

# Community Participation for Sustainability of the Temple Project at Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple, Mylapore

Community Members' genuine participation brings in a rich source of knowledge, energy and commitment to that community and it is the key for creating success in a community based programme such as the programme implemented at Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple, Mylapore.

Mangaldeep and Mission Sunehra Kal, the CSR wing of the well known corporate ITC jointly implemented a project on Solid Waste Management at Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple, Mylapore in collaboration with a decades old NGO, the Exnora Green Pammal during the year 2016-17.



The project had a vision to make the Kapaleeswarar Temple premises as a zero- garbage temple by installing a 12 cum biogas plant and bio-composter at the temple premises with the community's involvement and the support of the temple authorities. With the help of the Tamilnadu Hindu Religious Endowment Board, the necessary permissions and approvals were got from the Government and the Temple authorities to implement the programme. On the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the solid waste management programme was successfully inaugurated and the process of utilizing waste to generate biogas for the kitchen and making manure in the bio-composter started. After one month of operation, in February 2017, the biogas plant had

replaced 5 commercial cylinders worth Rs. 6690, bringing revenue from the refuse that the temple authorities had not thought about before.



*Biocomposter*



*Biogas plant*



*The blue flame from the burner indicates rich biogas generation*



*Manure from the biocomposter*

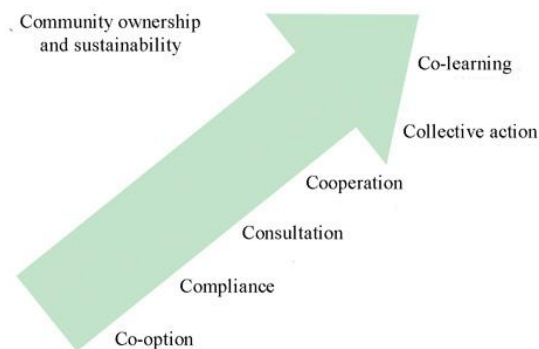
### **Strategy for community participation**

With the successful implementation of the first phase of the project, Exnora Green Pammal started to work on the second phase of the project with the involvement of the Mylapore Resident Welfare Association in bringing about sustainability and ownership of the project. The ownership of the project will start only when the community members see a visible change in their locality and that which aligns to their need.

Local people have a great amount of experience and insight into what works for them, what does not work for them, and why. So they contribute to the success of any intervention. Involving local people in planning can increase their commitment to the programme and it helps them to develop appropriate skills and knowledge to identify and solve their problems on their own. Involving local people helps to increase the resources available for the programme,

promotes self-help and self-reliance, and improves trust and partnership between the community and project implementers.

All participation is not equal. The extent of participation in programmes can vary from minimal to complete ownership. Increasing degrees of participation from the low end of co-option to the upper end of collective action can be seen while operating with community members. This shows that as community participation increases, community ownership and capacity increases.



### **Co-option: Local representatives are chosen**

The Hindu Downtown featured an article on Mylapore Resident Welfare Association and Ms. Mangalam Balasubramanian, the Managing Trustee of Exnora Green Pammal had a meeting with the President, Mr. V.N. Subramani, of The Mylapore Resident Welfare Association and subsequently with the Secretary, Mr. Viswanathan. The Mylapore Resident Welfare Association is a confederation of many Resident welfare associations operating in Jeth nagar, Kalyan Nagar and Thiruveethiamman Koil street and Trust cross streets at Mylapore. Incidentally, the Mylapore Resident Welfare Association has a wing called the “Kapaleecharam”, which works at Mylapore Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple on eco-friendly, pedestrian friendly, vehicle free Mada streets.



***Committee members of Kapaleecharam Resident Welfare Association***





### ***Mylapore Times featuring the efforts of the Kapaleecharam Committee***

Exnora Green Pammal chose local representatives from Kapaleecharam and started meeting them on a regular basis and involved with them on their regular “street walks” inspecting and identifying the places where the garbage is being regularly dumped and called the “hot spots”. Kapaleecharam enthusiastically participated in the planning meeting on the inauguration of the biogas plant at the Kapaleeswarar Temple.

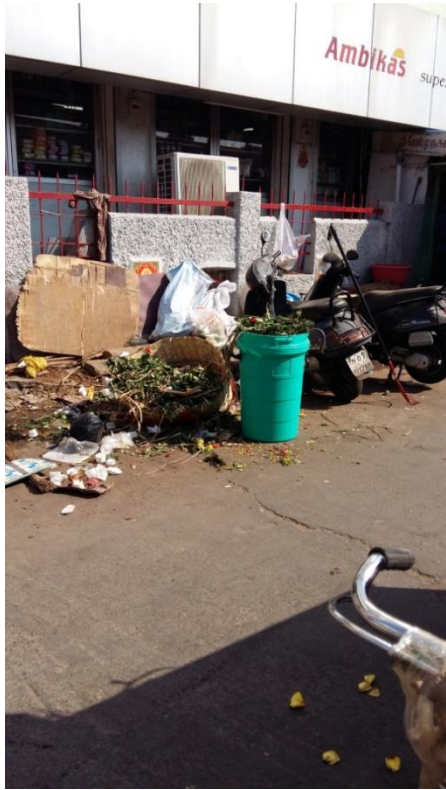
### ***Compliance and consultation: Local opinions are asked for and decide on a course of action and Tasks are assigned***

