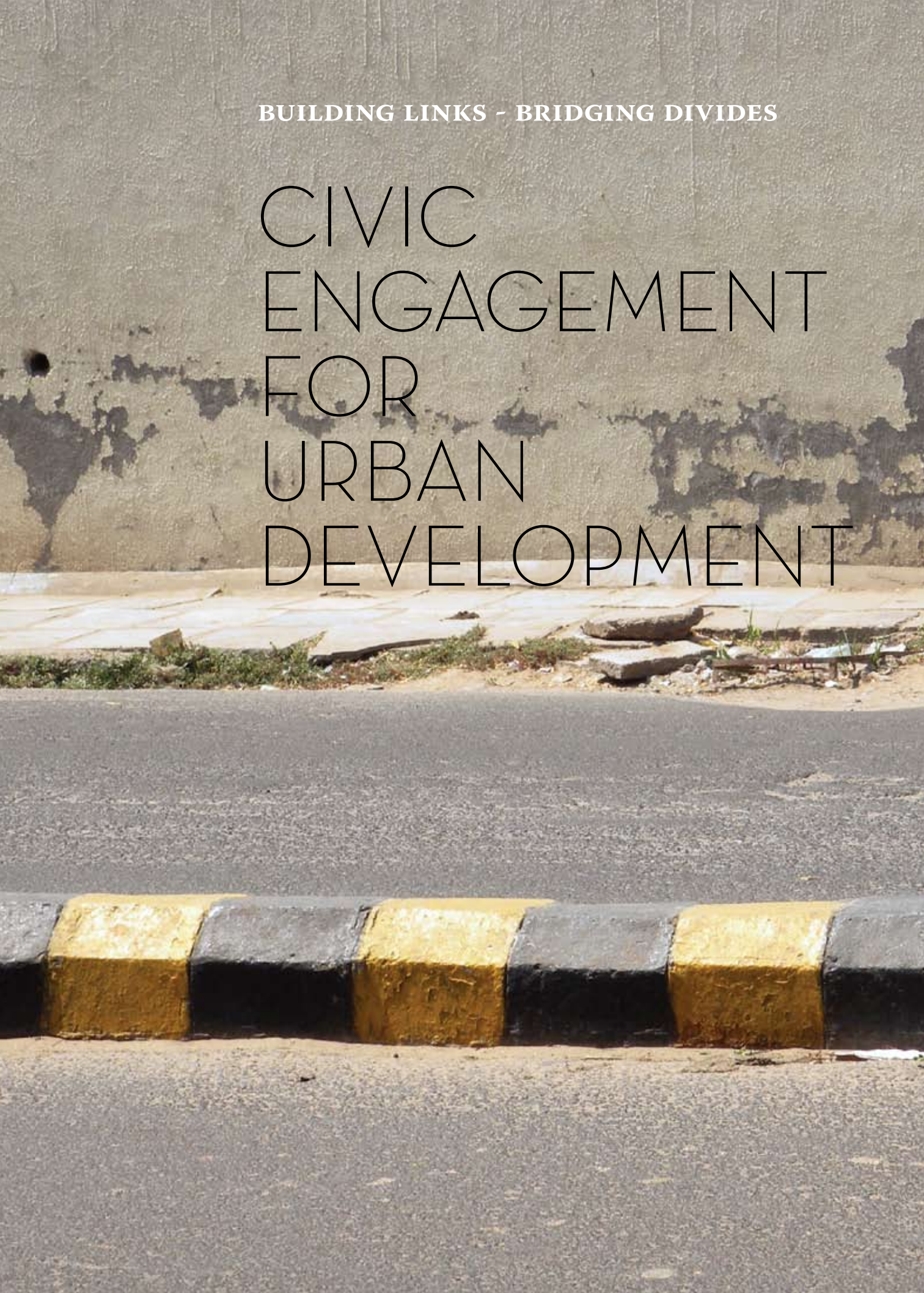BUILDING LINKS - BRIDGING DIVIDES

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Development is about crossing over and joining hands, to work together with multi-stakeholders, so that the benefits are accessible to vulnerable groups. The open road symbolises strategies that are developed to work with an inclusive framework. The cover page reflects a journey in engaging the civil society in breaking barriers, building linkages and bridging divides for urban development.

हमारे शहर का विकास हमारे हाथ

BUILDING LINKS - BRIDGING DIVIDES

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT

उन्नति

UNNATI
Organisation for Development Education

CONTENTS

PREFACE

Cities are geographies in contrasts. On the one end is the planned and regulated city. People living here have secure incomes and better access to services. They are counted, accounted and provided for by the government. The other end is the unplanned and unregulated city. Here, people have no proper homes, no security at work, poor access to social security benefits, and lack the power to resist or appeal in case of a violation. These people face constant threat of eviction as they are mostly the poor living, or as the governments phrase it - 'squatting' in the city.

There is, therefore, a yawning chasm between the rich and the poor.

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Inclusive urban development, must therefore work to bridge this gap, between the haves and have-nots, the planned and the unplanned, the counted and the invisible, the developed and the under-developed!

This resource-book is meant for all practitioners and facilitators who wish to work with the citizens, particularly with the poor for fighting inequity in urban development. It is based on UNNATI's experiences with civic engagement in urban development.

The book begins with a brief discussion on urban poverty and highlights the inter-connectedness of the various dimensions of poverty. This is followed by sharing of various experiments in civic engagement. It includes five ways of organising citizens and engaging them in the planning and development of their towns.

We invite you to support our efforts by putting your heads and hearts together; to understand and fight underdevelopment in our cities. The readers are welcome to share their experiences, comments and suggestions, even the disagreements and dissensions. This will help iron out the many erroneous creases that remain.

Arun Kumar and Alice Morris
SEPTEMBER, 2009.

UNDERSTANDING EXCLUSION IN OUR CITIES

UN Habitat's State of the World's Cities Report: 2006/07 revealed for the first time that the poor living in the slums in our cities were as badly off, if not worse than the rural poor. More than one billion people live in the shanties of our towns and cities. They are more likely to die earlier, experience more hunger and disease, attain less education and have fewer chances for work, as compared to others living around them. This is indeed ironical, as we commonly believe that the poor come from the rural areas in search of better work and education, more wages and freedom from hunger and ill-health.

The towns and cities are characterised by a disproportionately high level of inequity, even more than that of rural areas. Apart from the image of the city as progressive, developed, planned and industrialised, there are other faces to it as well. These are the unplanned and unregulated growth due to migration of the poor in search of livelihood. These people have no security, they are not sure of their homes when they return from work each evening, unsure of finding work the next morning. They are commonly termed as squatters because they 'squat' on public or private land. The squatters are often held responsible for the slow-down of the urban economy. In 1993, the Delhi High Court expressing itself on the space occupied by the urban poor, ruled that the public exchequer was burdened with crores of rupees for providing alternative accommodation for the squatters. The slums thus became, in a ruling of the Supreme Court bench in 2000, "…large areas of public land usurped for private use, free of cost."

In this section, we briefly examine the issues of the poor in terms of their habitat and work. We also look at some of the noteworthy initiatives of the government and the civil society agencies; and finally

raise certain critical questions around the construct of urban under-development.

UNDERSTANDING URBAN POVERTY

The poor remain in the shadows of the city. Their work and activities are characterised by lack of legal recognition. Even the nature of their work sometimes creates suspicion among the city's public authorities. Spatially also, the poor work from the margins. Even their residences are located on the margins of the city – along footpaths, railway tracks, on the pavements or on neglected 'public' land. City authorities and policy makers have adopted a 'culture of silence' towards the poor. This is reflected in the lack of serious policy statement and programmes to promote livelihood options and improve their living conditions. The lack of platforms for articulation of interests by the poor and the state's apathy towards them and their problems has pushed the poor into silence.

WHO ARE THE URBAN POOR?
Urban poor
> **have limited access to employment opportunities and income**
> **face inadequate and insecure housing and services**
> **live in violent and unhealthy environment**
> **have access to little or no social protection mechanisms**
> **have limited access to adequate health and education opportunities.**

Further, the urban poor are not a homogeneous group. Religion, caste, class, gender, work and sexuality create stratification within the urban poor. This leads to differences in work conditions, access and control over means of production and access to basic services and social security benefits. For example, a poor family belonging to a disadvantaged community would have even lesser access to work opportunities, basic services and social security as compared to a poor family belonging to a less disadvantaged community. Such differences translate into varying degrees of vulnerability, access and control over resources and development benefits and reinforce power structures. As a result, the organisation of the urban poor continues to remain a major hurdle facing the development practitioners and rights-based activists.

Here we outline briefly the visible and policy related causes and ways in which various dimensions of poverty – income, health, education, security and empowerment impact on urban poverty.

The Web of Urban Poverty

	INCOME	HEALTH	EDUCATION
VISIBLE CAUSES	Dependence on cash	Overcrowded and unhygienic living conditions	Constrained access to education
	Employment insecurity	Prone to pollution and environmental hazards.	Inability to afford school expenses
	Sickness	Exposure to diseases and accidents and high occupational risks	
	Lack of skills		
	Lack of access to job opportunities		
POLICY-RELATED CAUSES	Macroeconomic crises affect income	Regulations make housing unaffordable	Incapacity of public authorities to quality education.
	Failure of public services	Bad policy frameworks and failure of public services	Lack of safety nets to ensure education despite economic hardships in the family
	Informal nature of work due to poor regulation	Lack of labour protection	Insecure and unaffordable public transport
		Lack of safety nets and social support systems for families and youth	
IMPACTS ON OTHER DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY	Unaffordable housing and land	Inability to hold a job	Inability to get a job
	Lack of access to essential public services	Inability to earn sufficient income	Lack of constructive activity for school age youth, contributing to delinquency
	Poor human capital	Reduced ability of children to learn	Continued gender inequities
	Depreciated social capital resulting in domestic violence and crime	Risk of injury and associated income shocks	
		Poor education outcomes	

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SECURITY

VISIBLE CAUSES

Tenure insecurity: for land and housing

Personal insecurity drug/alcohol abuse and domestic violence

Family breakdown and reduced support for children

Social diversity and visible income inequality in cities

POLICY-RELATED CAUSES

Land policies do not permit regularisation of tenure in most unauthorised settlements

Inappropriate standards and codes make housing unaffordable

Regulations impose costly procedures to get registered

Lack of access to credit

Lack of employment opportunities, services, and assets stigmatise certain areas within cities as crime-centres

Lack of safety net policies and programmes

IMPACTS ON OTHER DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY

Evictions causes loss of physical capital, damage social and informal networks for jobs and safety nets, and reduce sense of security

Inability to use one's home as a source of income

Diminished physical and mental health and low earnings

Damage to property and increased costs for protection and health care

Depreciated social capital such as loss of family cohesion and social isolation

EMPOWERMENT

Illegitimacy of residence and work

Isolation of communities that are disconnected from jobs and services

Insufficient channels of information

Not having the rights and responsibilities of citizens

Regulatory and policy frameworks make the settlements and/or occupations of the poor 'illegal'

Oppressive bureaucracy and corruption

Official or unofficial discrimination

Lack of access to urban services

Sense of isolation and powerlessness

Violence

Inefficient use of personal time and money to seek alternative forms of redress.

