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***Sanitation status (Access, Use and Quality) in the
Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation Bus Stations
from Sriperumbudur to Thiyagaraya Nagar, Chennai***

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I am thankful to the passengers, TNSTC officials and others for their co-operation to respond to our queries related to the study. I am thankful to the students of M.A. Local Governance (2014-16 Batch), Dept. of Local Governance, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD) for their primary inputs from the field. I am thankful to Ms. Sreeja K, and Ms. Rajasree MR, both Ph.D. Scholars from the Dept. of Local Governance, RGNIYD for their additional inputs.

Abstract

Health, hygiene and sanitation are integral factors essential for realising social development. Sanitation must be all-inclusive and options be available for people from different economic standards and varying needs. User-friendly sanitation facilities particularly for women, aged and differently abled population are absolutely essential to achieve the goals of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

While taking requisite strides to transform this country into a 'Swachh Bharat', it is imperative that the sanitation status of public transport facilities is put through a scanner. And, metro-city services of Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSTC) are being used by lakhs of people in Chennai city and its suburbs on a daily basis. It is also noted that most of the commuters use multiple modes of travel like auto rickshaw/ share auto, train, bus, etc. as part of their daily mobility.

It is significant to note that a large cross-section of the commuters in the metro-city services in Chennai is women. And the percentage of aged population among the commuters is also significant, owing to different reasons. And, presence of adequate and clean sanitation facilities in the bus stations has become an important necessity.

This paper attempts to analyse the sanitation status in the TNSTC bus stations in Chennai and suburban areas, as a pilot study. The study focused on mapping and documentation of the sanitation services with thrust on Access, Use and Quality of the facilities available in an important route from Sriperumbudur to Thiyagaraya Nagar (T-Nagar), Chennai. This was taken up as a social responsibility by the faculty, students and Ph.D. scholars of the Department of Local Governance, RGNIYD with an aim to highlight the seriousness of the issue with the concerned authorities for necessary follow-up.

Key words: Swachh Bharat, Sanitation Status, Access, Use, Quality, TNSTC Bus Stations, Chennai

1. Background

Realising the importance of sanitation in the overall development of a country, Mahatma Gandhi included sanitation as a major component of his constructive programme. According to Gandhiji, promotion of sanitation was very close to his heart and he advocated that 'Cleanliness is next to godliness'. He wrote extensively on topics related to sanitation, hygiene and environment. He made exhaustive comments on cleanliness and good habits, and its relationship with good health. Perhaps he is the greatest leader of any country who realised the significance of sanitation and hygiene in the overall development of a country. He even made a fervent appeal to all Indians to become missionaries in hygiene and sanitation.

Government of India has taken number of initiatives to bring positive changes in this sector. The rural sanitation programme in India was introduced way back in 1954 as a part of the First Five Year Plan. Central Rural Sanitation Programme (1986), Total Sanitation Campaign (1999), Nirmal Gram Puraskar (2003) and Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (2012) are some of the notable ones. In spite of various programmes and initiatives, the sanitation scenario in the country needed a giant leap in terms of coverage and quality.

President of India, in his address to the Joint Session of Parliament on 9 June 2014, articulated the vision of the Government of India on the Swachh Bharat Campaign (SBA). On the occasion of the 68th Independence Day, the Prime Minister of India placed sanitation on top of the Government's agenda. In order to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation, the SBA was formally launched by the Prime Minister on 02 October 2014. It aims to achieve Swachh Bharat by 2019, as a fitting tribute to the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, which shall mean improving the levels of cleanliness through Solid and Liquid Waste Management activities and making the country Open Defecation Free (ODF), clean and sanitised.¹

2. Scope

It needs no emphasis that health, hygiene and sanitation are integral factors essential for realising social development. Sanitation must be all-inclusive and options be available for people from different economic standards and varying needs. User-friendly sanitation facilities particularly for women, aged and differently abled population are absolutely essential to achieve the goals of Swachh Bharat. From the perspective of planning for sustainability and ensuring good governance in any given sector, cross-cutting implications of lack of adequate sanitation facilities need to be analysed. It is significant to have a comprehensive approach to public health, hygiene and sanitation with scope for multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional convergence in the field.

