



"If we do not keep our backyards clean, our *Swaraj* will have a foul stench."  
— Mahatma Gandhi

# Swachha Dharwad

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## INTRODUCTION

Most of the times we hear public servants complaining that the concerned departments lack monetary resources to maintain cleanliness in a city. I used to think that it was indeed the case. However, a recent occurrence changed my views about this. My uncle, aunt and cousin visited both USA and Cuba recently. When asked, all of them unanimously said that Cuba is much better than USA in maintaining cleanliness in public places. This clearly shows that it is not necessary to be an economic superpower to be a clean country. What is required is the will and commitment to become a clean and hygienic country.



Comparing beautiful Cuban precincts with two streets of Dharwad.

So how can we maintain highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene in our city? I have tried to put together a few ideas. I cannot stress more on two aspects of this entry i.e. collaborate and inspire. Both of these are necessary in any good venture. In the case at hand, collaboration with good urban design firms, think tanks, NGOs and other organizations is necessary as it enables us to get the benefits of the detailed work done by them. And it is plain common sense to consult respective experts before doing something just as we consult doctors when ill. Inspiring the workers, people and getting inspired ourselves is also very important because

ultimately it is inspiration that pushes us towards becoming/ being the best. Great personalities become great personalities by getting inspired. Similarly, for a city to become great, the city needs to be inspired. I have tried to come up with some ways to get inspired and to inspire others.

### **Who is the customer?**

The proposal is about sanitation and cleanliness in public areas. Hence, the customer for this proposal is ultimately the common man/woman. This project will also create great employment opportunities. But since this proposal will be pitched to the government and should be implemented by the government, even the government is our customer.

### **Current conditions and need for action**

The twin cities of Hubballi and Dharwad together have a population close to 9,50,000 and area of 202.3 sq. km divided into 67 wards. Even if a person generates about 100 grams of waste per day, everyday 110 tons of waste is generated. There are a total of 226 containers and 63 contractors have been appointed to carry out the task of cleaning these regularly but the job is not done properly. In some parts of Hubballi-Dharwad garbage is collected from the houses itself. But there is no provision for waste segregation anywhere.

Cleanliness and sanitation are essential to both physical and mental health. A large majority of communicable diseases like malaria, dengue, typhoid, tuberculosis, cholera etc. can be prevented by just maintaining clean surroundings. Stakes are high. Health benefits of maintaining cleanliness are abundant. However, it is not just because of health benefits but cleanliness should be maintained in cities for better aesthetic appeal and pleasurable experience. There is no need of much explanation as to why we need clean cities. It is our responsibility and right to have clean surroundings.

### **Challenges in implementation**

#### **A. General**

There will be several problems in implementing this idea. Most important of them all is changing the mindset of the existing employees in the system. Getting them convinced that the way things are working right now is unacceptable and undesirable and they have to make an effort and bring about a transformation.

Corruption is one of the main challenges because no matter how much money is allocated for the solutions suggested in this proposal, if it is not spent properly, the system is not going to improve. Corruption not only affects the suggestions of this proposal but everything related to government and society in general. However, solutions to eradicate corruption are beyond the scope of this proposal.

#### **B. Financial**

Another challenge in implementation of this proposal is getting additional funds from the state and central governments to cover the costs of hiring urban design firm, product designers, technology firms to create apps etc., installing garbage bins, building toilets(one time investment) and minor costs of conducting

workshops/sessions for employees. However, all this is **needed**. And the currently running programs like 'Smart City' in which the central government selects cities and provides them with huge funds to implement various things at the ground level. Twin cities of Hubei-Dharwad have been selected and will be receiving around INR 1000 crore. This money along with other regular central and state government fundings should be enough to implement the solution suggested in this proposal. The amount needed is not big if government officials use the resources efficiently. The resources in the government are abundant and they should be utilized in proper ways.

## PROJECT OUTLINE

### Better Urban Planning

Urban planners to cities are what doctors to patients or teachers to students. They know how the problems of the cities can be solved. They know things like how traffic, waste, market areas, parking spaces, public spaces etc. should be managed in order to create better experience for the people. Without good urban planners and architects, a city cannot be raised to high standards. All the international cities like London, New York, Amsterdam, Paris etc. have good urban planners working for them. An urban design firm that I visited recently has done great research in solid waste management and sanitation along with other issues of a city. They had also done a great job in finding solutions to these problems. We just have to ask them how we should do it. Hence it is very important to hire a good urban design firm. A local firm should work in association with a good firm from outside. Things we can do with the help of such firms are—

- Redesign vegetable market and other major public places with large footfalls. Give pleasant experience to both customers and vendors.
- Redesign slums with ideas of affordable housing at minimum expenditure. Every home should have a toilet, a clean front yard and a backyard.
- Build adequate number of public toilets with the goal of making Hubballi-Dharwad Open Defecation/Urination-Free. Lack of toilets in public places is a bigger problem for women. Public toilets should be beautifully designed and kept clean, so that they become preferred destinations.