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Life on the Margins

Chuki Devi lives in a joint family of twelve members. Her family, which has been traditionally making and selling earthen pots, lives in one of the many unregularised settlements of the city. Despite being skilled at work and operating as a manufacturer, Chuki Devi has been unable to find permanent shelter and security for herself and her family in the cityscape.

Before starting work, she required forty thousand rupees for procuring the wheel and raw material. This money was borrowed from relatives at a seemingly generous rate of twenty-four per cent per annum. The loan amount has since been repaid. Three members of her family, including her husband and daughter, engage in this business. The family invests five thousand rupees on raw material each month, and spends another fifteen hundred rupees on storage and transportation costs. From this investment, the family manages to earn enough to support all the members. However, the work remains a seasonal activity as there is demand for the pots only in summer. In winters the family is forced to borrow money from their relatives. Consequently, a significant portion of the family's savings each summer is spent in the repayment of the debt.

Chuki Devi says that the family faces frequent harassment in the form of eviction orders from the Municipal Corporation. These threats force the family to temporarily withdraw their work. Each time this result in a loss of ten days' works costing the family up to three thousand rupees and forces them to dip into their previous savings for survival. This vicious cycle has prevented Chuki Devi from expanding and diversifying her work and accruing income. She also mentions that in exchange for generosity from the police and the municipal authorities, they are forced to give them their wares free of cost.

For such an informal commercial enterprise of the poor, looking for land in the city is a challenge. Successive eviction orders have forced the family to move two hundred metres from the intersection, from where they could sell far more and better. Being farther away from the bazaar has reduced their earnings. Such spatial marginalisation of the informal worker leaves them vulnerable to acute poverty. Chuki Devi's husband says that the Municipal Corporation must allocate a permanent space for the family to carry on their trade.

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Urban informal economy is the primary source of income and live-lihood for the poor. According to the International Labour Organisation, across the world, the informal sector employs up to two thirds of the world's working population. It is estimated that nearly 93 per cent of the country's total workforce is employed in the unorganised sector. About 42.6 million people live in slums in India, of which, more than 96 per cent work in the informal sector without any legal protection and social security. The continuing presence of the informal sector has been attributed to slow growth of the economy, no additions in number of jobs in the formal sector, limited access to formal sector work opportunities due to lack of appropriate technical and entrepreneurial skills.

The informal sector is characterised by vulnerability, both social and political, poor access to formal institutions for credit, training and social security, and poor living and working conditions. The informal nature of work results in increasing harassment from the public authorities. Being unorganised this sector has limited space for articulation of their interests and demand for their rights.

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The Government of India has been running the *Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rozghar Yojana* (SJSRY) scheme, with its distinct components of self-employment and wage-employment. The review of the scheme reveals that its limited success can be attributed to poor market link-ages and poor access to financial services like loans and investments, lack of capacity enhancement opportunities and most significantly, the sector specific approach of the government. Livelihood is also linked to a wide range of other variables and processes, such as living conditions, access to social security benefits, socio-cultural back-ground that dictate the skills and available work opportunities and options. These were overlooked while formulating the scheme.

Cities can support the informal economy through the provision and maintenance of infrastructure, including adequate supply of electric power, water, transport and telecommunications networks. By relaxing rules and regulations, the informal sector can be expected

to contribute further to the creation of jobs and, perhaps, eventually be integrated in the formal economy

POVERTY AND SHELTER

The National Building Organisation (NBO) in 1991 had estimated the urban housing shortage at 8.23 million units, and expected the absolute shortage to decline progressively. United Nations Habitat Report, 2006-07 estimates however indicate that the shortage will increase. The poor live in illegal and non-notified settlements. These are characterised by temporary or semi-permanent housing on government or private land. Their houses have no access to piped water and very often not even through public stand post, drainage facility and roads. They live in unhygienic conditions and sometimes in hazardous terrain.

The Master Plans, more often than not, do not take note of these settlements. Thus, cities manage to push them out from the ambit of planned development. This results in low resource allocation for the poor in municipal budgets and poor servicing. Lack of quality services would also mean that the poor frequently fall sick and pay more for healthcare. This affects their work opportunities and overall productivity. They are laid off for frequent absence and inability to work or get paid less for not contributing as required. They do not have ownership of the land they live on, despite investing vast resources in building and maintaining their homes. The 'house' of the poor, thus fails to become an 'asset' for the poor. This inability to build assets results in increasing vulnerability, with no opportunities for breaking out of the poverty cycle.

A significant trend during the past decade has been the growing awareness of the relationships between human rights and sustainable development. The right to adequate housing is recognised by more than 70 per cent of the world's countries. Almost all countries in the Asia-Pacific region promote housing rights in their legislation and the Arab States provide the greatest protection against eviction.

In India, negotiation and participation are increasingly being
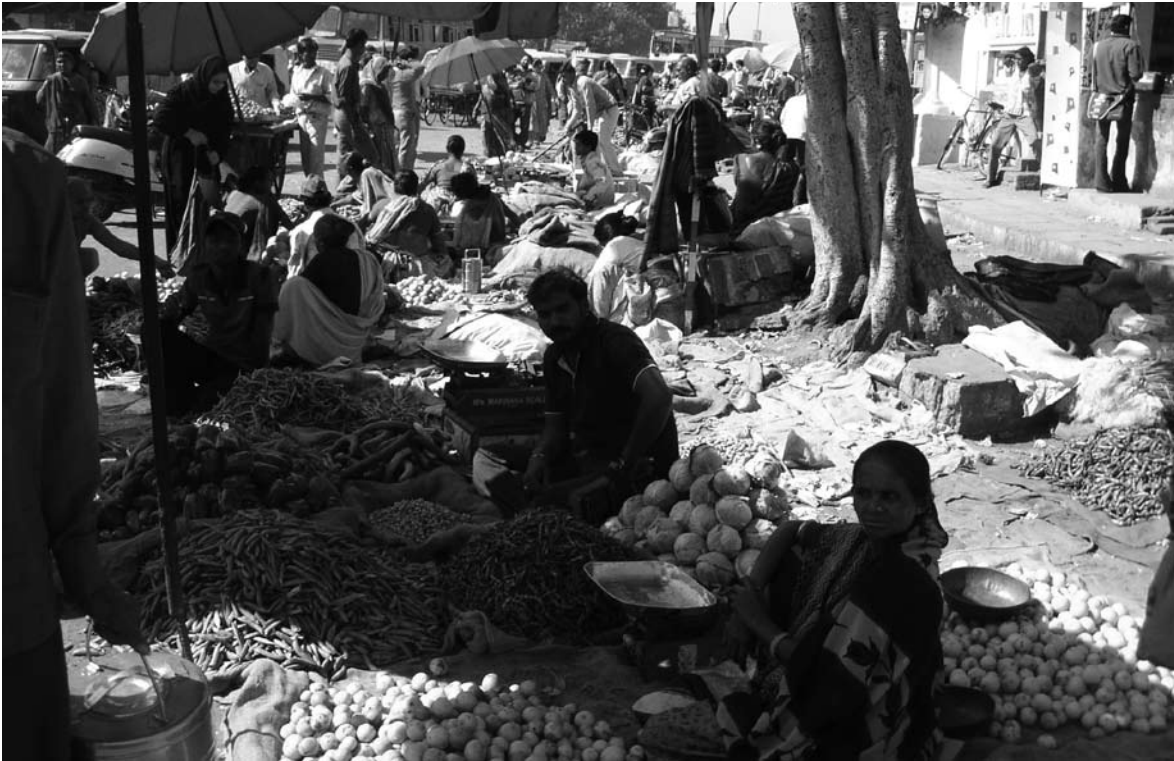
A glimpse of urban poor and livelihood

employed to secure the urban poor their rights to shelter. This has led to a decline in mass forced evictions.

Granting of secure tenure to the urban poor is one of the most far-reaching decisions that can be taken in promoting a sustainable shelter strategy. The Government of India runs two distinct programmes, one which aims at addressing the shortage of houses and the second which tries to provide minimum services in the slum/squatter settlements. Through *Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana* (VAMBAY), Two Million Housing and the Night Shelter Programmes, the government has tried to increase the housing stock for backward communities, slum dwellers and migrant population. National Slum Development Programme (NSDP), Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT) and Accelerated Urban Water Supply Programme (AUWSP) schemes have tried to improve the living conditions in slums through providing basic services like water supply, drainage network and roads. Under the National Urban Renewal Mission these schemes have been merged into the Urban Infrastructure Development ment Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT) and the

Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) through the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. The basic objective remains the same.

THE FAILURE OF GOVERNANCE

It is generally believed that the constraint in the development of the poor in urban areas is unavailability of financial resources and land. But it is more than anything else the general apathy and lack of political commitment to accommodate the poor. A whole range of activities in our towns and cities, especially those in the manufacturing and service sector such as paper bag making, agarbatti making, laundering, ironing, repair services, waste sorting and recycling operate from the households of the poor. But they have never been recognised as 'productive'. Their rights as 'citizens' to food, land, drinking water, primary education, healthcare and safe work environment have never been met.

The government norm for providing housing has been fixed at five square metres per person and twenty-five square metres for the household. On account of the logic of paucity of space, the planning agencies - either of the government or of private consultants suggest two-rooms, twenty-five square metre multi-storey units, stacked one atop the other; with no workspace for adults, no open areas for children and minimal services. In some cases, water has to be fetched each morning from the ground floor. A fact that is overlooked is that most poor work in informal sector and many of them work from their home. Women particularly work at home to augment the family incomes. This means that the poor are forced to live and work in extremely cramped spaces. Very often, these units are also far from the city centre. Pushing the poor workers, who are often dependent on the city's commercial and middle and upper-middle residences for their work to live in the city margins increases their travel cost and renders their economic activity unviable.

For providing services to the poor and to cover the cost, the government and the agencies of the market have for long been

pursuing the 'partnership' model. This is being pursued based on the argument that the government has limited resources and that private agencies are more efficient. Evidence from across the globe however suggests otherwise. The privatisation of services has resulted in exclusion of the poor from its coverage. More often than not, the poor find the services unaffordable. Metering and accounting of services in itself disqualify the poor as they often have no legal documents as evidence for securing a connection.

To make the basic services accessible by the poor, innovative solutions are few. Such solutions cannot be replicated easily and therefore they fail to attract both the large development agencies and the governments. Identifying them on case specific basis raises the challenge of social engineering, demanding effective community mobilisation. At present, attempts at networking the poor to protect and promote their rights are limited and have remained confined to slum pockets inviting the attention of governments, global media and development agencies.

There is a systematic failure of the constituent agencies to deliver and the existing regulatory norms and policies do not protect the interest of the poor. Some of the key concerns related to governance are as follows:

Increasing Hegemony of the State:
Over the years, the state governments have been launching and promoting missions and companies to co-ordinate and implement the various centrally sponsored urban development programmes. While the central guidelines clearly indicate the need for autonomous local bodies, which would prepare and submit proposals for development, get money directly for implementation, invite and award tenders and track progress, the state governments have rushed to form quasi-state agencies, which are either in partnership with private developers and realtors, or promoted by banks and the government with advisory councils. Especially, in the case of small and medium towns, which have limited technical capacity and inadequate staff, the state missions and promoted companies are fast

taking control of some of the vital functions and powers away from the municipalities. This, in turn, is not only making the planning process inaccessible for the people living in these towns but also for municipalities themselves. Such transfer of power instantaneously to the state and the limited process of devolution have raised serious questions on the autonomy of the municipal governments in the country.

