Public urination and defecation on street corners and adjacent to marketplaces along with open sewers are common occurrences in many major cities in India. Out of the approximately 4,500 cities in India, only about 235 have functioning sewer systems. Among the urban population, as few as 20% have septic tank toilets. The rapidly expanding population growth within India also adds to the sewage burden. For example, the sewers in Delhi were designed for a population of 3 million. Currently there are over 15 million people residing in the city of Delhi. This photograph shows men urinating behind one of the most crowded markets in the city of Jaipur. Although this part of the city actually supplies them with a specific place to go (most often this is not the case), the waste still runs off into the street draining into open streams and rivers whose water is used for many different purposes such as washing clothes and cooking pots. This situation becomes worse during the monsoon season when drains become clogged and water begins to inundate streets, markets, homes and stores.

Questions:

1. What potential health problems (direct and indirect) could arise from this situation?
2. As a public health official in the area, what are the first steps you would take to improve this situation?
3. What are the potential obstacles you could be faced with within cities? Present a creative solution that addresses the issues of appropriate, affordable, and culturally acceptable toilet facilities within cities.

4. Who would need to be involved? How would you ensure compliance and cooperation among these individuals?
5. At the government level, how might these problems creatively be approached?
6. What kind of management support would be needed for your suggested intervention (i.e. monitoring and accountability)?
7. What stakeholders would need to be involved?