

A group of women are gathered outdoors on a paved surface, engaged in a community activity. In the foreground, a woman in a purple sari is drawing a diagram on a large sheet of paper with a black marker. To her left, another woman in a yellow and white striped sari is looking on. Further left, a woman in a blue sari is also visible. In the background, several other people, including a man in a red t-shirt and a woman in a green sari, are standing and watching. A small child is also visible in the background. The scene is set in a community area with buildings and trees in the background.

VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES IN WASTE PICKING COMMUNITIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

ARISE PHOTOVOICE

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INTRO

Waste pickers in India are extremely vulnerable to a range of health problems due to their poor living and unsafe working conditions, and struggle to access the health services they are entitled to.

This research uses a community-based participatory research and focuses specifically on vector-borne diseases in two districts of Andhra Pradesh, exploring how they impact the lives of waste pickers, the extent to which waste pickers are reached by preventive interventions and potential opportunities for better prevention and control of these diseases.

Alongside other participatory methods, Photovoice was used to understand community perspectives, highlighting how issues such as poor housing, inadequate water supply and lack of drainage increase waste pickers' vulnerability.

Disconnection from the health system and local government impacts the ability of waste pickers to access preventive interventions and seek care.

This project is hosted by the Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre, supported by grants from the Medical Research Council UK and Royal Society of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It is led by Bea Egid and Pavani Pendyala.

WASTE PICKERS' VULNERABILITIES TO VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES



The drainage water is stagnant, and our children play here which affects their health. As it is dirty water, mosquitoes live here, and we get dengue and malaria. The water is stagnating because we don't have proper drainage canals. There should be a drainage system so the water will not overflow.

***It is important for our children to be able to play
and not get affected by diseases.***

DEVA LAKSHMI, WOMAN IN NAIDUPETA DUMP YARD



WATER LEAKS FROM THE VALVE OF THE WATER TANK...

We use this water for daily tasks, but when there is no drinking water, we drink water from the tank. If we see that there are mosquitoes in the water we won't drink it, but we often can't see the mosquitoes, right? The valve has been damaged and there are a lot of holes in it. We should fix the valve, make sure it is not leaking and clean all the garbage around the water tank. Every individual is responsible for cleaning. We should not depend on anyone because it is our tank.

MANJULA
WOMAN IN VAMBAY COLONY



THE DRAINAGE CANAL IS FILLED WITH DIRTY WATER AND MOSQUITOES LIVE IN THE WATER.

These mosquitoes come inside our houses and bite us which is painful and leads to fever and other ailments. Especially in the winter season, it takes time to recover from the illness and we cannot go to work. As you know, if we do not go to work, we cannot eat. It affects not only our health but also our livelihood.

SANGEETA
WOMAN IN NAIDUPETA DUMP YARD

HOUSING CONDITIONS



WATER
ACCESS



DRAINAGE
AND WASTE





Inside our houses, due to lack of electricity a lot of mosquitoes sleep under our blankets and utensils.

MAN IN VADDESARAM

*Due to the disposal of waste near the apartments mosquitoes are biting us in the daytime as well.
This causes typhoid and malaria diseases.*

MAN IN VAMBAY COLONY



WORKING CONDITIONS





Rag pickers are more vulnerable to Moquito-Borne Diseases as they do not use any safety equipment. They pick waste with their own hands... when water gets stagnant people will just remove it with their hands which is harmful and leads to vulnerability to diseases.

MAN IN VAMBAY COLONY

When I was working in the waste factory there was stagnant water. When I was cleaning it, I got bitten by a mosquito and my leg started swelling and caused a lot of pain...there was a situation when I was not able to walk, I used to crawl. My parents then took me to a private hospital, they gave me an injection and then the swelling decreased. But even now I still get pain sometimes.

WOMAN IN VAMBAY COLONY



*We have to get the treatment right and cannot leave my son alone...
If rashes affect him severely then we have to stay at home,
without going to work...I did not go to work for two days,
instead I took him to the hospital.*

WOMAN IN NAIDUPET DUMPING YARD

VECTOR-BORNE DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL



Only few of us have bed nets...DBRC provided bed nets but all of them have torn apart, and we got some of them from the waste picking.

WOMAN IN VADDESWARAM

If we cover ourselves with blankets it will be very hot, we will sweat a lot and we cannot breathe. But if we do not cover ourselves with blankets mosquitoes bite us and we will be awake whole the night.