Privatisation of Planning and Service Delivery:
The state has been engaged in preparing contracts and setting out terms that has enabled private players to move in. The space available to the private sector has expanded phenomenally. The state has greater power in terms of contracting out service delivery and planning, but much lesser power in terms of regulating and monitoring. The key to any planning exercise is the process of decision making, which determines the social choices we make as collectives. The private sector has moved in to make decisions for municipal government on the basis of the paradigm that competition leads to better quality of services. However, the private agencies have no in-built accountability to the poor.

Shrinking Autonomy of the Urban Local Bodies:
As a result of the decrease in the role of the state as a provider, the space available is being occupied by private agencies at the city level. The urban local bodies (ULBs) are left with little or no space for decision making. This runs counter to the tenets of decentralised democracy that the nation started off on nearly a decade and a half ago. At the city level, it results in the increasing alienation between the state and the citizen. It puts pressure on the local governing agencies to maintain and sustain the expanded asset base.

Limited Civic Action:
It has been commonly observed in a large number of cities, that there is very limited civic action currently being organised. Civic action in urban areas is restricted to NGO interface on behalf of people in providing information on schemes and delivery of basic services.

In rural areas, decentralisation conceptualised a three-tier structure – at the *gram panchayat,* block and district level. This structure of local governance facilitated people's participation through *gram sabhas* and *panchayat* meetings. Given the fact that urban areas are large, densely populated, heterogeneous and complex spaces characterised by plurality of occupation and social structure, it is difficult to have meaningful community participation at the municipal level. Although, the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) provides for ward committees in large towns and cities for facilitating community participation, it has yet to take shape. There is no such provision for small and medium towns. Absence of common platform for interaction between citizens and for citizens to dialogue with the municipal authorities has led to alienation of communities from the governing institutions.

The need, therefore, is to revitalise local democracy, create and ensure that space is made available to 'all' the people, and at 'all' stages: from planning to implementation and monitoring. There is also a need for ensuring a pro-active, pro-poor stance on the part of the government and for ensuring that the poor have 'voice'. At the same time, there should be mechanisms for holding the service providers, whether private or state-run, accountable to the people they serve. In this, it is imperative that governments be brought closer to the people. Local governments, therefore have a critical role to play.

The civil society actors need to create and sustain action in all its myriad forms. They need to progress beyond the myopic service delivery models, which though essential, should ideally become the starting point for negotiating with the government. In this, it is equally critical that the poor play a larger role.

UNDERSTANDING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Present day urban governance has focussed on partnerships. One of the more prominent partnerships that have emerged is the one between the state and the private corporations. This is evident from the increasing privatisation of basic services, for example—water supply, electricity distribution, solid waste management and urban planning. It is being promoted on grounds that the private players will help improve the overall quality of service delivery, reduce leakages and distribution losses, improve overall efficiency and ensure timely and proportionate payment from the users. It is expected that the competition between private players will lead to all-round improvement.

However, as privatisation of essential services may mean possible increase in user charges, it may have an adverse effect on the urban poor. They may either be completely left out because of their inability to pay for the services, or end up paying far more with no significant improvement in the quality of service delivery. Most often, the poor are left out because they do not have a 'voice' in the design, planning, implementation and maintenance of development projects. The lack of access to quality basic services affects the poor more acutely than it affects others, because:

• they end up paying more for the same,
• the service provider is not accountable to them which affects the maintenance and upkeep;
• loss of overall productivity because of sickness, loss of income, excessive expenditure on health; and
• their growth and expansion opportunities are severely impaired being engaged in informal sector.

To counter this challenge of urban poverty and increasing socio-economic inequality, it is essential to engage citizens as the critical

link in the partnerships. Not only are the citizens capable of providing additional information as input for planning in terms of their needs, issues and possible solutions; they can also act as 'collective regulators' by countering the nexus between the market and state institution. It will help build horizontal accountability through a process of continuous monitoring, demand and questioning. This will improve the overall effectiveness in service delivery. Communities armed with knowledge have a constructive role to play in planning for their development and in taking action for protection and promotion of the rights and interests of the poor and marginal sections.

However, conventional decision making is characterised by increasing command and control by experts – either from the government or appointed by it, or by the private agencies. Needless to mention, such agencies have vested interests in specific outcomes.

At present, for want of information in simple format, the community remains isolated from the planning process and are silent spectators of the outcomes of such planning at the city and state level. This has led to growing interest in promotion of participatory planning, with its focus on including community/citizens that contribute in the planning process. This is a major change from their prior role as beneficiaries. The root of such engagement is the belief that people possess the best knowledge about the problems that afflict them, and even suggest the most feasible solutions for them. Their involvement can help foster ownership, thus facilitating the implementation and sustainability of the development projects.

LINKING CITIZENS AND BUILDING ALLIANCES

The citizens need to be organised into networks for civic action. These networks, which can be structured and unstructured, can operate under the rubric of civic engagement. Such civic engagement has multiple forms and functions. Examples of structured networks are residents associations, self-help groups, guilds, professional associations,

parent-teacher associations, religious trusts, charitable societies and youth clubs. The more dynamic and effective networks are usually unstructured like neighbourhood groups, crowd at the corner shops, women at the community markets, vendors on the roadside, daily traveller groups and so forth. These networks are grounds for collectivisation, where social capital in the form of trust, reciprocity and mutuality develop. It is here that socio-political opinions are formed, challenged and questioned, and economic opportunities are explored and further ties are established.

Civic engagement has potential in effecting change and its significance in a democratic polity should not be undermined. Even though decentralisation through the 74th CAA provides for ward sabhas and in some cases, even area sabhas as platforms for civic engagement, there is an urgent need for creating an all round enabling environment. For example, the present day government schemes for urban development have very limited scope for direct citizen's participation.

Civic engagement can not only shape the poverty alleviation programmes but also help in building a more secular, peaceful, equal and just society. Civic engagement in its current form is mostly for fighting poverty and gaining better access to basic services. There is need to move towards civic engagement for promotion of the rights to life and liberty. This is important for marginalised groups like minorities, dalits, tribals, women and persons with disabilities whose rights to life and liberty are under constant threat.

In a democracy civic engagement holds great promise. Across the globe, critics of such communitarian approaches have pointed out that such exercises are being used as fronts by the nexus between the 'power elite'. Micro-spaces, by their nature, in their plurality hold diverse solutions. There is a need for intense and extensive engagement to find genuine and sincere solutions for strengthening civic engagement.

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THE BENEFITS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement is not an event but a process that closely involves people in the economic, social, cultural and political process that affects their lives. Some of the key benefits of civic engagement have been summarised below:

Helps Overcome Institutional Inefficiency:
It has been observed that poverty is often linked to misallocation of scarce resources. The unsatisfactory performance of poverty alleviation plans in towns and cities is attributed to this misallocation by the governing or deciding institutions which are perceived as corrupt, non-transparent, or simply as not having the desired information to make wise decisions. However, civic engagement is an effective medium of developing check and balances, improving the quality of decision making in allocation of resources, and in ensuring that all the necessary information is available.

Strengthens Democracy:
The process of governing is most legitimate when it is based on the democratic principles of pluralism, representation, citizen's involvement transparency and accountability. The voices of all citizens groups along with their active participation should be considered in decision making. However, representative democracy does not necessarily ensure that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision making. Very often, marginalised groups are left out of the development planning process and therefore the needs of the poor do not get included in the plan. Since it is not reflected in the plan, no investment is made for the poor. Civic engagement can help to carry the voice of the poor and marginalised to the government and other decision making agencies.

Promotes Decentralised Governance:
Civic engagement can help local bodies to find effective, cheap and city specific solutions to urban issues. To address these issues it is important for local governing bodies to engage with the citizens.

This will ensure that they are not just voters but active citizens that can shape the development process and make it more inclusive, effective and efficient.

Helps in Including the 'Excluded':
The participation of the poor is not constrained by their economic hardships but by the power relations that perpetuate exclusion. If the available and the newly created space has basic democratic values, all sections of the people including women will feel a sense of involvement and ownership. Civic engagement is a process of reclaiming space of common citizen to influence and shape inclusive development.

Empowers the Citizens:
Civic engagement, in itself is an empowering process. It reserves political space for citizens to take part in the mainstream decision making processes, ensures that their voice, apart from their vote gets counted, that invisible nexuses between various power centres get exposed. This realisation of the political potential of the citizen is the broad objective of civic engagement.

Thus, creating space through civic action in planning, implementation and budgeting process can ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups, empowerment of citizens to participate in a meaningful way in the decision making process and in building transparency and accountability in governing process.

Building Alliances to fight Poverty: Case of SPARC and NSDF

Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), is an NGO established in 1984 by a group of professionals who began working with the pavement dwellers of the Byculla area. These women had repeatedly borne the brunt of demolitions of their homes and loss of their meagre belongings. SPARC began to work with the women pavement dwellers to better understand the effects of the demolitions and how they could be countered.

Mahila Milan is a collective of women pavement and slum dwellers whose central activity is the operation of savings and credit activities. It was set up in 1986, as a result of SPARC's work with the Muslim pavement dwelling women. The rationale behind its formation lay in the recognition of the central role of women in the family, as well as the potential of women's groups in improving the lives of poor families. *Mahila Milan* now conducts informal training and support activities, as well as saving and credit groups, and aims to empower women to play a greater role in community management. *Mahila Milan* now has a total of over 300 thousand households as members across the country.

Established in 1974, National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) has a history of organising the poor against demolitions, as well as attempting to secure the basic amenities of water, sanitation and such services for the urban poor. While the Federation was initially a male slum dwellers organisation, in 1987 it began working in partnership with *Mahila Milan* and SPARC, and since then the number of women members has grown, with around half of NSDF's community leaders now being women. With its 'Alliance' with SPARC and *Mahila Milan,* NSDF is responsible for organising, mobilising and working to strengthen similar federations of slum dwellers and homeless families in Africa and Asia.

MOBILISATION STRATEGIES AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TOOLS
The Alliance mobilises communities of the urban poor to take a lead role in driving city-wide initiatives for wide range of issues including safe and secure housing and infrastructure. At the core of the mobilisation strategy is the idea that it is only when very large numbers of the poor are networked as an organised collective, with clear strategies and goals that

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their demands are taken seriously by the state. Therefore, the federation membership expands within a settlement and between settlements, within a city and across cities, and within a country and across countries, together representing hundreds of thousands of households. The idea is that communities and their leadership must begin by getting together, building their assets, searching for land, doing their homework and preparing for managing their housing and infrastructure – all well before they actually get tenure of land, secure shelter and basic services. Eventually, it is only in the articulation of their problems and survival strategies, and the interaction with local officials that the urban poor begin to explore possible solutions, test out various options and see themselves as important agents of change.