### Garbage bins at public places

Garbage bins should be installed in all the public places—markets, lakes, temples, gardens, campuses of educational institutions etc. The people, especially in markets, don't have a choice right now to dispose of the waste in a proper way. For instance, when someone eats a banana in the market, he has no option but to throw it haphazardly. Beautifully designed garbage bins should be placed at regular distances. People should be tempted to use them. Though there are a few places where garbage bins have been installed, their surroundings are not inviting. Also the most important aspect of waste segregation is not taken into account.

Segregating waste into biodegradable, recyclable and non-recyclable categories solves most of the problems and has many advantages. Waste management becomes difficult because it is not segregated. Biodegradable waste starts decaying and giving out foul smell. Because of this, the other waste, which can

be recycled, also becomes inaccessible and hence unusable. If we segregate the waste, biodegradable waste can be made into compost and can be used as organic fertilizer. Or it can be used to generate bio gas and Hubballi-Dharwad can become the first cities in the country to have hotels where only bio gas is used to cook! Or this bio gas can be used by some sort of community kitchen. The recyclable waste can be turned into useful products thus reducing the waste that would have been generated. Only the non-recyclable waste goes to the dumping yard and more ways to reuse this can be thought of.

Sorting and segregation of waste should be done in homes as well. Provision should be made to collect segregated waste from homes to make things easier.

Waste sorting facilities should be set up in the outskirts of twin cities which also create employment.

### Inspire Laborers

Why inspiration is important has been discussed briefly in the introduction. Inspiration means the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something. If we manage to inspire the laborers to do their work properly and if they realize that a great part of responsibility lies on their shoulders in making Hubballi-Dharwad world class cities, our job is almost done. Here are some ways to do this—

- Improve their working atmosphere. They should feel that their leaders and people care for them. For this, things like annual trips of a day or two can be planned and other ways should be explored.
- Educate them about the best practices and hazards of worst practices (Ex: burning plastic. Burning plastic is highly dangerous as it releases carcinogenic gases i.e. dioxins. The people affected most by this are the laborers themselves because of their proximity to the burning heap). Laborers often tend to set heaps of garbage on fire because they don't know the harmful effects of the act. They should be educated about the harmful effects—maybe videos can be showed and pictorial booklets can be given to all of them.
- Show them good examples. Conduct small workshops. Show them good films. Make them read (not just about best practices but good literature). The point is to increase the level of satisfaction in their lives.

### Inspire People

Inspiring people has the same reasons as to why the laborers should be inspired. If people can be inspired to work toward making Hubballi-Dharwad world class cities, nothing can prevent it from happening. We can use these ways to inspire/ create awareness about things like—

- Reduce plastic usage—promote cloth bags.
- Waste segregation at homes—how and benefits.
- Using garbage bins in public places. And more...

I have tried to list some ways to inspire. However, by no means this is an exhaustive list.

- Advertisements/ Hoardings/ Boards should have inspiring examples and messages. These can be used to create awareness about the best practices from around the globe.

- Street plays are also powerful tools which haven't been utilized properly. Such plays can be performed in the market and other public places to create awareness about hygiene and sanitation.
- Cleaning campaigns in public places should be planned in which city officials and local leaders also take part.
- Teach school children about best practices. Not only are they tomorrow's citizens but they have the potential to change their parents.
- Competitions should be conducted for most responsible citizen, best corporator, cleanest residential area, cleanest commercial area. We should make people realize that they are doing something wonderful.
- Make people realize they have done something wonderful.
- Promote volunteerism. Appeal to students, youth, workers, and people going to religious places to offer volunteer service for one or two hours in a week.
- Making t-shirts with good messages printed on them is a great way of spreading awareness. People love wearing t-shirts for a cause. If hundreds of people wear t-shirts with messages like "Swachha Hubballi-Dharwad", "Use Me" with a picture a trash can etc. it surely makes an impact. And if these hundreds of people wear them together, at a time, to campaign in events like marathon, community cleaning, the impact increases exponentially.
- Beautiful and meaningful graffiti creates better experiences along with employment for painters.

## Conclusion

These ideas can be implemented properly only through a strong corporation-citizen partnership. The responsibility lies on both parties—local governing body and the citizens. All the efforts should be made to foster this partnership. Hubballi Dharwad are loved for their pleasant climate, small size which makes it possible to reach any place in less than half an hour. Yet the twin cities are not like rural areas where people are isolated from the benefits of the modern world. It is our responsibility to keep it clean to create better experience. Keeping **collaboration** and **inspiration** in mind, we should work towards making Hubballi-Dharwad the best cities to live in.