While taking requisite strides to transform this country into a 'Swachh Bharat', it is imperative that the sanitation status of public transport facilities is put through a scanner. It is reported that the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSC) has a fleet strength of 23,078 buses including 2,239 spare buses as on 31 March 2016.² And, it is noted that the all State Transport Undertakings (STU) in Tamil Nadu operate at an average of 94.92 lakh kilometre per day.³

Metro-city services of TNSC are being used by lakhs of people in Chennai city and its suburbs on a daily basis. The commuters include students, teachers, officials, professionals, vendors and people from all walks of life. Though most of the passengers in the metro-city services of TNSC travel for a short distance, it is noted that many of them change the bus to avoid delay in commuting. And, many of them use multiple modes of travel like auto rickshaw / share auto, train, bus, etc. as part of their daily mobility. It is noted that a large cross-section of the commuters in the metro-city services in Chennai are women, unlike many other cities of India. And the percentage of aged population among the commuters is also significant, as many of

them were engaged in gainful employment after attaining the official age of retirement and also due to personal reasons for marketing, social visits, etc. Presence of safe and hygienic sanitation facilities in such public transportation facilities catering to the basic requirements of the population needs no emphasis. Presence of sanitation facilities in Bus stations is very much necessary for all commuters, and it is all the more important for girls, women and aged population. Hence, presence of adequate and clean sanitation facilities in the TNSTC bus stations has become an important necessity in this regard.

In this context, a study on the sanitation status in TNSTC bus stations on a busy route in Chennai has been taken up by the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), Sriperumbudur. The study focused on mapping and documentation of the sanitation services in the select TNSTC bus stations. The access, use and quality of sanitation facilities available in the TNSTC bus stations in an important route, Sriperumbudur to Thiyagaraya Nagar (T-Nagar), Chennai, was examined as part of the study. The study was taken up as part of the social responsibility of the students and faculty of the Department of Local Governance, RGNIYD for analysing the sanitation status in public utilities leading to advocacy with the concerned authorities.

3. Objectives

The study was taken up with the following objectives.

- To analyse the sanitation status with thrust on access, use and quality of the facilities available in the TNSTC bus stations in the select route.
- To put forward suggestions towards improving the sanitation status in the TNSTC bus stations, in the context of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
- To submit the report on sanitation status to the concerned authorities for necessary follow-up.

4. Methodology

Survey was carried out to ascertain the sanitation status in the selected bus route of Chennai. The following tools were employed for collection of data from the field.

- Observation schedule to capture the Access, Use and Quality of sanitation status in the TNSTC Bus stations.
- Interview schedule for the passengers at the TNSTC bus stations.
- Interview schedule for the officials at the TNSTC bus stations.

5. Transport System in Chennai - An Overview

Mobility is one of the most fundamental features of economic activity in any country. The economies that possess and enable greater mobility would have better opportunities to develop than those suffering from lesser mobility. Reduced mobility affects development of a country whereas greater mobility acts as a catalyst for development. Mobility addresses the basic need of going from one place to another, be it for personal cause, professional purpose, family reason, social engagements, etc. Mobility of people, goods and services is very important for realising development in any economy. Thus mobility can be viewed as an important indicator of development.

Transport system plays an important role as a catalyst in transforming the economic, social and political geography in any part of the world. It connects people to education, health, public distribution, and other services. It enables production and supply of goods around the world. It enables people to interact leading to generation and dissemination of knowledge, formation of positive attitudes and acquiring of skills that leads to growth and development in several aspects. It enables them to take part in meetings, discussions, training programmes, etc. and acquire and enhance the leadership skills. When the transport system is efficient, it provides economic and social opportunities that result in significant impact in the

economy. Taking appropriate steps to increase the reach, extent, effectiveness and efficiency of transport system is significant in this context.

Vision 2023 document unveiled by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu aims 'to make the State, India's most prosperous and progressive State by 2023 with the status of the poverty-free first state and place the state firmly on the path of an Accelerated, Innovative and Inclusive growth and accords top priority to an efficient, reliable and safe transport system'.⁴ The policy note indicates that the Government of Tamil Nadu aims to transform the State 'where its people enjoy all the basic services of a Modern Society and live in harmonious engagement with the environment and with the rest of the world'.⁵

According to the Policy note 2016-17 released by the Transport Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, the number of scheduled services as on 31 March 2016 is 20,839. The total staff strength including reserve is 1,48,411 as on 31 March 2016.⁶ As a result of various measures taken by the Government of Tamil Nadu to improve the performance of STUs, the performance indicators have shown positive trend. It is noted that 'Fuel efficiency increased from 5.25 Kilometre per litre in March 2011 to 5.29 Kilometre per litre during March 2016.'⁷

The STUs in Tamil Nadu have been consistently bagging national awards in achieving the best physical parameters such as fleet utilisation, fuel efficiency, tyre performance and performance in operational cost.