Either way, it is problematic for us to sleep.

WOMAN IN VADDESWARAM

There are people here who have better infrastructure like beds and bed nets but also people who do not have anything...me and my family have only one bed net which is not sufficient for all of us.

WOMAN IN NAIDUPETA DUMP YARD



MOSQUITOES HIDE IN THE CORNERS OF THE BED.

There is no fan and no mosquito net - there are a lot of mosquitoes which accumulate in this place and bite us every day. Nowadays, mosquitoes are big in shape and suck a lot of blood, and when they bite it is very painful. We cannot sleep because of lack of proper ventilation. The next day, due to lack of sleep we cannot do our daily activities or our work properly. After tiring work, we want to have a peaceful sleep, but it is very difficult to sleep without a fan and mosquito net. I want to use the mosquito coil, but I cannot stand that smell.

MANJULA
WOMAN IN VAMBAY COLONY



DURING THE RAINY SEASON, THE WATER GETS STAGNANT

This leads to a rise in mosquitoes which come into our houses. If everyone in the community comes to an agreement and decides to clean the place, all the surroundings would be more hygienic, and we wouldn't fall sick so easily. But no one in the community cares about their surroundings. The government should also care about our community, but no one has come to check the surroundings - the only person who came was the Panchayat secretary, and they refused to help us as they said it's our responsibility to clean it.

GOPAL
MAN IN VADDESWAREM

THERE IS GRASS IN BETWEEN AND AROUND THE HOUSES, AND STAGNANT WATER WHERE MOSQUITOES BREED A LOT.

The railway department should do something because there are pits near the railway track and when it rains all the water gets stagnant in it. We should try and make sure the water inside the pit is emptied, and then half of the problem will be solved.



GOPAL
MAN IN VADDESWAREM



Earlier, at the age when I got married, some of the doctors and ASHAs used to tell us about malaria. But now there are cell phones, TVs and radio where everyone is listening and getting aware of things. Nowadays no one is coming door-to-door to create awareness, everything has changed.

WOMAN IN VAMBAY COLONY

Because we belong to lower caste, our lives are like this. If we question the government about their accountability and carelessness towards us won't it be harmful for us?

WOMAN, NAIDUPETA DUMP YARD

If waste is inside and beside our houses we can clean it. But if it is on roads and other public places, it is the government who should clean it and be responsible for it. If we are employed as municipality workers we could have cleaned it, but we are not.

WOMAN IN VAMBAY COLONY



If we were in urban areas, there would be DDT spray where all the mosquitoes die, and we could tie bed nets and sleep peacefully. But where we are living no one comes to spray DDT, even if they do mosquitoes will come again because of the waste dumped nearby.

MAN IN NAIDUPET DUMPING YARD

**TREATMENT, DIAGNOSIS AND
INTERACTION WITH THE
HEALTH SYSTEM**



When we fall sick we need to take tablets and glucose powder which give us energy. It is always good to take tablets and we should not neglect our health by not taking medicines. Because of the accumulation of mosquitoes in the drainage canals, we get illnesses. When we consult a doctor, he or she asks us to take medicines, and we have to take medicines to get cured.

Many people I know do not use medicines when falling ill.

