

project parishkar
A Study of Sewage and Waste Management
in the
Dibrugarh Municipal Area

Submitted by

2004 MBA Batch
Centre for Management Studies

An Initiative of



Centre for Management Studies
Dibrugarh University
Dibrugarh 786 004

p r o j e c t p a r i s h k a r
A Study of Sewage and Waste Management in the Dibrugarh Municipal Area

Introduction

Dibrugarh is a lovely town situated on the south bank of the river Brahmaputra in Upper Assam, at a distance of 443 kilometers, east of Guwahati. It is the district headquarters of Dibrugarh district. It is famous for its tea, coal and oil industries. Assam's first medical college, Assam Medical College and the second university of Assam, Dibrugarh University is located here. The stations of All India Radio and Doordarshan have also contributed to the town's prestige and importance. It also finds a place of pride in the cultural map of Assam.

The Great Earthquake of 1950 which made the river Brahmaputra change its course and lifted its river bed has since then taken a visible toll on the location and size of this town with floods and erosion playing havoc. A dyke now protects it. The town has seen unplanned and haphazard growth, which has given rise to a host of problems. Water logging and artificial floods is one of them. It was felt that a study on Sewage and Waste Management could provide significant insights into this problem. With this background, a survey was carried out in selected areas within the Dibrugarh Municipal area to primarily have a feel of what the citizens think of this problem and its ramifications.

Scope

The study is expected to throw some light on the people's perspective of one of the most serious problems being faced by the town. It provides some insights into what the authorities concerned are doing. It may also be a basis for a more detailed and wider review of the problem. The survey is based on the perception of the people about the problem and we have not considered the technical aspect of the problem.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the reason for water logging problem from the people's perspective.
2. To know the person/authorities responsible for this problem from the peoples' perspective.
3. To find out the awareness of the people regarding this problem

Limitations

The study has been conducted with the aim of having a first hand experience of what the people think and as such is not intended to be detailed or deductive. No technical aspects have been considered and all technical matters are out of our purview.

Methodology

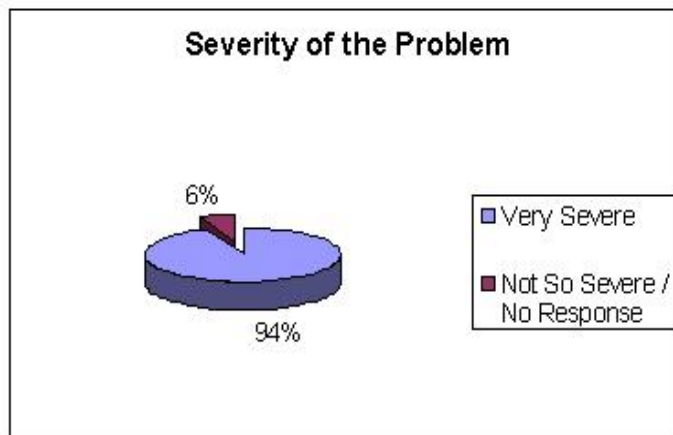
The areas where the problem of water logging and artificial floods was most severe were first identified. The areas thus selected were then divided into six different zones, namely Assam Medical College, Jail Road, Police Reserve, Shantipara, Lachit Nagar / Sasanpara and Graham Bazar. The sample size for each zone was fixed at twenty-five (25). Respondents were selected randomly and were asked to complete a self – administered questionnaire, containing fourteen (14) questions. The surveyor also helped in answering the questions and made additional notes.

A separate questionnaire was prepared for the officials of the Municipality Office and Town Planning Office, to know their views.

Analysis and Findings

The survey brought out some interesting findings. A majority of the people (55%) thinks that the authorities concerned (the Municipality and the Government) are responsible for the present state of affairs. An overwhelming majority (94%) acknowledges the severity of the problem and agrees that it is affecting their lives and daily activities. Many people are even forced to leave their homes.

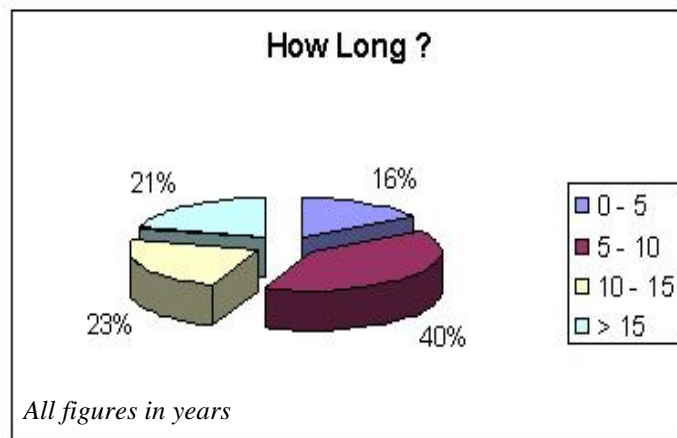
In many areas, people are facing the problem of water logging for decades. 16% of



the people find it a recent phenomenon, which brings home the fact that the problem is spreading to newer areas.