6. The Process

As part of the professional assignments and personal engagements, the faculty of RGNIYD used to visit Chennai City in general and the Thiyagaraya Nagar (T-Nagar) area in particular. And T-Nagar, being the commercial hub

of the city, is an important area for visit by all. As part of the visit to T-Nagar, break journey in the bus stations in the select route was also made earlier. The personal experiences and observation by the faculty and other members of the research team and inputs gathered / comments heard from other passengers during the journey also formed the base for taking up this initiative.

It needs no emphasis that to realise Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in the country in letter and spirit, there is a significant change needed in the sanitation status of public transport system. As part of the curriculum for the M.A. Local Governance students, Field studies is a core course which provide opportunities and scope to undertake such field-specific assignments leading to gather realistic experiences from the field. Based on inputs gathered from the field through professional and personal experiences and discussions on linking Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to a field assignment, the faculty and students of the Department of Local Governance decided to take up this field assignment.

The discussions were facilitated by the faculty, who formulated the draft schedules for data collection, with active inputs from the students. The schedules for data collection developed to undertake a similar survey in the suburban railway stations in Chennai were modified appropriately. After finalising the schedules for data collection, an orientation session was organised prior to the field visits, in which the student-researchers were made aware about the protocol and procedures to be adopted while taking up such assignments in the field, involving the cross-section of the society.

The students were divided into three groups of four students each, ensuring the spread of boys and girls in each group. Each group was assigned with specific responsibility to visit the designated TNSTC bus stations for the study. The students were oriented about the nuances of documentation using the

schedules developed for this study. They were instructed to use the 'Observation schedule' in the beginning and document their observations, comments, reflections and suggestions. Subsequent to that, they were asked to interview some of the passengers available in the bus stations during the time of their visit. The schedule for interview with the passengers was kept very short towards consuming less time for the interview, as the passengers, in general, would be in a hurry to move to the next destination.

Wherever possible, efforts were taken to interact with the officials present in the TNSTC bus station towards seeking their views, comments and suggestions. The schedule for interaction with the officials in the bus station was also kept very short to gather only those data needed to cross-check with the information noted as part of the observation and interactions with the passengers, in addition to document their suggestions. The team members were specially instructed to interact with the officials after seeking their convenience and without causing any disturbance to their routine duties and functions. It was also instructed them not to adopt any 'pushy approach' during the data collection, if the designated officials seems reluctant to share their views and comments.

As part of the study, seven TNSTC bus stations between Sriperumbudur and T-Nagar, Chennai were visited by the team. The members of the team made note of the details of their visit using the schedules. As part of the study, interactions with number of passengers and officials were made and documented.

After collection of data from the field, editing, tabulation and analysis of the data was undertaken. In all stages of the study, the students were involved right from conceiving the issue up to the preparation of the report, keeping in view for increasing their sensitivity towards the social issue, developing social commitment and enhancing their skills as social researchers.

7. Discussions and Analysis

In this section, the sanitation status in TNSTC bus stations visited as part of the study is being classified into three sub-sections like Access, Use and Quality.

7.1. Access

In terms of access to sanitary facilities, the following aspects were observed.

- Availability of the sanitation facility in the bus station.
- Convenience to locate the sanitation facility.
- Presence of name board.
- Presence of multi-lingual name board.
- Availability of signages, pointing to the facility.
- Comfortable entry for differently abled.
- Convenient entry for women.

At the time of field visits, hundreds of passengers were cited in all the bus stations. Out of seven TNSTC stations visited in the select route from Sriperumbudur to T-Nagar, the facility was available in six stations only. And, no such provision could be seen near Porur bus station, though this bus station is used by lot of commuters throughout day and night. Looking into the quantum of commuters using the Bus station and being the starting point for many buses, the need for sanitary facilities at Porur Bus Station is very high. In addition to the passengers, provision of such facility would be comfortable to the TNSTC staff as well.

Regarding the indication regarding the Name Board in the bus stations, it was noted that the same was found in six bus stations with sanitary facilities, except Porur. However, the name board in the bus stations in three bus stations (Sriperumbudur, Iyyappanthangal and Guindy) were indicated in Tamil only, whereas the name boards were found in multi-lingual pattern in Poonamallee, Saidapet and T-Nagar. 'E-toilets' were found in Guindy Bus

Station and 'Namma toilets' were found in Poonamallee Bus Station respectively, which has multi-language name boards in Tamil and English.