MANJULA, WOMAN, VAMBAY COLONY

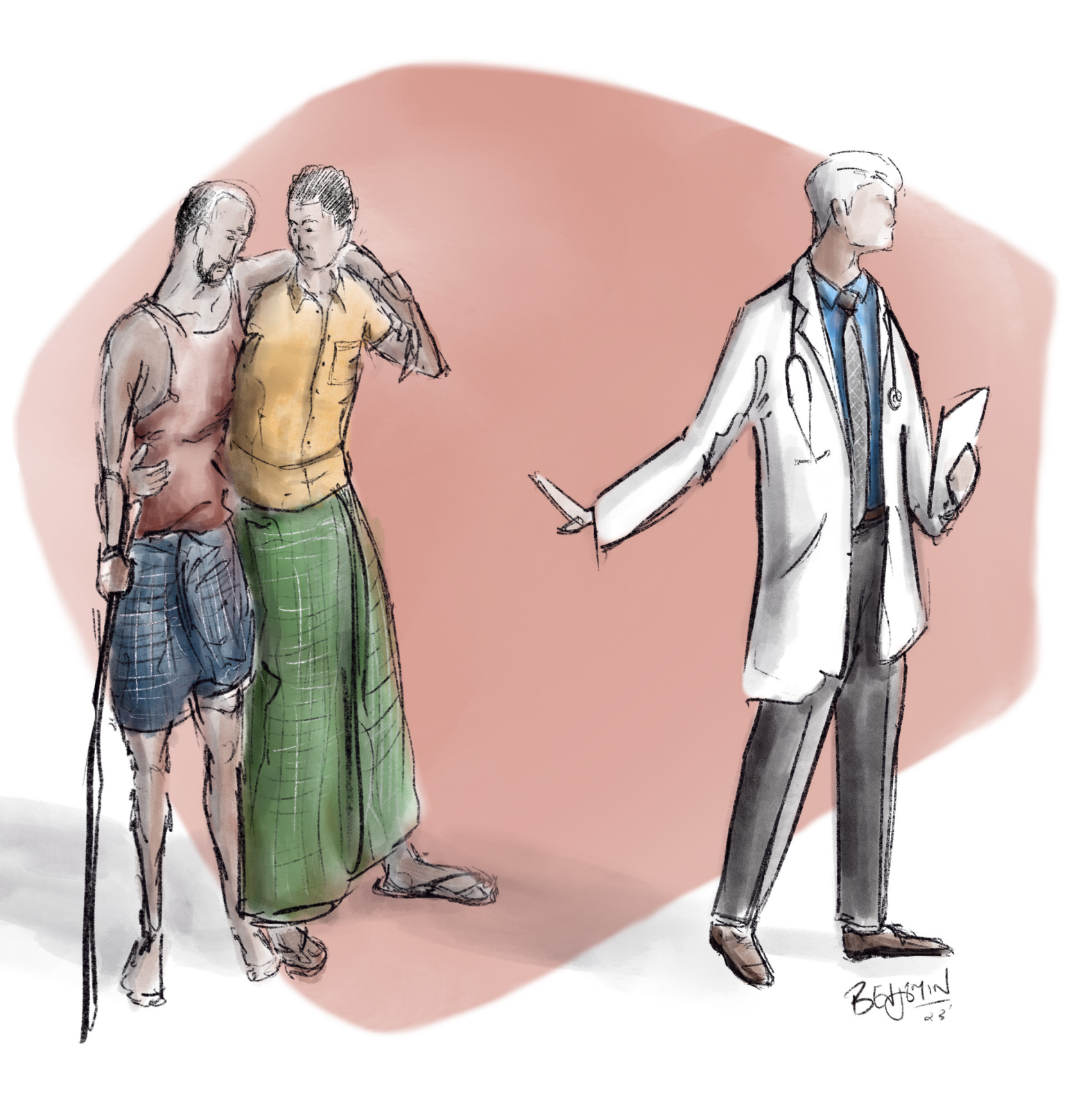


I understand the government hospital do free treatment, but it will be more expensive to travel to Guntur because of the transport charges for coming and going.

WOMAN IN NAIDUPETA DUMP YARD

When a snake, crab, or scorpion, bites and we suffer from jaundice we prefer going to a traditional healer as they give some treatment in their own way which we also totally believe in. In addition, all the hospitals are far from where we live which is making us rely on traditional healers.