Some of the mobilisation strategies are listed below: (a) Daily savings and credit activities of *Mahila Milan* (b) Organising federations of the poor according to land ownership – e.g. Railway Track Slum Dwellers Federation or Airport Authority Slum Dwellers Federation – because one has to negotiate with the land-owner (c) Enumeration, mapping and survey of slums (d) Holding community exchanges where the poor from one slum in the city visit other slums or where people from one city visit another city or from one country to another and learn from each other (e) Holding exhibitions where people put up life-size models of houses of the kind they would like to have.
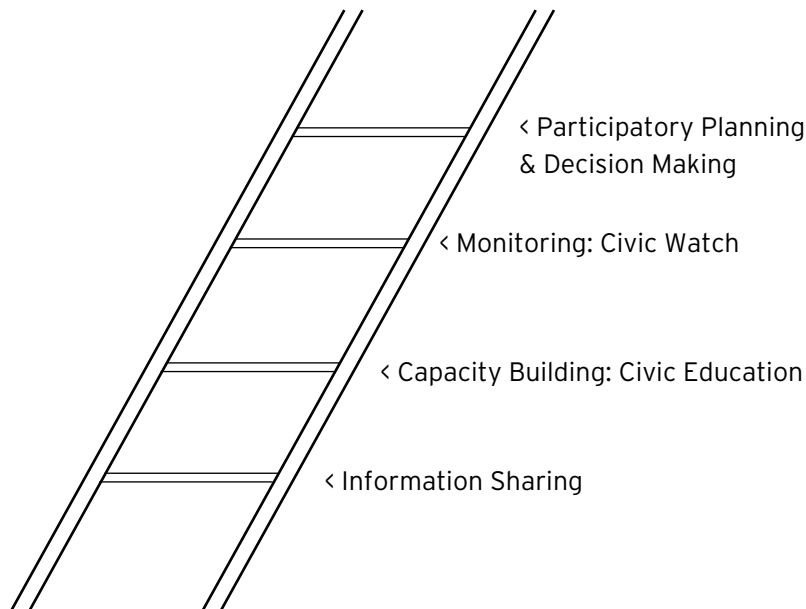
ENGAGEMENT WITH THE STATE
The Alliance is clear that the purpose of engagement with the state is to renegotiate and reorient the roles and responsibilities of state agencies, NGOs and CBOs and to influence the policy and programme of the state. The practical reason for engaging with the state is that it produces, controls or regulates all the goods the urban poor need: land, water, sanitation, electricity, housing finance and the like. Some of the concrete achievements include: Along with Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, the Alliance has resettled about 15,000 families living on railway lands in Mumbai. The Alliance has been involved with designing, constructing and maintaining more than 120 toilet blocks in Pune and more than 200 toilet blocks in Mumbai for slum sanitation along with the respective municipalities. It has been involved with the redevelopment/ construction of about 5,000 – 6,000 housing units for slum dwellers in Mumbai.

Written by Sunder Burra and Sheela Patel

FORMS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic engagement can take various forms. Its form depends on the context, the level of information available, the objective behind engaging with the citizen and the expected outcome of the process. Civic engagement is understood as a continuum spanning from one-way flow of information to the public, to multi-stakeholder consultations in the form of participatory assessment and dialogue, collaboration for joint work and shared decision making between facilitator and stakeholders, and empowerment where decision making powers and resources are transferred to civic organisations in the form of user groups.

< Participatory Planning
& Decision Making

< Monitoring: Civic Watch

< Capacity Building: Civic Education

< Information Sharing

The ladder of civic engagement

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The process followed in some of the popular forms of civic engagement, including the step-by-step objectives, illustrative cases and some of the outcomes have been shared.

INFORMATION SHARING: ROLE OF THE CITIZEN SUPPORT CELL

One of the critical dimensions of any form of civic engagement is accessible and usable forms of knowledge/information. According to the World Bank's 'World Development Report 1998-99', lack of information has been one of the critical reasons for ongoing poverty and deprivation. Knowledge/information, therefore, has the transformative power, in that it can equip people to fight poverty, recognise their rights, fight its violation, access social security, participate and gain from the markets. Increasingly, there has been a global movement towards information as the key towards meaningful engagement, between people across geographies, hierarchies and agencies. Instruments like Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005 in India provide a legally mandated mechanism to demand for information on development projects, budgets and their utilisation. This helps people to scrutinise public records, monitor progress, check leakages and facilitate access. The process is further accelerated when people get organised in the form of citizen groups or any other forums.

Creating mechanisms to provide access to relevant information can build effective civic engagement. Free flow of information on how a decision is taken and how the decision is enforced is commonly understood as transparency. The information should be in a form that is easy to understand and to act on. This will help people to monitor the quality and benefits of the decisions made. This is commonly understood as accountability. All the actors in the governance process must ideally be accountable to each other. They should provide answers on a pro-active basis or at least when asked for.

The information can help citizens to voice their needs and take action. For example in Port Alegre in Brazil a participative municipal budget and decision making process was initiated as early as 1989 which ensured that all stakeholders are included in the planning and budgeting process. The Mayor set up a decentralised system based on neighbourhood committees that gave public access to information on budgets and its utilisation. This has enabled groups to make decisions

on how to utilise funds. By 1995, this process was successful and involved more than a lakh of citizens from various sections. This ensured improved access to drinking water and sanitation.

Equipping the People: RTI in India

Right to Information was enacted by all the states in India in 2005. An application in writing or through electronic media can be made to the Public Information Officer (PIO) seeking information with details of the information required and the reason for seeking it. Information sought can include records, documents, memos, press releases, government orders, emails, opinions, advices, circulars and samples of material data held in any form. RTI includes the right to inspect works, documents, records, notes, extracts or certified copies of documents and records, certified samples of material, obtain information in the form of printouts or CD, videos and audio cassettes or in any other electronic form. Fees as prescribed have to be paid except in case of persons belonging to below poverty line (BPL) category. The Act has also set a time limit of 30 days, from the date of application for providing the information. In case it concerns the life and liberty of the person then the time limit is 48 hours. If the information is not provided within the specified time then it will be deemed as refusal of information.

Information will be provided only on documents that are listed as open documents. Certain information is considered as confidential and will not be provided under this act. This includes information that can affect the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the nation, international relationship, those forbidden by the court of law to be made public, impede investigation or prosecution of offenders, trade secrets and information that could endanger the life and safety of any person. Request for information covered under exemption from disclosure mentioned above can be rejected.

For effective civic engagement information should flow both ways - from the policy makers to the citizens (policies and programmes), so that the citizens can play a meaningful role in the decision making process. Information flow from the citizens to the policymakers will enable policymakers to understand the local conditions and benefit from the local reservoir of knowledge.

Even though there is a provision of area sabhas and ward sabhas in urban decentralised governance in India, these are largely dysfunctional. There is very little linkage between the citizens and the municipal governing system on a daily basis. Both officials and elected representatives do not share information with the citizens.

To facilitate sharing of information between the citizens and the municipality, UNNATI had set up citizens support cell (CSC) in select towns in Gujarat. These cells were set up within the premises of the municipal office so that they are easily accessible to everyone. This also helped the Cell to develop a joint ownership with the municipality. The objective of the CSC was to:

- Provide continuous information on various government programmes, legislative enactments, rules, procedures and best practices;
- Extend advice and counselling support to women and dalit elected representatives as a support to build their social legitimacy in the local governing system;
- Conduct regular trainings in collaboration with government and local NGOs;
- Take up ward and town level planning with an inclusive approach through workshops and demonstration; and
- Facilitate a process of forming and strengthening citizen groups to build public accountability and transparency.

The activities of the citizen's support cell:

Link Citizens with Government and Municipal Systems
  The CSC acts as a link/window where citizens seek information on a sustained basis. The CSC organises ward and cluster level regular meetings, particularly in informal settlements, so that poor people voice their problems before the elected representatives, and participate in the development process.

TWO-WAY INFORMATION EXCHANGE WITH THE ACTORS THROUGH THE CITIZEN SUPPORT CELL

PUBLIC EDUCATION:
Creating and running mass awareness campaigns and promotions.
Through preparation and distribution of pamphlets, booklets, painting competition, street plays and puppet shows.

CAPACITY SUPPORT:
Building the capacity of officials and visibilising the issues of the poor.
Through training programmes and exposure visits, regular meetings, inviting them to community discussion forums and multi-stakeholder consultations.

ACCESSING DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS: Information about government programmes, social security benefits etc.
Through community meetings, distribution of forms and leaflets, organisation of community fairs etc.

LINKING THEM WITH THEIR INTEREST GROUPS: by seeking information on up-coming resolutions and orders, discussing municipal concerns and possible solutions; and sharing information on the effects on the poor.
Through community meetings and dialogues

MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

CITIZEN SUPPORT CELL

COMMUNITY

ELECTED REPRESEN-TATIVES
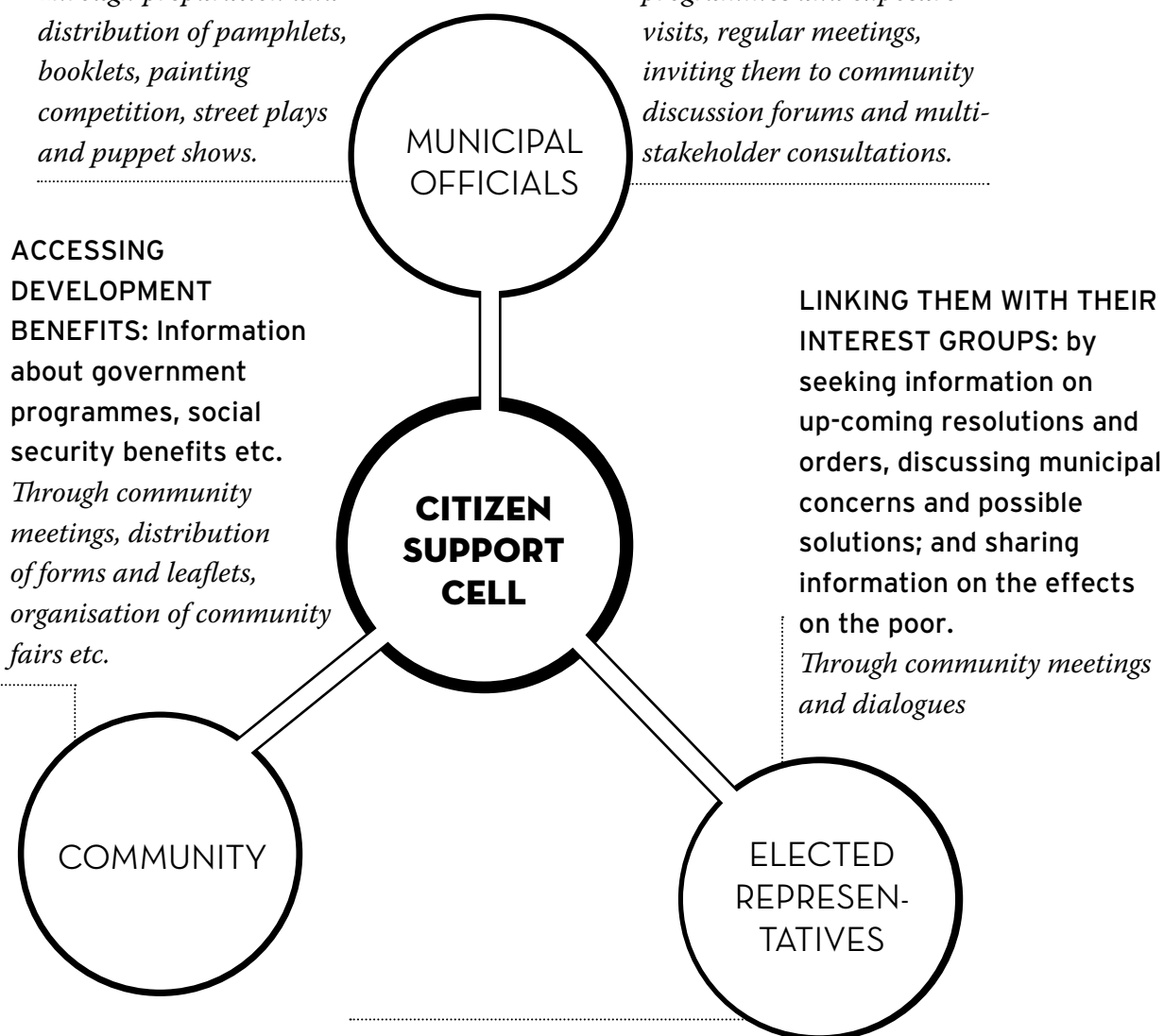
BACK-UP SUPPORT:
Support in filing nominations and orienting them on their roles and responsibilities to facilitate functioning and ensure effective representation; as they are often unable to powerfully represent their interest groups.
Through training workshops, exposure visits, hand-holding support etc.