Convenience to locate the facility, with prominent display of indicators/ directional arrows/ signages is very important, as that would be convenient to the commuters. It is noted that the signage about the location of sanitary facilities was found only in T-Nagar, with the boards written in Tamil and English. As lot of persons from different parts of the country have been working in Chennai city and its suburban areas, presence of multi-lingual name board and signages at the bus stations is very much necessary.

Hassle-free entry for differently abled persons in using the sanitary facility is an important aspect, that needs to be viewed more as a 'Right' than as a mere 'Facility'. Regarding the presence of the sanitary facility for differently abled persons, it was noted that sanitation facilities for the differently abled was available in five out of six bus stations (except Iyyappanthangal bus station) in the selected route. However, the facility available in Saidapet bus station is not comfortable for persons with physical disabilities as there is no adequate space to move the wheel chair.

It is noted that privacy in entry to the facility is an important aspect that encourage/ discourage the commuters, especially women, from using the facility. Entry to the sanitary facility should be made in such a way that the privacy of users could be maintained. For example, the main entrance of the facility should not be seen from outside, towards maintaining their privacy of the users. However, only in two bus stations (Sriperumbudur and T-Nagar), the entry to the sanitary facility was noted to be convenient for women.

7.2. Use

In this sub-section, the following aspects regarding the use of sanitation facility were noted.

- Status of facility - Open or locked.
- Type of services – Free or Pay & Use.
- Display of user fee.
- Availability of separate facility for male/female.
- Availability of separate units for urinal/toilet.
- Number of units available.
- Water, Lighting and ventilation.

In all the six TNSTC bus stations in the select route with sanitary units, the facility was found 'Open' at the time of visit. But, in Guindy Bus Station, it is noted that there is a person who 'regulates the usage of the facility', by keeping the facility locked and the 'Operator' keeping the key. However, during the interactions with the 'Operator' at Guindy, it is noted that the person 'regulating' the use of public toilet facility was not formally authorised, but he is doing the assignment on his own. It is significant to note that the 'Operator' is charging money from the users of the sanitary facility. During the discussions with the 'Operator', it was known that he used to keep the facility neat, clean and then kept under locked condition, on his own for the last many years. It was also informed by him that he did not force anyone to pay for the use of toilets, but collect 'whatever' they give to him out of their 'own interest'. However, the research team observed that he used to collect user charges from those who use the sanitary facility. Though the initiative by the 'Operator' to carry out the upkeep and maintenance of the toilet may be encouraged, but the manner in which he 'regulate the facility' without any formal authorisation from the civic authorities needs to be looked into.

About the type of service (Free or Pay & Use) offered by the sanitary facility, it is noted that pay and use facility was available in five stations and free service was observed in Iyyappanthangal bus station. It is observed that out of five stations with pay and use facility, the display of charges for use of facility was noted at Sriperumbudur Bus Station only.

Regarding the availability of separate sanitation facilities for male and female, it is noted that all the six bus stations have separate facility.

About the availability of water facility in the sanitary units, it is noted that in all the bus stations, storage tanks and running water taps were cited. But in Iyyappanthangal bus station, the workers maintaining the facility remarked that due to scarcity of water, the pipes are not functioning regularly and the water is stored in two tanks outside. And, it is noted that no running water pipe was found in the sanitary toilets in Saidapet Bus Station and the users have to take water from a big water tank kept in the corner of the facility.

Presence of sufficient lighting is important in a sanitary facility and it becomes a necessity during twilight conditions and night. However, sufficient lighting was not found in any of the bus stations during the visit. Though light points were there, but bulbs were not present or not in working condition in certain places. This indicates the lack of minimum maintenance in such public utilities.

Similar to lighting, adequate ventilation is also important in sanitary facilities. However, sufficient ventilation could not be seen in the bus stations except Sriperumbudur and Poonamallee as noted during the field visits.

Field visits in the bus stations were carried out at different points of time. During the visits, it is noted that the average number of passengers in the bus stations varied from 100 to 500 approximately. The least number of passengers were noted in Iyyppanthangal Bus Station and the most number of passengers were found in Guindy and T-Nagar Bus Stations at the time of visits. Presence of such huge number of commuters at any given time is a pointer to the need for providing sanitary facilities in the bus stations. The need for such basic facility is all the more important as a large segment of the passengers were girls, women and aged persons.

7.3. Quality

In this sub-section, the following aspects regarding the quality of sanitation facility were documented.

