

Roundtable on “Waste-full Cities: Ground-level Challenges and Research Questions”

(This roundtable is being organized by Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi)

Rationale:

Urban sanitation has come to the fore in the policy space given the call for a Swachh Bharat. A part of public sanitation, viz., solid waste management (SWM) is firmly placed as a municipal obligation, while other aspects, especially dealing with human fecal waste, may be dealt with by other levels of government. As a research topic, it remains relatively under-researched, though there has been a body of recent work on rural sanitation and links to malnutrition. The thrust of this panel is to highlight ground level challenges in order to pose research questions.

The panelists will discuss formative research on ground realities in different parts of the urban sanitation chain including municipal solid waste, public toilets and waste water management and its intersection with and implications for city governance, economic models of service delivery, public health and environmental pollution. This session will bring together perspectives on different facets of public urban sanitation, and the inter-play with different levels of government and the role of individual behaviour and responsibility. Some of the issues proposed to be highlighted include:

- 1) The transition of sanitation arrangements from rural to urbanized areas with a focus on the neglect and limited understanding of small cities in urban sanitation policy
- 2) Issues surrounding the primacy and need for infrastructure subsidies to provide for improved sanitation verses the arguments in favoring the need for behavior change and creating demand by urban communities
- 3) The role of community voice and ownership in governance in producing citywide sanitation outcomes – including processes demonstrating civil society action
- 4) The different types of waste, the current processes on the ground, both formal and informal, for handling them and the manner in which they are affected by public policy interventions.

Panelists:

TBD

Moderator:

Shubhagato Dasgupta, Senior Fellow and Director of the Scaling City Institutions for India (Sci-Fi) Sanitation initiative, CPR, New Delhi.