Meeting with citizens at the ward level to identify issues

With help from the CSC many families were able to access social security benefits. For example, 32 families received their ration cards, nine widows and four old people started receiving their pensions, three people received their disability certificates, which help them access other social security benefits from the government; 12 families received housing support from the government and 22 people availed of self employment loans under the SJSRY.

In Dholka, through CSC issues of provision of regular drinking water supply for the 20 households located near the railway station, spraying pesticides in slum areas after monsoon, alternative space allocation for vegetable vendors and formation of co-operatives for *safai kamdars* (workers engaged in cleaning the city) were addressed. The CSC facilitated the process of accessing the Sanitary Mart Scheme. The process included the identification of beneficiaries, activating the old group, formation of new groups and linking with the municipality and Gujarat Municipal Finance

Board (GMFB). A study on the process of budget formation was also undertaken to evolve citizens' participation in the process and take further action on how people's participation can be strengthened.

A process of enlisting voters was initiated in 2005 before the local elections. In Dholka around 350 persons belonging to the *Vaghri* community (group which migrate for employment) were not listed in the voters list. Since they migrate to other regions for employment, they did not have the time or the opportunity to enlist and therefore never exercised their franchise. In the election, held in December 2005, to the local body they were able to cast their vote for the first time.

Provide Special Support to Women

The CSC reaches out proactively to women elected representatives and provides them with the necessary back up support so that they can effectively play their leadership role within the municipality. Support was also provided during elections to women and dalit candidates to fill and file nomination forms so that their candidature was not rejected.

Orienting Citizens and Elected Representatives

The citizen leaders and elected representatives are oriented on development issues, governance and gender so that they effectively address the issues of equity, vulnerability, gender justice in the development process. Town level training programmes were organised on the following themes:

• Role and responsibilities of the municipality in the context of 74th CAA;
• Participatory evaluation of basic services using report card method;
• Mechanisms for building accountability in the municipal system;
• Developing a participatory development plan; and
• Public-private partnership for the development of basic services.

Besides the training programmes, exposure visits were organised within and outside Gujarat to learn from the other experiences.

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Orienting citizen leaders on participatory evaluation of basic services

Public Education

A process of public education and awareness building was initiated through preparation and distribution of pamphlets, popular booklets and other educational materials. Some of the areas covered were:

- Awareness among voters
- Awareness on cleanliness and SWM
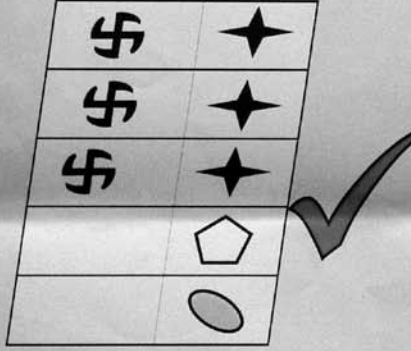
Creating a Database for the Town

Most often, the information available does not cover details of the vulnerable groups and informal sector. There is a need to create information on these groups on their population, their location, services available, status of land entitlement and livelihood. This information, in a simple format can indicate the degree of vulnerability for developing city based projects. It can also empower people to make clear demands and by the municipality to provide services and include these groups in the development plan of the city. The

Educational material for voter awareness campaign

Poster for voter awareness campaign

data base can be created either by using semi-structured surveys or by using qualitative methods like mapping and transect walk.

The CSC with the support of citizens created a data base on status of land entitlement in the slums in Modasa and Prantij towns and the informal sector in Dholka town. A data base on vegetable vendors and vulnerable groups of the town was created through a quick survey. This list of vegetable vendors is being used by the municipality to allot them space for vending.

The CSC along with the local NGO and citizen groups conducted a survey on land entitlement in seven wards of Prantij municipality. The survey helped to identify more than 200 vulnerable families, living around the local pond. Each monsoon their houses were flooded and each summer the municipality threatened to evict them as they were squatting on public land. The enumeration exercise was conducted and completed by the trained citizen leaders. The data was presented to select councillors and also at the General Body Meeting of the municipality. UNNATI helped the municipality prepare a housing proposal which was submitted for approval through the National Slum Development Programme in 2005.

A mapping exercise was conducted in Rishi colony, Bhavaninagar in Sanand of Ahmedabad district, with support from the citizens. Rishi colony has 33 families, all belonging to *Valmiki* community, who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy in India. This community, historically, worked as manual scavengers and now they clean the city. Although, they are engaged in cleaning the city, in their own colony there were no gutter lines, the open gutters were overflowing and garbage remained uncollected for days. The data on the condition of gutter line was presented to the municipality. In 2006-07 the municipality laid gutter line in this colony and has initiated door to door collection of garbage like in other areas of the town.

Creating an information base of the town

Lakshman, a safai kamdar, who lives in this colony, is engaged in cleaning septic tanks in the town and the neighbouring villages. He along with five others cleans around six to seven tanks in a month and gets paid Rs. 2000-2500 per tank. Since they do not have their own equipments, they have to hire a pump at the rate of Rs. 600-700 per hour. The act of cleaning the septic tank is hazardous as the tank is usually filled with highly poisonous methane gas. Very often the job is done without protective devices. The workers generally drink alcohol before doing this work. In 2005, for the first time these workers underwent a health check up which revealed health problems like skin and eye infection and respiratory problems. These worker groups were later mobilised and linked to the Sanitary Mart Scheme of the Government of Gujarat to access training and loan for purchase of equipment to carry out the job in a dignified way.

Nagarvani a Window of Information Exchange
Nagarvani, a monthly newsletter was published from each town. This is a town level information bulletin in the hands of citizens
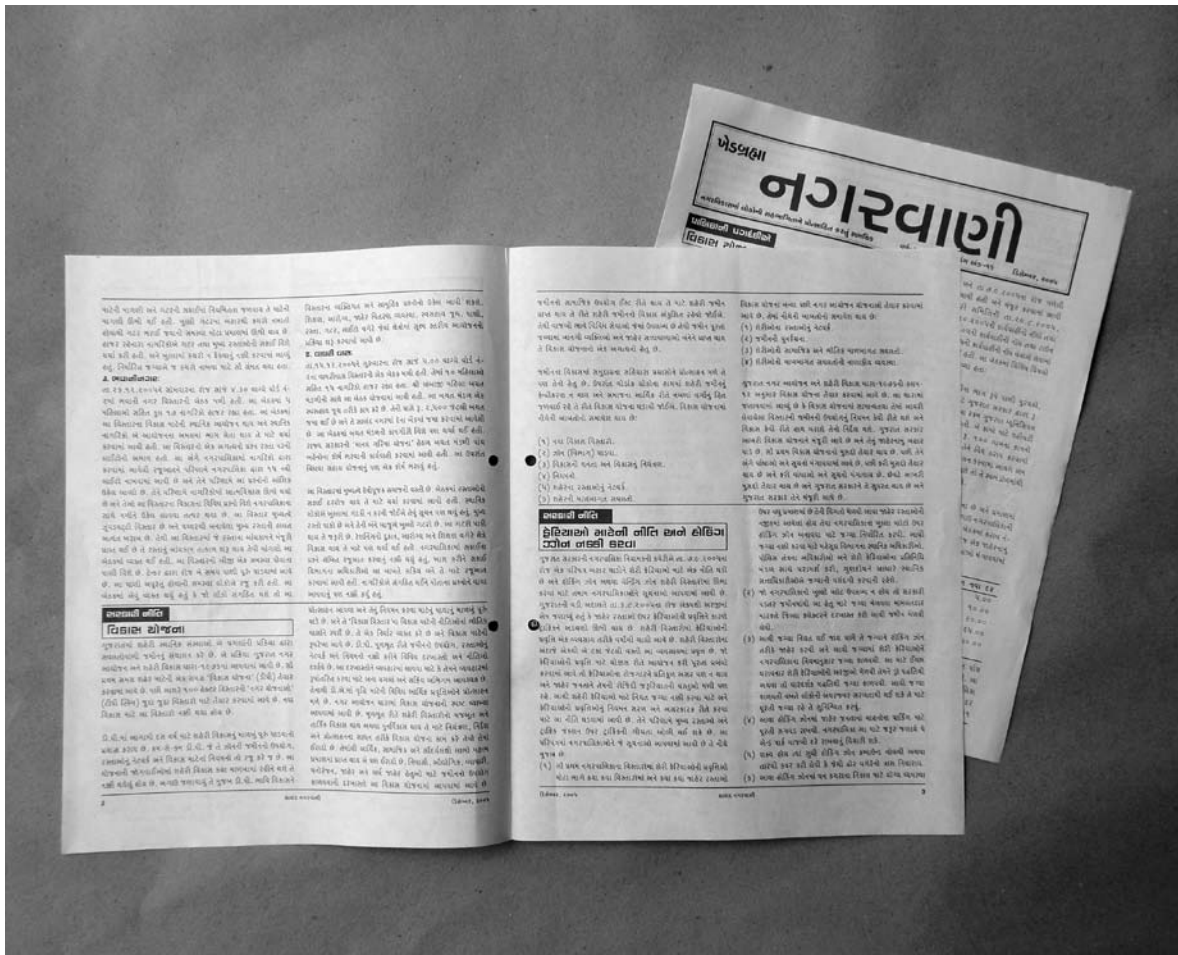
Nagarvani: monthly newsletter for sharing information

to know about the government schemes, policies, municipal plan and budget and to raise demands. One section of the newsletter documents what is happening within the town as reported by the citizens and in another section the municipality provides information on the development activities planned for the town. Some of the themes covered included state/central policies, government resolutions related to urban governance, popular notes on national and international studies on governance issues, accountability of municipality, municipal budgets, best practices on public private partnerships, innovations to improve basic services, ward delimitation, information on candidates during municipal elections and citizen's views on governance.

CAPACITY BUILDING: CIVIC EDUCATION FOR FIGHTING POVERTY

It is critical to strengthen the capacity of citizen leaders so that they can play an active role in holding the various actors in local governance accountable and responsive to the needs of marginalised sections of society. When the citizens, particularly from the marginal groups are informed and organised they can make an impact on the quality of governance. Equipped with the knowledge, the citizen leaders can be organised into groups, to challenge the local power structures. Unlike individuals, groups are better able to counter retaliation and backlash, if any. They are also in a better position as a collective to function as pressure groups. Groups have inherent capacity to ensure checks and balances to ensure that services reach the underprivileged.