Exnora Green Pammal conducted an introduction meeting at Kalyan Nagar on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2017 and the objective of creating a litter free and plastic free Mada street was included as one among the other objectives that the Kapaleecharam was working on. On the next meeting conducted on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan Trust building, the overall plan was discussed on conducting a campaign against the use of plastics and creating awareness among the vendors and shop keepers on the Mada Streets on no plastics. It was decided that a cleaning drive on the inner and outer circle of mada streets, awareness rally and replacing of plastics with banana leaf and “Mantharai” leaf.



***Ms. Mangalam Participating in the committee meetings***

On the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the community members met again at Kalyan Nagar and planned for the full cleaning of the inner circle of the Mada Streets. This cleaning drive is conducted everyday from 1 pm to 5 pm, even on Sundays. For this purpose two tricycles along with 12 bins with two workers were introduced. The cleaning drive was started from the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and it is functioning till date.



**Before cleaning the Mada Streets**



**During the cleaning of the same spot**



***Cleaning of Mada Streets***





*Clean streets near the temple lake after cleaning of the Mada Streets*

**Cooperation:** Local people work together along with project implementors to determine realities

Kapaleecharam volunteers and committee members meet regularly on every weekends to bring public momentum to keep the area litter free. Since Jan 19th to the first week of February 2017, the committee had met 4 times and discussed on ways of involving the stake holders and the vendors in making the area litter free.

The Kapaleecharam Resident Welfare committee has started a Whatsapp group and they continuously discuss the strategy for bringing out total cleanliness in the streets around the temple. The committee consists of residents who are empowered to create a change in the

place. As residents of Mylapore, some of the residents have created their own small and simple movements in their streets contributing to the cleanliness drive in the area.



***Committee meetings***

Seeing the efforts taken by the “Kapaleecharam”, Shivasamy Kalalaya, a local school at Mylapore wanted to do their part and hosted the next community meeting conducted on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2017, Saturday. The members discussed on street play, Rally to create awareness on “Say no to Plastic” and collect plastic covers from the flower sellers.



***Meeting at school at Mylapore***



***School children in the campaign***

The local school children also participate in the litter free program on special days



**Collective Action: Community members control the project at the same time that professional partners build the community's capacity to make informed decisions and to take collective action.**

From the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2017, all the stakeholders involved in creating awareness of saying “No to Plastics” joined together and conducted an awareness campaign and rally in the four inner circle Mada streets and on the outer circle.



***Team involved in the campaign***

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017, the rally and awareness programme was conducted at the shops in the four inner circles of the Mada Streets. Around 150 scouts and guides and NSS volunteers from different schools in and around Mylapore and from other parts of Chennai participated in the campaign and distributed about 5000 banana leaves and 250 paper bags and 150 “Mandarai” leaves to the shops and insisted them to use the leaves instead of the plastic covers they are using. There are about 60 flower shops and the scouts and guides went around distributing the leaves while also participating in the rally.



***Scouts in the rally***





*Scouts advocating for the use of leaves instead of plastics*



*Scout girls on rally*

The impact of the campaign could be seen almost immediate when the shop keepers responded by using the banana leaf and Mandarai leaf for wrapping the flowers instead of the plastic covers.



***Shop keepers wrapping the flower in leaves***

On the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the rally and awareness programme was conducted and again the same amounts of leaves were distributed to the shops. Members of the Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs participated in the rally and the MLA of the Mylapore Constituency, Dr. Nataraj, IPS also participated in the rally. The Resident welfare association distributed notice boards and the schools did their part by providing a music band for conducting the rally.



**School music band in the rally**





***Dr. Natraj, IPS and MLA along with Ms. Mangalam and Kapaleecharam team***



***The MLA distributing pamphlets to the shop keepers***

On the 25<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the rally continued in the same fervor with a Therukoothu cultural team performing street plays and the school band performing. About 5000 Banana leaves, 300 Mandarai leaves and 250 paper bags were distributed.



*Banners on Mangaldeep during the rally*



*Ms. Mangalam encouraging a devotee using leaf wrappers for flowers*





*Mangaldeep and Exnora Green Pammal on the rally*



*ITC support for the rally*



*Karakattam performance during the rally*



*Ms. Mangalam along with school children in the rally*

Next step in community mobilization and participation would be co-learning and in this the local people and project implementers share their knowledge to create a new understanding, and work together to form action plans, while the project implementers do the facilitating of the project. Eventually they will become the guardians of the project and the activities will continue in a sustained manner.