducted by GP team identified that 20 households need toilets and the process of construction is now in progress.

The lesson Kunchanapalli teaches about the important role of planning for sustainability, otherwise the efforts of the hard work will not last long. Most GPs that have achieved the ODF status under SBM should also concentrate on the lines of sustaining the status.

Kunchanapalli Village, being situated on the Highway there is quite fair chance of expansion of real estate and eventually in future the prices of land increase as well as fall short of land availability for toilets construction.

The GP therefore needs to come up with a plan for next 5-10 years of estimating population growth and its rectification. Another interesting lesson that the GP can draw is from the Students of the Primary School who organised themselves as a “School Swachh Bharat” team. This team comprising 13 members ensures daily sanitation at the school level.

Kunchanapalli GP slipped back to open defecation as a result of lack of planning exercise therefore repeated efforts are being put in to achieve sanitation in the GP. This reflects on the need for proper planning to sustain sanitation as a part of SBM and lack of such planning might lead GPs into insanitary conditions in a few years.