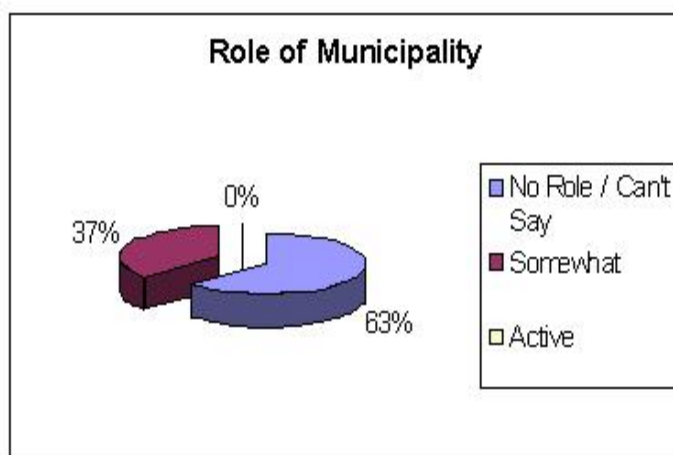
As expected, 63% of the respondents are of the view that the municipality is a

silent spectator. Even those people, who are of the opinion that the municipality is playing some role thinks that it is limited to the occasional garbage collection and cleaning of the drains, done in a very unsystematic and unscientific manner.



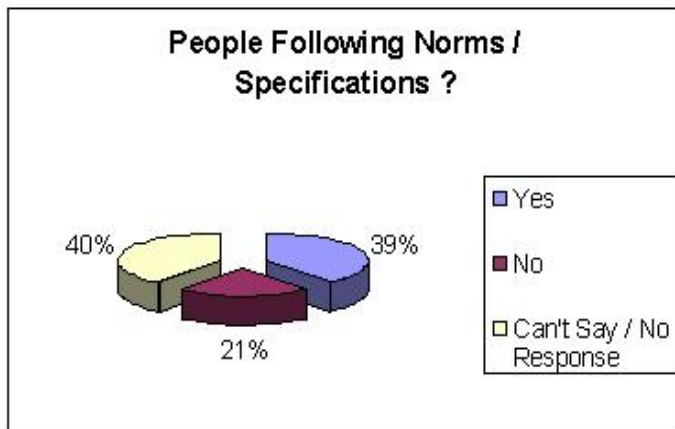
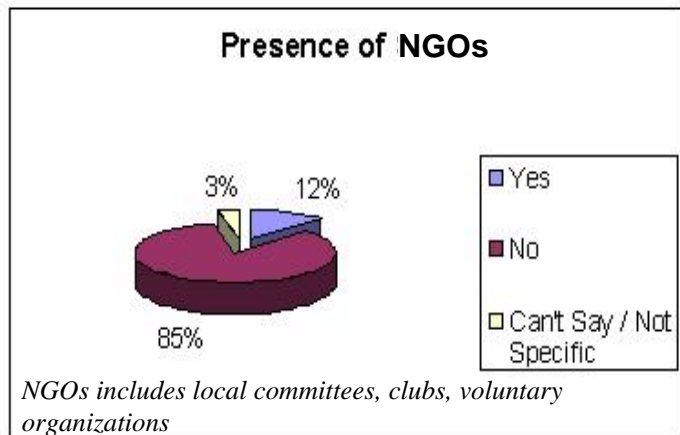
A revelation of sorts was the fact that in spite of the high level of awareness noticed

among the people regarding water logging and artificial floods, their role in tackling the same was found to be very limited. It was felt that the people wakes up from their



slumber only when water enters their home / compound and brings with it a plethora of associated problems. It was noticed that people were looking at the problem as locality specific and seeking solutions also in the same vein.

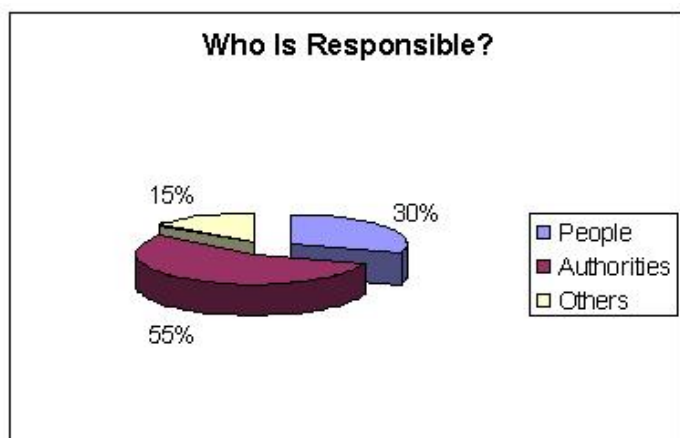
85% of the respondents replied in the negative when queried about the presence of NGOs (local committees, clubs, voluntary organizations), who could have played a proactive role in reducing the severity of the problem and acted as pressure groups. Even where, some sort of organized groups exists, people are not satisfied with what they are doing.