- General cleanliness.
- Status of flooring in the sanitation facility.
- Presence of a roaster for maintenance with details of responsible persons.
- Availability of wash basin for hand washing.
- Presence of essential items for maintenance of the facility like bucket, mug, soap, broom and brush and dust bin.
- Provision for a suggestion box.
- Display of sanitary message/instructions.

General cleanliness of the sanitary facility was rated on a five point scale, ranging from Very Good to Very Poor. During the visits, it was observed that in all the bus stations with sanitary units, the general cleanliness could be rated as 'Poor'.

Cleanliness of the floor in the sanitary facility was another important aspect noted. It was rated using a five point scale ranging from Very Clean to Very Dirty. Regarding the upkeep and maintenance of flooring in the sanitation facility in the bus stations, it was noted as 'Not clean' in one bus station (T-Nagar) and in the remaining four bus stations, it could be commented as 'Very Dirty'.

Presence of a Work roaster/ Schedule for maintenance in the public utility is a sign of streamlining the work of the staff deployed for the task. No sign of roaster/ schedule for maintenance of the facility could be seen in the bus stations during the field visits. It is also important to display the contact number of maintenance supervisor/ staff so that any comment / suggestion on the upkeep of the facility could be communicated by the commuters.

During the field visits, it is noted that the name and contact number of Supervisor was displayed in Guindy, Saidapet and T-Nagar Bus Stations only.

Provision of a wash basin for hand wash is a necessity in any public sanitary facility was not available in any of the bus stations visited except Poonamallee. The general items for cleaning and maintenance of facilities like bucket and mug were found in the bus stations but they were not found in sufficient number with respect to the number of sanitary facilities. In many bus stations, used bottles of soft drinks/ drinking water and used pots of paint/ other liquids were modified and kept for use by the commuters, which is a manifestation of poor thrust on hygiene and sanitation. Dust bin in the sanitation facility was observed in all the stations except Saidapet at the time of field visit. However, it was noted that maintenance in almost all the Bus stations was below average. And no message or instruction regarding sanitation and hygiene could be seen in any of the bus stations. However, in the E-toilet in Guindy, appropriate use of the facility and safe hygiene practices was displayed in multi-lingual pattern. It also displays an instruction like 'drink plenty of water and live healthy'. However, in comparison with the conventional toilet, usage of E-toilet is relatively low, as noted in Guindy. This may be because of the lack of understanding and exposure about the facility established in the e-toilets.

Presence of a complaints/suggestion box was also not seen in any of the stations visited during the study.

Regarding the presence of maintenance staff in the sanitation facility, an average of two persons was cited in all the bus stations, except at Guindy.

8. Major Impressions

Some of the major impressions regarding access, use and quality of the sanitation facilities noted during the study are given below.

- One out of seven TNSTC bus stations visited as part of the study, no sanitary facility for the passengers was found in Porur Bus Station. And, even where the facility was available, it was easy to locate them in four out of six bus Stations only, i.e., Iyyappanthalangal, Guindy, Poonamallee and T-Nagar.
- Three bus stations have the name board indicated in Tamil only. And, presence of a multi-lingual name board could be seen in Poonamallee, Saidapet and T-Nagar.
- The access and entry to the unit was not friendly for women in Guindy and Saidapet.
- In all the Bus stations except Iyyappanthalangal and Saidapet Bus stations, the sanitation facility was convenient for differently abled persons.
- Pay and use facility was noted in five bus stations but only in one bus station (Sriperumbudur), the display of user charges was noted. During the interactions, some of the passengers mentioned that the user fee being collected from the commuters vary from time to time.
- Availability of tank for storage of water was noted in all the bus stations with sanitary facilities.
- Sufficient lighting and ventilation was found lacking in all the bus stations with sanitary facilities, except Sriperumbudur and Poonamallee.
- On an average, about 100 - 500 passengers were found in the bus stations at the time of visit that include people from diverse demographic features, especially women and elderly. This points towards the need for sanitary facilities in the bus station. During interactions, it was known that in certain cases, the passengers had to stay for 30 to 45 minutes waiting for the bus towards their destination. Thus provision of sanitary facilities is imperative.
- General cleanliness in and around the sanitation facility in all the bus stations except T-Nagar could be rated as 'Poor'. General cleanliness

is marginally better in T-Nagar bus station and it could be rated as 'Average'.

