Kumarini Palli, a Gram Panchayat (GP) in Vallur Mandal, YSR Cuddapah District was declared open defecation free (ODF) on April 12 2016. In 2008, the GP was awarded Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) for achieving total sanitation.

There are 149 households in the GP with three habitations- 1) Kumarunipalli (53 HHs), Kumarini Palli Harijana Wada (68 HHs) and Agraharam (also called Kothakota) (28 HHS). Of the 149, 73 households already have access to toilets. The households built the toilets under various previous schemes before 2008. With the construction and usage of toilets in the remaining 76 households, added because of divided joint families and migrated families, the GP became ODF in Swachh Bharat Mission.

Achieved and Slipped

The village slipped after achieving the NGP because of no follow up, further new families added owing to division of joint families and newly migrated households after 2008. It is evident that, post 2008, no focused efforts were made towards sanitation with reference to construction of toilets. The newly added households over a period of time (76 HHs) had no toilets but practiced open defecation. This caused the slippage.

Coverage of 76 households under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)

The district administration is targeting GPs in a phased manner. In the first phase, two potential GPs per mandal had been identified. Thus, 100 GPs from 50 mandals in the district were selected to achieve ODF. Kumarini Palli is one of the two GPs so identified with an aim to achieve ODF in the Vallur mandal. The reason behind choosing the GP in the first phase is that the GP has already achieved total sanitation in 2008. The construction of toilets began after conducting a survey during the month of November 2015. The GP built 76 toilets just in 4 months from November 24 to March 2016.
The Mandal team conducted Gram Sabhas and regular sensitization activities under SBM. The Sarpanch of the GP, Smt. Soubhagya-vathi and Sri. Venkata Rami Reddy, who served as sarpanch for two terms in whose term the GP got NGP award in 2008, supported the activities. Under close coordination and monitoring, 35 households built toilets by utilizing incentive under the scheme. The households received incentives immediately after construction (within one week). This was possible because of quick geotagging, processing by Mandal team and availability of funds.

**Timely release of incentive plays role..**

Timely release of incentives to the households has really been a motivating factor for other households. Witnessing this, another 20 households took up constructing toilets under SBM. Indeed, these households had a deaf ear despite sensitization activities and regular motivation by officials. The quick payments encouraged the households to construct toilets individually.

**Solution for financial difficulties..**

Although interested, 8 households explained their inability to initiate construction as they did not have money to start the work. Under the SBM, beneficiaries receive the first installment after completion of the basement. Up to the basement, the beneficiary has to bear the expenditure. Hence, the beneficiaries requested the Mandal officials to construct toilets with the incentive. Responding to the request made and based on the advice by Mandal officials, Sri. Prabhakar, Mandal Resource Coordinator acted as a third party agency and constructed toilets for the 8 households with his own source of funds. Later, the households repaid him after receiving the incentive.

**Solution to stubborn.**

Still, there were 13 households to be covered for attaining ODF status. Sri. Prabhakar made a door-to-door visit and assured them to construct toilets for them, as he did for 8 households. In addition, Mandal team and Sarpanch held frequent meetings to motivate and persuade them. Nevertheless, all the efforts were in vain. The households were rigid, expressing their comfort in open defecation. Finally, the Mandal officials forcibly convinced them with a warning that their pension, Ration and other services from the government be withdrawn if they would not construct toilets. The warning of stoppage of facilities really worked, as the households showed their consent to have toilets. Sri. Prabhakar constructed toilets for these households too.

**Sustainability of ODF..**

Post ODF follow-up is critical to sustaining the ODF. However, Mandal officials and GP team made efforts as part of meeting the targets, regular follow-up mechanism need to be worked out. As part of this the GP and Mandal team proposing vigilance committees in the village for monitoring, fine and severe warnings with respect to temporary stoppage of Pension and Ration facilities in the matter of families who continue to practice open defecation.