Citizens groups need to be trained on government policies and schemes, monitoring development work, understanding budgets and fund management, dialogue and networking. It is in this context capacity building of citizen leaders have been taken up through structured training programmes.

Capacity building of citizens to play an informed role in policy decision making and to create political space is another form of civic engagement. For example, in a poverty reduction effort in Tanzania, UNDP supported workshops for civil society to prepare them to participate in the national level poverty programme. Through this the civil society was able to monitor the quality of basic services, provide feedback and take up advocacy to communicate their views and priorities to the policy making group.

CIVIC WATCH: MAKING CITIZEN REPORT CARDS

In the urban context, the issue of basic services is a major concern. Citizens in towns and cities are dependent on the municipality for basic amenities like water supply, road, sanitation, garbage collection and street lighting. It is the responsibility of the local bodies to provide basic services to the citizens. There is widespread

Who Is A Citizen Leader?

When local community residents come forward with a vision and commitment and encourage others to understand issues of community management of assets, facilitate collective action to improve their neighbourhoods, and create valuable innovations, then such a process leads to the emergence of a citizen leader. She/he is aware and sensitive to the emerging issues/happenings, is respected, accepted, and recognised by the community. He/she possesses leadership qualities, works as a medium between the government and the grass-roots level, i.e. joining the local development issues with the policies of the government. Such leaders demonstrate the abilities to include the excluded sections of society, those who are marginalised, voiceless, vulnerable and disadvantageous. For instance, the issues of the dalits, persons with disabilities, women, tribals and minorities are voiced. Citizen leaders are not paid workers, they work voluntarily for the uplift of the community. A paid employee is accountable to a particular organisation only and not towards the community. Citizen leaders link up with several other organisations for dissemination of information (door-to-door visit, posters, *nukkar nataks*/ street plays) on issues like education, health (pulse polio programme), water harvesting,

on-going government policies and programmes (food for work programme, mid-day meals in government schools) and empowerment of girl child. Citizen leaders build relationships within the community through cultural and traditional mediums for community participation. They should be open to ideas and suggestions, have patience, should be impartial, non-coercive, and flexible. Citizen leaders should possess negotiation skills, a follower of win-win situation, and should map other alternatives and evaluate the cost of each alternative before resolving the issues.

Community members have their own ideas for recognition of citizen leaders. Discussion with community members can help in identification of such leaders. It has been found that such leaders have been active in formal and informal associations, workers unions and traders association. Very often they work on their own by reaching out to the people who are denied their rights and entitlements and find out different ways to resolve them starting from representing on their behalf, organising collective action like group representation, linking with other broad rights based demands in the form of *jan sunvais* (public hearings) and demonstrations.

dissatisfaction about the services provided by the urban local bodies. Often, the poor and their settlements are left out. As citizens experiences and views are not recognised in planning and implementation of these basic services, often basic issues from the user's point of view are not addressed. The citizen report card (CRC) can be used as an instrument of civic watch to build accountability of governing institutions towards the citizens. Some examples of civic watch by citizens include, monitoring of basic services using report card that was initiated by Public Affairs Centre, *Jan sunwais* initiated by Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, social audit by citizens instituted in Kerala, direct overseeing of development work by PROOF in Bangalore. CRC can be used to facilitate civic engagement to demand for better access and improvement in quality of basic services from the service providers.

The formal audit which organisations commonly conduct is for complying with the legal requirements and only monitors the project in terms of budgets and expenses. This helps to bring out the gaps in spending. It is, however, a dead end in the chain of accountability. The report card can help design local solution to urban issues.

Report cards are participatory assessments that solicit user feedback on the performance of public services. The report card reflects the actual experiences of people on a range of basic services. It attempts to present a view on the status of public services from a citizen's perspective and captures citizens feedback in simple terms indicating their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The users can make an assessment of the services and tell the provider of the accessibility, adequacy, appropriateness and affordability of the public services and the problems they face in accessing them. The process also includes initiation of a dialogue with the provider to find local solutions to improve the services. All this can lead to participatory management of services. It can form the base for taking up town level planning exercise.

The CRC card mainly addresses two problems: (i) Service delivery in its current format that is typical top-down techno-managerial in approach; that provides little space for users' voice and responsiveness and (ii) Ineffective planning that leaves out certain settlements, poor services that affects a vast majority, frequent problems of breakdown and repair, leakages and distribution losses, widespread corruption and so forth.

The outcomes of the report card are many. It involves the users. This helps check corruption among the service providers and improve their responsiveness. At the same time, engaging with the community provides an opportunity to utilise local knowledge and evolve cost-effective solutions to common problems. This checks losses and builds an active tracking system to ensure quality service delivery.

REPORT CARD:
A TOOL OF CIVIC WATCH
> **Is user-end assessment of basic services, that measures: access, adequacy, appropriateness, affordability and user satisfaction**
> **Opens space for dialogue with service providers**
> **Provides local people a chance to participate in public problem solving**
> **Encourages the disadvantaged to participate in the decision making process**
> **Reduces losses in distribution, leakages, theft and black-marketing**
> **Can help improve the overall quality of basic services**
> **Checks corruption**

Participatory monitoring of basic services using report cards was taken up by UNNATI on a pilot basis in 10 towns in Gujarat. The issues of basic services - water supply, sanitation, street lighting and roads were taken up through CRC card to create demand for accountability from municipal authorities. The key steps for the preparation of CRCs are as follows:

Rapid Appraisal:
To gain familiarity with the town and its people transect walk, observing and making notes, collecting secondary information on population, wards, economy and land use can help in making a rapid assessment. Stakeholder identification and preliminary meetings with various groups can help to create interest and understand their views on their town.

Transect walk of the town

Citizen Orientation:

To develop wider ownership and build trust within the community it is important to identify citizen leaders through regular neighbourhood meetings. These citizen leaders are then oriented on the use, purpose and process of a CRC. Meeting the elected representatives and municipal officials and inviting them to the orientation and community meetings can build wider ownership.

Identify Services:

To identify the services to be included in the CRC, a priority list of services can be drawn based on demand/necessity/popular opinion, group meetings and discussions at the community level to find out which services are stressed. Five to six services can be included in one round of CRC. A final list of services to be included can made through a discussion with community groups and arriving at a consensus.

Meeting with citizens on citizen report card to identify priorities

Develop Parameters:

To develop parameters on the services that will be monitored, problem areas within the listed services should be identified and converted into parameters and indicators. The parameters should be developed in consultation with the community. They should preferably be in graphic format so that non-literate residents can also participate.

Doing the Citizen Report Card:

To collect information and prepare the CRC, the wards should be divided into clusters. At least ten percent of households in each cluster should be covered. Effort should be made to collect cases which can highlight the problem and also help identify possible solutions. Survey method should be used only if participatory appraisal through large neighbourhood meetings is not possible.
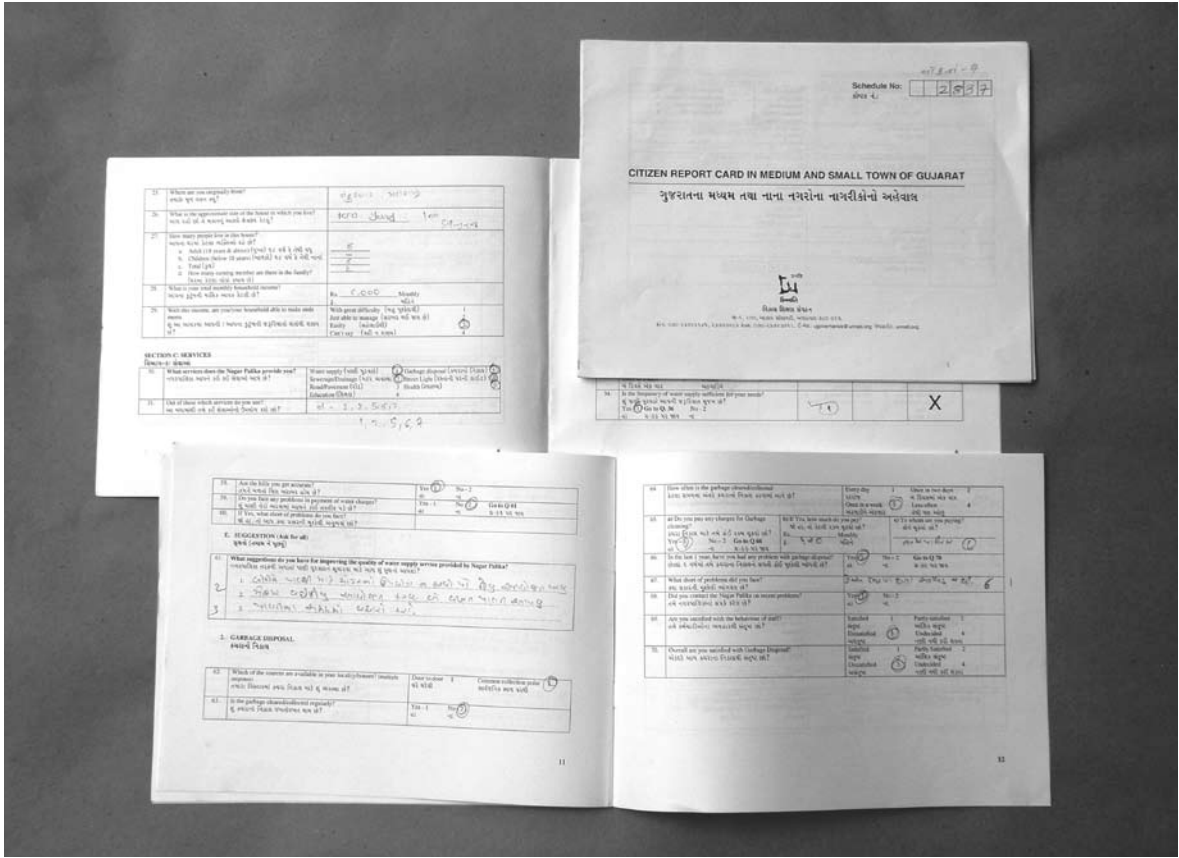
The citizen report cards with filled in information

Analysis of the Data:

To analyse the data collected and to finalise the CRC apart from quantitative data, qualitative data needs be collated and documented through discussion with various stakeholders. The citizen leaders should be trained to analyse the collected data through calculation of averages, frequency, sum and percentages. The document prepared should be comprehensive and easy to read, with cases to highlight the key problems and possible solutions.

Share Widely:

To generate interest and inform the concerned actors on the status of basic services in their town, the CRC should be shared in the local language. Additional suggestions from the community should be collected, along with the solutions provided by them. The CRC should be presented at public meetings in schools, libraries, town halls and municipal office.

Identify Action Points:
　To improve responsiveness, an action plan can be developed through a consultative meeting involving the service providers. This should include areas of improvement, responsibilities, time frame and the potential costs involved. It should be ensured that the community and the municipality agree to the action plan.

Some of the outcomes of the report cards were:

- The information can be used as a feedback by the service providers and it has often led to efforts to improve the quality, availability and access to basic services. In several cases, the poor settlements and slums were able to access services and subsequently regularised.
- Institutionalised report card created a benchmark on the quality of public services.
- Through the CRC, the needs and priorities of the vulnerable groups were articulated and provided a legitimate forum to demand for quality services.
- Report card is not a one time action. It should be used routinely, and efforts made to institutionalise the process helps in building citizens groups and getting connected to put pressure on local bodies to be accountable on other issues. In the process legitimate space is created for citizen engagement.
- It is important to ensure that the community drives the CRC and the facilitating agency's service is used only where required.