- Display of work roaster/ schedule for maintenance and details of the maintenance staff and supervisor could not be seen in Sriperumbudur, Poonamallee and Iyyappanthangal.
- No message or instruction regarding sanitation and hygiene could be cited in all the bus stations visited during the period except E-toilets in Guindy.
- Presence of a suggestion box could not be located in any bus station.
- On an average, two maintenance staff were seen in all the bus stations with 'Pay and Use' facility. However, only one maintenance staff was cited in Iyyappanthangal bus station where the facility is 'Free' but cleanliness is very poor due to water scarcity.
- More over the maintenance of infrastructure in terms of door, lights, bucket and mug in all the public toilets is very poor especially in Saidapet station.
- While reviewing the policy notes issued by the Transport Department, Govt. of Tamil Nadu during 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17, it is noted that the word 'Sanitation' was not even found. However, it is seen that there is a mention of 'toilet facilities located on the route of long distance buses' in the section 'Motels' in the policy document.⁸ In addition, the detailed breakdown of expenses indicated in the policy document also did not reveal any expenses made for provision of sanitary facilities in the bus stations.
- In the 'Customer Related Management' section of the SETC Manual, there is a mention of providing 'toilet facilities and seating arrangement at bus stands'.⁹ However, this provision as part of the customer satisfaction was not given the requisite priority as noted during the field visits.

9. ***Suggestions***

The following suggestions are put forward towards improving the sanitation status in terms of access, use and quality in the TNSTC bus stations.

- In all the TNSTC bus stations, the sanitation facility be made available to the passengers on top priority. And separate facility for male and female is also to be made available.
- In those bus stations without any sanitary facility, introduction of 'Namma toilets' (Pre-fabricated toilet units with Fibre Reinforced Polymer structure) successfully operated by the Corporation of Chennai in many parts of the city, need to be installed without any further delay as an interim measure. Subsequently, the necessary initiatives be made for construction of permanent infrastructure.
- Proper indication/message about the location of the facility be made available at the bus stations. And multi-lingual sign boards with proper message leading to the facility are to be kept at prominent places for the convenience of passengers from different parts of the country.
- Hassle-free entry to the sanitary facility is to be made available, keeping the interest of differently abled.
- While constructing the facilities, special care is to be taken to keep the entry to the facility in such a manner as to protect the privacy of women passengers.
- It is mandatory to display the user charges to be charged from the commuters. The quantum of user fee generated from the public utilities cannot be the criteria for maintaining the functioning of pay and use facilities. It is noted that the user fee collected from the passengers is not adequate enough to run and maintain the sanitary facility neat and clean. The poor collection of user fees may be attributed due to avoidance of the passengers owing to poor up-keep of the facility, which is cyclical in nature. The Transport Department, Government of Tamil Nadu need to run the facilities and maintain it properly in the larger interests of hygiene and hygiene of the

population. If required, the State Government need to think of providing additional financial support to the Transport Department for the regular operation of the sanitary facility, keeping the larger interests of health, hygiene and environment.

- Regular maintenance of the sanitation facilities available in the bus stations has to be done, with appropriate monitoring system. The details (including phone number) of the persons responsible for cleaning/maintenance/ monitoring are to be displayed in all the public utilities with the work roaster/ schedule.
- Provision of a scientific waste management system that includes the positioning of an incinerator for safe disposal of sanitary napkins is to be installed in the TNSTC Bus stations.
- A suggestion box may be kept near to the Sanitary facility in the TNSTC bus stations. And the complaints/ suggestions from the box are to be taken up at regular intervals and appropriate remedial actions taken.

10. Conclusion

The survey revealed the real status of sanitation facilities in the TNSTC bus stations in the select route. It showed that the existing sanitary facilities were not only insufficient but unhygienic and unsuitable for use in most of the bus stations in the select route. This has led to the existing facilities under-utilised or abandoned by the users. This point to the need for a user-centric approach in which appropriate efforts be made to increase usage of such facilities, regular maintenance and upkeep of the existing units with proper water supply, etc. Efforts be made to inculcate ownership among the community about the need and significance of such facilities in the general interest.

The report will be submitted to the concerned authorities of TNSTC/ officials of the Transport Department, Govt. of Tamil Nadu for their information and necessary follow-up. A study of such kind may lead to study of sanitation

facilities in the public places as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in the country, which will provide useful inputs towards realising the objectives of the campaign in letter and spirit. It reminds us that unless necessary initiatives and interventions are undertaken to keep our public utilities and public places neat, clean and hygienic, Swachh Bharat will always remain as a dream only and can never turn to be a reality.

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