

TOILET 2.0 TALES



Beyond Cleanliness: The Tale of a Community-Driven Public Toilet in Madurai

Toilets 2.0 represents a vision for enhancing public and community toilets in India, introduced by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) on World Toilet Day 2022. It delineates five key themes crucial for ensuring accessible, well-maintained, and sustainably functioning toilets. This case study from Madurai specifically focuses on innovative business models tailored for low-footfall toilets, presenting promising strategies to address this challenge.



Madurai, a bustling city in Tamil Nadu, is known for its rich culture and religious significance. Tucked away in the streets near the famous Thiruparankunram temple, a public toilet stands out for its cleanliness, efficiency, and unique management approach.

In 2011, a local Self Help Group called "TamizhVel" took the initiative to build a public toilet catering to the community's needs. In 2021, with support from HDFC Financial Services, the NGO Gramalaya renovated the facility, modernising it for better service. Located opposite the temple, it's become a point of attention due to its focus on cleanliness and innovative sanitation.

Meet Uma and Ganesh, the dedicated caretakers of the female and male sections, respectively. They clean the facility three times a day, while the male section is cleaned every hour due to high footfall. The septic tank is regularly desludged by corporation vehicles, and essential supplies such as soap, sanitary pads, and baby diapers are restocked daily. This toilet uses a unique voluntary contribution model instead of user fees. With an average of 100-150 visitors daily, users contribute Rs 2 to Rs 3, with some offering as much as Rs 10. This fosters a sense of community ownership and helps generate Rs 400 to Rs 450 daily. Uma explains that cleaning costs (for consumables) are around Rs 100, and the remaining amount is divided for maintenance and their wages.

Sustainability in Every Flush

Ganesh manages the men's section and operates a small cart-based utensil shop within the toilet premises, supported by the PM's Svanidhi Scheme for street vendors. This initiative exemplifies the self-sustaining business model for toilets, providing him with additional income. The utensil cart generates Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 monthly.

Source	Daily Footfall	User Contribution (Rs.)	Daily Earnings from Toilet (Rs.)	Daily Cost for Consumables (Rs.)	Daily Profit (Rs.)	Uma's and Ganesh's Daily Earnings from Toilet (Rs.)
User Fee	100-150	2-10	400-450	100	300-350	150-175

The toilet facility goes beyond the basics, daily restocking essentials like soap, sanitary pads, and baby diapers. Corporation vehicles conduct regular septic tank maintenance, ensuring the longevity of the infrastructure. During peak periods, especially during festivals like Margazhi and Karthigai, corporation staff provides additional support, and the local councillor actively participates in the facility's management, offering financial assistance when needed. A decent amount of toilet space is also allocated for advertisement, providing additional revenue.

This public toilet's success hinges on several key factors. Meticulous management, community involvement through user contributions, and support from local authorities have fostered a sustainable model for public sanitation. The toilet serves as a beacon for Madurai, demonstrating what can be achieved when a community takes ownership of its sanitation needs.





Uma shares, “ I find cleaning near the temple to be a sacred duty, as maintaining cleanliness is of utmost importance in such revered spaces. It's a gesture of respect and devotion.”



A Beacon for Madurai: A Blueprint for Tomorrow

Standing in the shadow of the Thiruparankunram temple, this public toilet stands as a testament to community spirit and resilience. It's a blueprint for other toilets in Madurai, highlighting the transformative power of public engagement. This facility is not just a restroom; it's a symbol of collective responsibility.



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