Monitoring Water Supply in Dholka

In January-February 2006, the citizen groups trained in monitoring of basic services undertook a report card on drinking water supply in Dholka town. Water supply was selected with the consensus among citizens since drinking water is one priority services that needs to be monitored. The exercise was undertaken with the objective to identify the key issues in water supply in the town and to find local and simple solutions in consultation with the municipality. The monitoring was done over a period of two months on a daily basis and covered all the 12 wards of the town, particularly all the slums. After discussion with the community a list of parameters that needed to be monitored was prepared and put into a format.

A sample of households was selected and the format in local language was filled on a daily basis for period of one month as part of the monitoring process. At the end of the two months, the citizens with support from the facilitating agency collated the data.

The data revealed the following:
• Most areas receive water supply on a daily basis for 1-2 hours.
• Around 75 per cent households in the town have water connection. However, in ward 3 only 50 per cent have connection.
• The time of supply is not fixed in many of the clusters particularly in the slums creating problems for those who go out for work.
• Sometimes the pressure is not good so they are not able to collect sufficient quantity of water
• When there is power cut many areas do not get water. This usually happens for 5 days in a month.

Once these issues were highlighted, the community took up the issues of timing of water supply with the municipality. The municipality over a period of time has come up with a fixed timing to supply water to the different areas. The issue of water pressure and additional connection was also discussed and over the last two years new pipelines have been laid which has partly solved the problem of low pressure.

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Spaces for civic engagement are sought or secured either through a process of on-going contestation between agencies or as explicit invitations for participation for the citizens. The state invites citizens and their groups to participate in governance process through various policy measures and specific programme guidelines. However, this is not well known and citizens are often unaware of the space that rightfully belongs to them. Most often, they are unable to participate because they are not organised into groups. This results in alienation between the citizen and the state. This lack of knowledge must therefore be bridged to facilitate citizens to use their invitations.

Planning provides one such space for civic engagement. Involving beneficiaries in the planning and implementation of development projects can help in promoting inclusive development. In this, citizens and civic groups have been contesting the domination of the experts and bureaucrats to plan for 'inclusive' cities, or cities that accommodate all. This has been a difficult and inconclusive contest.

Planning should include spatial planning, social planning and economic planning. Conventional planning approach however, focuses more on spatial aspects of planning and to some extent the economic aspect. Planning can also be socially transformative. By giving space to the voice of the poor, allowing them to question the development process, and in building accountability through a process of awareness and consciousness building, planning can empower the poor. While the town maps and the infrastructure maps help identify the physical availability of basic services, local issues like poor hygiene standards, time lag in repair and maintenance, poor condition of sewers, contamination of drinking water, non functioning of street light, etc. get highlighted in citizen consultations.

Traditional planning is centralised and mostly imposed from the top. It is considered as technical exercise done by experts and is mostly spatial planning. Often, the experts determine the priorities

and decide the solutions and outcomes. As a result, the poor and vulnerable groups and their needs are left unaccounted for.

Participatory planning is decentralised planning process from the bottom and based on dialogue and discussion with stakeholders. It is focused on building a vision for the town/city. It is democratic and inclusive and tries to bring the state and civil society closer. The state or the local governing body is encouraged to play a facilitative role. Participatory planning takes into account the knowledge and concerns of the local area. It looks at the community as actors who can shape their own development. The objective of citizen participation is to bring in issues that affect the quality of their daily life; and to facilitate their political empowerment. Planning is, therefore, an important space for civic engagement. Participatory planning can ensure that the interest and the voice of the poor are represented and accounted for in the development plans for the urban areas.

The poor need to know why they should take part in the making of a Development Plan (DP). Increasingly, one finds evidence of plural voices, concerns and interests within a city. This is because of the high level of inequality in cities. Even the urban poor are not a homogeneous mass; instead they have different and often conflicting interests. Often, the interests of the marginalised are neither articulated nor integrated in the formulation of city development proposals and projects. This is increasingly evident with the new Urban Development Mission where the private consultants and planning agencies are preparing City Development Plans (CDPs) for cities and towns.

It has been widely recognised that the knowledge of the 'local' is essential for the successful implementation of any project. It is for this reason that community participation provides an opportunity for any development agency to improve its effectiveness in service delivery or programme implementation. It offers the advantage of utilising the 'local' and 'non formal' knowledge. It also offers the advantage of expanding ownership status and developing associations

with and within the community. Such associations go a long way in maintenance of assets and services. Community participation helps reduce citizen alienation, promotes collective ownership and helps in effective operations.

Lack of co-operation and local influence often result in project delays. Limited information on the actual site conditions at the local level can aggravate the delay. It is therefore, economically useful to involve the community in determining the project time line. Based on the above arguments, community participation is prudent not only for its social impacts; but also from the financial feasibility and project management perspective and for successful accomplishment.

Steps that can be followed for facilitating participatory planning:

Rapid Assessment
Rapid assessment of the slum settlements including the neighbouring settlements in the areas is the first step. This helps provide a broad understanding of the settlement, its linkages with the people living in the neighbouring settlements, the status of notification and the land ownership. This can be done by conducting transect walks across the settlement. The walk must be undertaken with members from the community. Subsequently, a voluntary team should be constituted. Household mapping should be conducted.

Mapping of Basic Services in the Settlement
On the basis of the transect walk, encourage the community members to draw a rough base map of the settlement. In the first community meeting, share the objectives of the exercise and details of the team involved in it. On the base map, ask the participants to indicate and draw the locations of the services such as drinking water, overhead storage tanks, site for defecation, public toilets, drainage facility, water logged areas, street lighting, waste disposal site, ration shop, grocery stores, religious places or sites, education and healthcare facilities, transportation nodes and road access. This
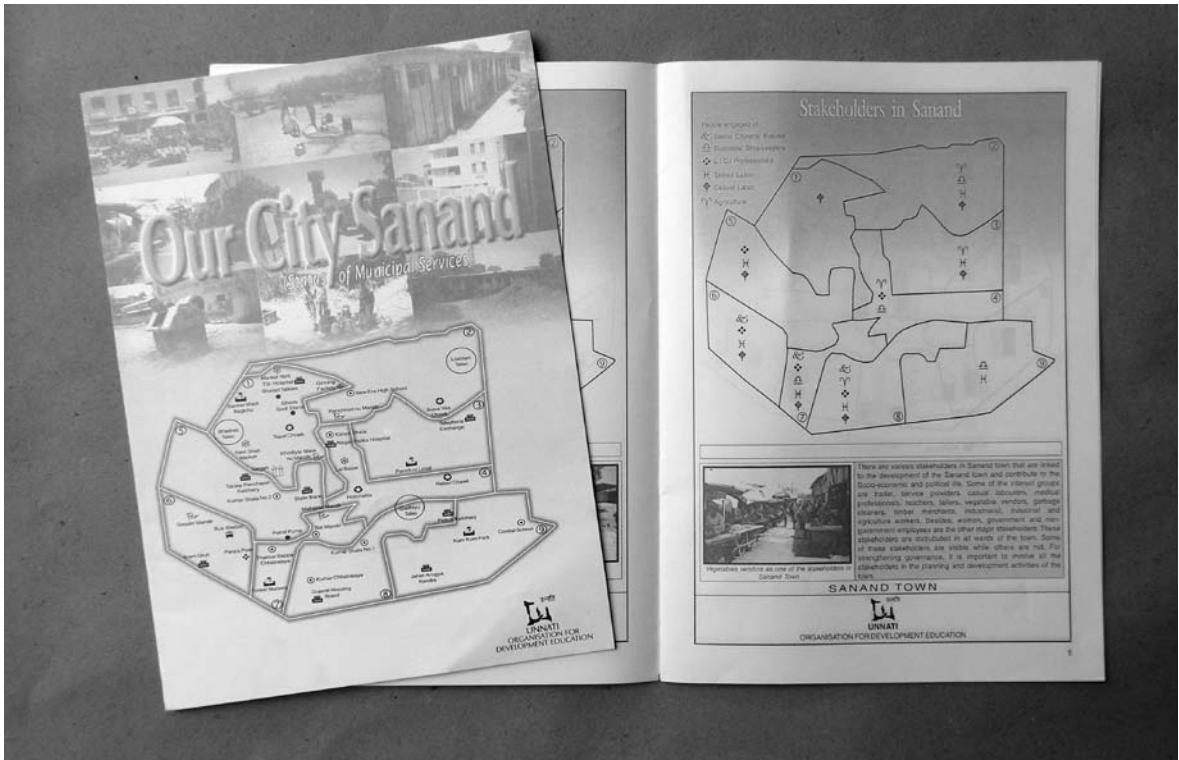
Rapid assessment of basic services

can be validated with another transect walk – this time detailed notes on each settlement are prepared by conducting on the spot interviews with the residents or members accompanying the team.

Sharing with the Poor

At the subsequent consultation, the maps that are prepared are shared with the community. The mapping of individual units is particularly crucial as it helps identify cases of multiple claimants to land, disputes and conflicts within the settlements, and cases of encroachment from private builders. This can serve as a critical first step in initiating community organisations and encouraging resolution within the community. However, all surveys conducted by the local authorities should be considered as base reference. This can help resolve conflict and help prepare a case for notification. For those members who do not have a survey number or are not listed, applications can be filed with the municipality based on documents providing proof of residential status – including post cards and letters with dates, ration cards, electricity and water supply bills.

LEGEND

EXISTING ROAD (Carriage Way)	
SET BACK	
ROAD 10' (Min. 3' set back on either side)	
PATH WAY (A) 3' (Min. 1' set back on either side)	
PATH WAY (B) 3' (Min. 1' set back on One side)	
PATH WAY (C) Stepped Platforms	
Public open space	
WATER POINT 5'-5'	
PUCCA	
SEMI PUCCA	
KUTCHA	
VACANT PLOT	