People are confused about the various norms / specifications that they need to follow when carrying out construction / developmental activities. No wonder, 40% of the respondents were either unsure or unwilling to respond when asked if they

were following the norms / specifications already in place. Even those who responded in the affirmative conceded that they may be ignorant of various laws / regulations framed by the Government / Municipality and thus may be violating them without intending to do so.

The people in general love their town and consider it an ideal place for residing but acknowledge that the problem of water logging and the related problem of hygiene is taking the sheen out of this



beautiful town. They seem to be aware of the fact that they have an important role in finding a lasting solution to the problem but they lack the initiative. The reasons of course are difficult to access.

The officials of both the Municipality Office and Town Planning Office were not very forthcoming with their views and needed a lot of coaxing to come out with some facts. According to the officials of Town Planning Office, the main causes of water logging are:

1. Topography of Dibrugarh town.
2. Poor sewage and drainage system.
3. Unplanned and haphazard construction by the dwellers / residents.
4. The main drain of Dibrugarh town is capable of handling only 50mm of rainfall in 24 hours and whenever, the rainfall exceeds this limit; there is an artificial flood.
5. Culverts are small obstructing proper flow of water.
6. Encroachment of drains / culverts.
7. Attitude of the people, who are hampering in the building of a proper drainage system.

The Dibrugarh Municipality officials came up with the following reasons:

1. Blockage caused by the construction of the Bogibeel Bridge.
2. Siltation of the drains and blockage of drains owing to garbage disposal.
3. DMB officials blame that the tea gardens located within the municipal areas and its periphery are pumping the water of the tea gardens into the main drain in huge quantity.
4. Sluice gates are not opened.
5. Telephone and cable laying works cause damage to the drains and thereby aggravate the problem of water logging.

Suggestions

The survey has brought forth to a varied extent the problems faced by all urban areas of the country. And as such, suggestions are also to a large extent, valid across all urban areas. The suggestions can be viewed from three different contexts – all

implement-able over different time periods – short range, medium range and long range.

Short-range measures would include cleaning of all drains on a war footing and seeing to it that the rubbish, silt etc. taken out is also immediately disposed off and not left besides the drains.. Adequate number of dustbins and their regular up-keep is also a must. Peoples’ participation in proper waste disposal must be ensured through awareness programs and involvement of the NGOs. Poly bags are a major nuisance and their use must be minimized and their proper disposal ensured.

Medium-range measures should put emphasis on completion of all projects that are half-done either due to paucity of funds or some other reasons, more so with respect to projects regarding the drainage system.

Long-term measures will be broadly based on a major rethink on existing policies and overhaul of the administrative machinery. A transparent and responsive administration is the need of the hour and this can be ensured only at the highest level through major policy decisions. A comprehensive waste management plan has to be formulated and implemented. People’s participation must be ensured and civic sense must be instilled in them. A good example of it is the Bhagidari project launched in Delhi, which is a model of peoples’ participation and involvement in governance and administration. This would of course mandate an efficient, professional workforce.

Conclusion

This exercise, which has been completed, we believe, is only a small and amateurish attempt and effort to try and get to the root cause of the problem. It is significant here to note that the problem of water logging and artificial floods is not going to diminish by itself. Every year, the intensity is bound to go up until and unless we identify some very constructive, practical and permanent solutions to be planned and implemented in a most well thought-out and scientific manner.

Right now, we are fortunate that the task ahead has not yet reached Herculean proportions. The only thing to remember is that we have to do whatever we want to immediately.

Project Parishkar was just a humble effort on our part to highlight the problem, create public awareness and to seek solutions before it is too late.

APPENDICES

1. Personal Details

- *Name* :
- *Family Size* :
- *Locality* :

2. How do you feel about Dibrugarh Town?

3. What are the problems faced during rainy season?

4. How severe is the problem?

5. How long have you been facing this problem?

6. Who is responsible for this problem?

7. What role is Municipality playing?

8. Are you aware of the duties of Municipality?

9. How water logging is hampering your day-to-day life?

10. How are you tackling the problem at present?

11. Do you have any Self-Help Awareness Group in your locality?

12. Are the people following the specification for construction of house of the Municipality and Town Planning?

13. What is your role in solving such problem?

14. Suggestions:

project parishkar

A Study of Sewage and Waste Management in the Dibrugarh Municipal Area

Under the aegis of Centre for Management Studies, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh

Questionnaire for Municipality Office and Town Planning Office

1. Ward Number/ other specification for dividing the town area.

2. ***Our objectives***
 - a) To find out the cause regarding the water logging problem in Dibrugarh Town.
 - b) To find out the preventive and corrective measures on part of civic bodies and people in general.
 - c) To gauge the awareness level of people regarding the problem.
 - d) Absolute academic survey.

3. Standards and guidelines about drainage requirements in residential areas.

4. How frequently cleaning operations are taken up? (*For Municipality office only*)

5. What is the root cause of this problem? Future plan to remove this problem.

6. What is their role in relation to this problem? What are the difficulties they are facing in performing their role?

7. Power and authority to compel people to abide by the set guidelines.