MAN IN VADDESARAM

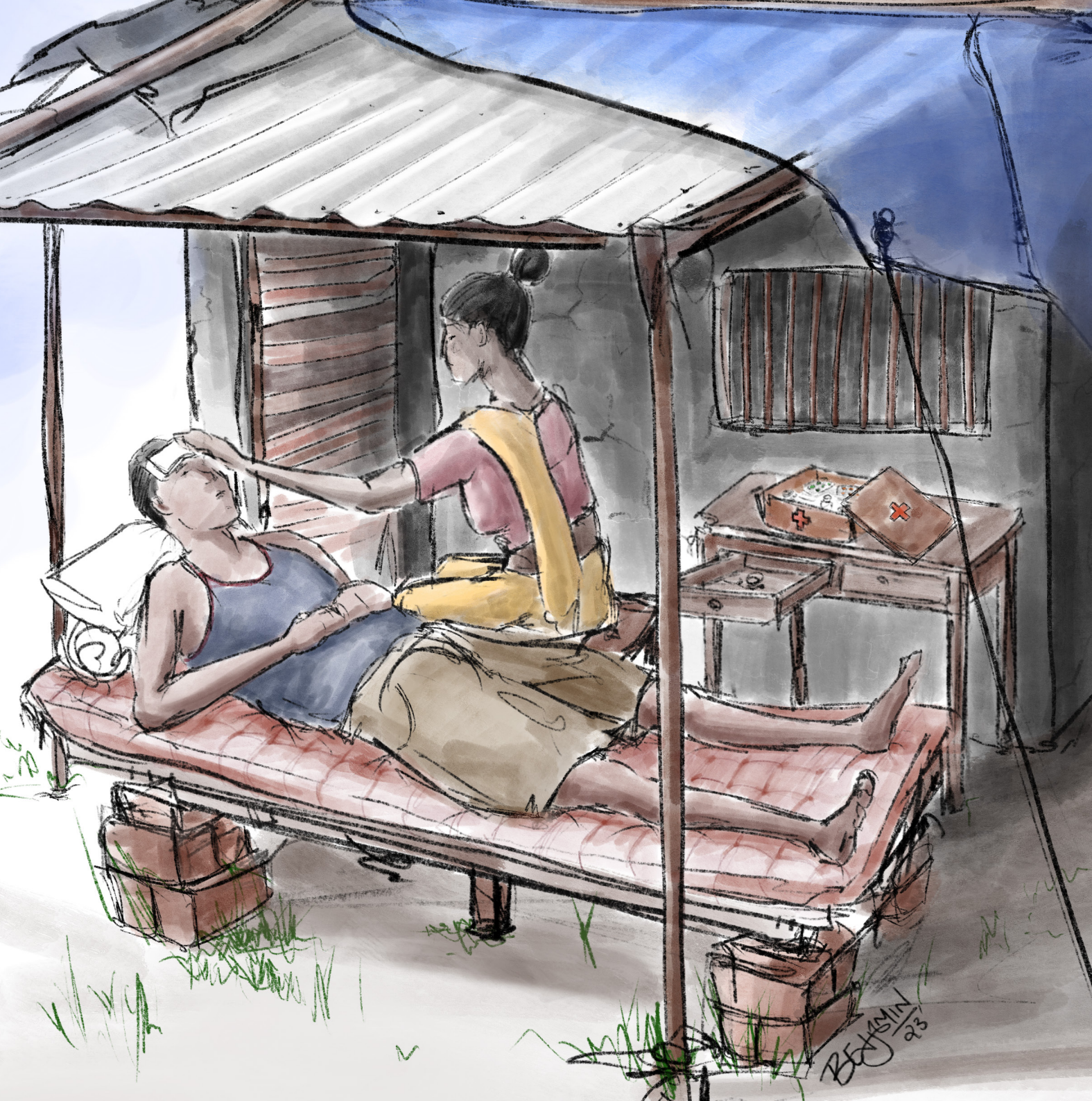


The mobile clinic staff provide tablets to us but they only treat us if we have Aadhaar card...if we don't have Aadhaar card they just give us paracetamol, but they don't diagnose us for any serious treatment. They ask us to go to the government hospital.

WOMAN IN NAIDUPETA DUMP YARD

We do not want to visit government hospitals because they make us to go here and there. We are all illiterate; we do not know where to go and from where to get medicine. There will be people like you telling us about a lot of things in the hospitals, but we don't understand. Hence, it will be very difficult for us to go to the government hospitals and get treatment there. We cannot share our problems with anyone.

WOMAN IN NAIDUPETA DUMP YARD



If he or she needs a tablet, we give them. If not, we will call an auto to go to the hospital. We help each other in this community and share money when needed.

MAN IN NAIDUPETA DUMPING YARD

I thought that there is no use in visiting all these hospitals. Instead, I kept faith in Jesus Christ. I have been suffering from this rash for two months... even after applying the medicine it used to spread over my body. As I said, I kept total faith in my God that he will touch and heal me.

WOMAN IN NAIDUPETA DUMPING YARD

See, if you go to the RMP doctor just pay 100 rupees to take tablets quickly and you rest at home, but at the PHC you have to wait for a long time.

MAN IN VAMBAY COLONY





ARISE

Accountability in Urban Health