KALAKAR COLONY

Prepared jointly by LEED Collective and UNNATI
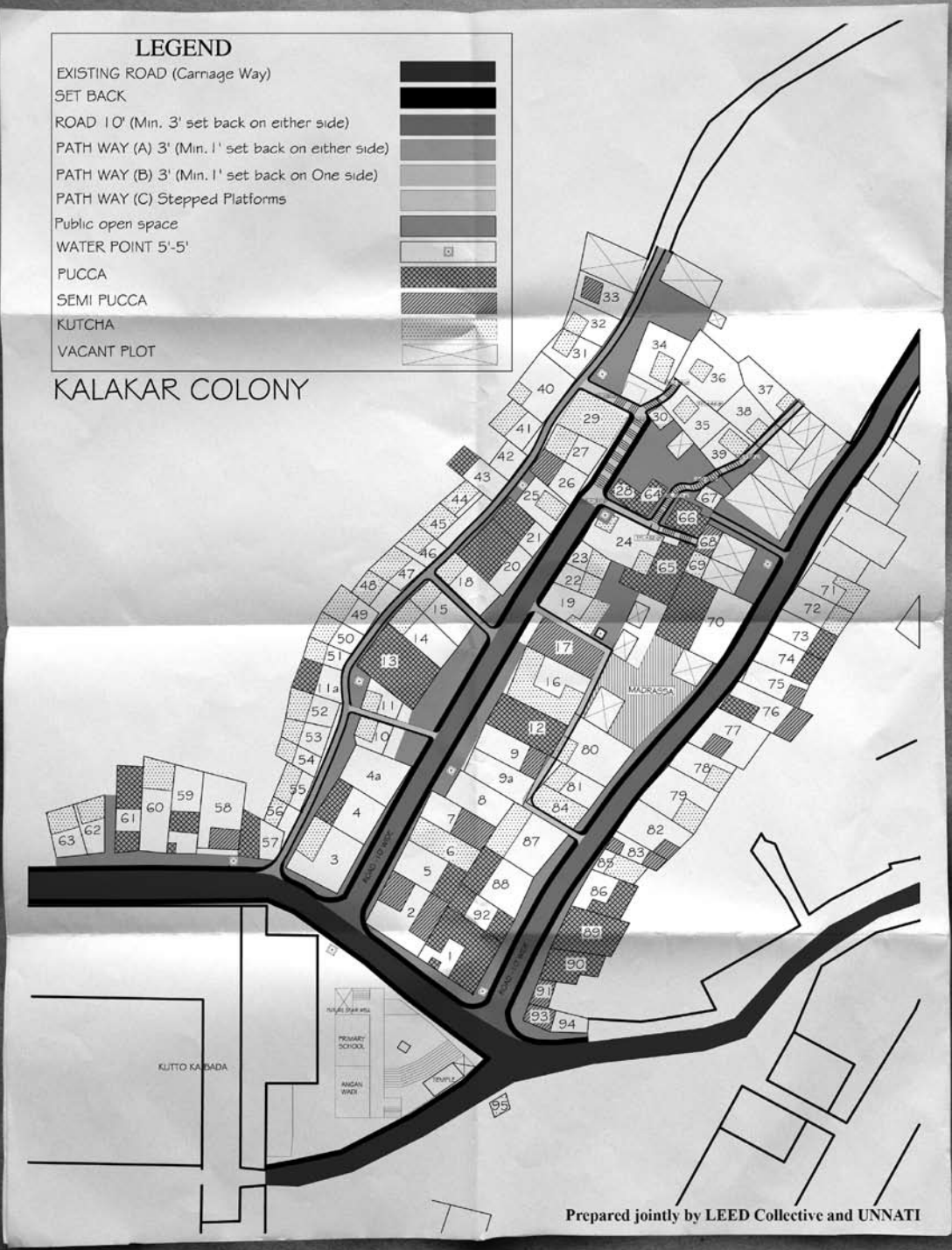
Mapping to identify and plan for basic services of urban poor

Facilitating an Organised 'Voice' of the Poor

The members should be encouraged to form a residents association, preferably with equal number of men and women in it. The group is encouraged to name their association and conduct parallel meetings, where the members of the designing and planning team should be present to share and review the progress of the plans.

Information Collection

Detailed household level surveys should be administered. Detail data on occupancy status of the house, construction status of the dwelling unit, social profile of the residents (caste, demographic status including number of residents, sex, age, education) and housing related data including built area, suitability of open spaces, ownership related data including date and survey number given by local authority, if any should be collected. Questions related to infrastructure including drinking water and its storage, disposal of garbage, defecation provisions for the members of the house, road and transportation access should be included. Data relating to community and social infrastructure such as – healthcare, education, public health programmes, public distribution system – including its availability and access is important. Profiles of the income and expenditure status of the family and asset holding within the family should also be prepared. While it is preferable to prepare detailed profiles for each household, in case of large settlements the survey can be scientifically sampled.

A station survey should be administered, providing topographical details, distances from neighbouring settlements, distance between plots, building footprints, streetlights, trees and other natural or construction features.

Final formulation of the project

Subsequently, the results of the analysis should be shared with the settlement. This will include the physical verification of plots and ownership, economic and lifestyle profiles of the people, identification of their core concerns and prioritisation of needs and design inputs.

The selected components for financing should be identified through a consultative process with active community participation. The community should also be encouraged to prioritise their needs. A detailed project proposal needs to be prepared for each component with the support of the municipality. Support can also be taken from professionals and civic agencies. The selected components should be compiled as a list and submitted along with the detailed project proposal. Stakeholder consultations have to be organised to assess their views.

BENEFITS OF INVOLVING THE POOR IN PLANNING

The community must be involved at each step of the planning process. This is critical to ensure ownership, contribution and sustainability of the initiative. Such an approach works best if the community recognises plans for and provides for (in whatever measure possible) the development. Also, the association or CBO once formed can be used for all subsequent development interventions – including those for extending small-scale credit, undertaking livelihood development programmes, preventive public health care etc.

FROM PLANNING-FOR-PEOPLE TO PLANNING-WITH-PEOPLE: UNNATI'S EXPERIENCE ON URBAN PLANNING

This section discusses two exercises on participatory planning, initiated by UNNATI. While the first one is based on post-disaster resettlement planning in Bhachau, the other is a neighbourhood planning with a slum colony in Jodhpur.

INCLUDING THE POOR IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

UNNATI has been working to facilitate earthquake rehabilitation process in Bhachau town of Kutch, particularly to protect the interests and the rights of the poor and vulnerable groups. As a part of its work, four key areas of interventions were identified:

- Urban planning which addresses the concerns of relocation vs in-situ reconstruction, land use, community infrastructure and access to the poor, special needs of women, persons with disabilties and cultural groups;
- Improving the governance processes for service delivery especially the social processes that affect the marginal sections and improving the status of land entitlement among the poor;
- Revitalising the home based and traditional production systems through forward and backward market linkages; and
- Future disaster mitigation.

On August 25, 2001 a day-long programme was organised with support from local groups to discuss the draft development plan. Senior representatives from Asian Development Bank, Gujarat Urban Development Company, Bhachau Area Development Authority (BhADA) and Dalal Consultants also participated. The issues that came up during the dialogue included – clarity regarding status

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of Navagam, forest in place of Junavada, relocation of Vadinagar, institutional area in place of existing Rabarivas, lack of provisions for fodder markets, veterinary facilities, agricultural stock keeping, seed banks, extension facilities and market linkages. As a result of this dialogue, the draft development plan was modified and settlements at Junavada were given their earlier place in the new plan and residential zone was demarcated. Vadinagar was brought back to its original location. The proposed institutional area was reduced and Rabarivas was accommodated at its existing location.

Advocacy for Modifications in Development Plan

To effectively facilitate the participation of people in urban planning, a satellite image of Bhachau town showing the urban development in Bhachau prior to the earthquake was procured. This image was used to discuss, with community groups their settlements. Using satellite imagery and field investigation, the community was supported to evolve an alternative plan. Suggestions regarding realignment of the roads and drainage plan of the town were accepted and incorporated in the new development plan.

Infrastructure Development in Slum Areas

Advocacy for inclusion of slum areas in new infrastructure plan was taken up. As the Development Plan was only at macro-level, the infrastructure plan did not include neighbourhood level planning. As most of the town is being built in-situ, slum settlements were not getting any new infrastructure as they were not part of the Town Planning Scheme. Specific allocation of infrastructure investment for the slums was advocated. In coordination with BhADA it has been possible to get about Rupees six crores sanctioned for slum infrastructure up-gradation in the town. Support was provided to the municipality to construct three community water storage tanks in the slum areas of Bhachau to cover about 150 families. The municipal water supply has been linked with the community water storage tanks and now these families can store water even at the time of scarcity.

Entitlement of Housing Land for the Poor

In the first year of reconstruction, it was realised that most of the poor in Bhachau did not have security of land tenure and continued to squat on government land. A survey was of about 2000 families was undertaken in Bhachau to understand the scale and extent of the problem, the different kinds of land tenures and on what type of land the slums were located. It was possible to provide building permission to the people who did not have legally recognised land ownership under provisions of BhADA. An advocacy campaign was initiated for in-situ regularisation of the housing land for the poor. In the past two years, there is significant progress and achievement on this issue. The issue was constantly taken up with the district administration, the World Bank team and Gujarat State Development Management Authority.

The government explicitly recognised UNNATI's intervention and recommendations to take up regularisation programme in Bhachau town. 1757 families have been recommended for regularisation of land. Currently, the process of land measurement and land price fixing is going on. More than 150 house-owners have already deposited Rs.10,000 as advance with the government authorities for the land title. In August 2004, the district administration ordered the regularisation of 100 families and more names are being processed for issuing the government order.

CHALLENGES IN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

As a part of promoting participatory planning, an integrated slum development planning exercise was undertaken in two select squatter settlements of Jodhpur city. Experience suggests that those living in the non-notified settlements face acute deprivation in terms of access to basic services and are most vulnerable within the city.

To take advantage of community mobilisation and the organisation's engagement through its urban resource cell (URC), 26 slums in the Pratap Nagar and Sursagar Area (within ward numbers 1, 3, 11, 16 and 17) were initially selected as sites of which two were selected

for the pilot project. The selection was based on the vulnerability assessment which used a variety of indicators like access to basic services, housing quality, terrain etc. Two of the slums that were rated highly vulnerable based on the above criteria were Vijay Colony and Kalakar Colony in the Kutto ka Bada area off Sursagar Road.

Kalakar Colony is settled on Urban Improvement Trust land to the north of the Kutto ka Bada, which is a facility to house stray dogs. As per our understanding, Vijay Colony is settled on private land to the south of the Bada. Kalakar Colony was settled 20-25 years ago and predominantly houses Langa and Sindhi Muslims. The younger Vijay Colony settled 10-12 years ago and predominantly houses the Bheel community.

The slum settlements with 100 households in Kalakar and 65 in Vijay have a population of approximately 750 people. Most of the residents work as unskilled daily wage labourers. In Kalakar 65 per cent and in Vijay 78 per cent residents work as daily wagers primarily as quarry or *kamtha* (construction) workers while a few Langas continue to practice their folk music for a livelihood. The status of land entitlement is varied and the housing stock in Vijay Colony is inadequate. The following main problems were expressed during community consultations and the household survey:

- There is no sewerage provision in the area and people defecate on the open hill side. With recent private land development around the settlement and diminished open space, it has become an acute problem for the residents.
- The terrain in the settlement is rocky with no tar roads or pedestrian paths. Many houses are inaccessible even by cycle.
- Land tenure is available to very few households in Kalakar Colony and none in Vijay Colony. Some households have UIT survey numbers. The lack of tenure has deterred households from making investment in their houses and continues to live under constant anxiety and insecurity. In Vijay Colony, people live under a constant threat of eviction from local land mafia, private property owners and the UIT.

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- Vijay Colony has no electric supply even for street lighting. Kalakar colony has limited street illumination. The undulating terrain, poor road and snakes in the area make it difficult to walk through the settlement at night and in early morning hours.
- Water is supplied for 1-2 hours every alternate day through community taps. There is however only one community tap in Vijay Colony shared among 65 households. Kalakar Colony has three community taps and few individual connections.

OTHER CONCERNS

The anganwadi and primary school in the settlement are held in one-room rented facilities. A third of households rates the schools poorly and attributed this to poor quality of teaching, lack of space and infrastructure such as drinking water, playground and sitting area.

A third of the households in Vijay and a tenth in Kalakar has no ration or BPL cards. Further some residents have their public distribution system (PDS) ration shop at a distance of 30 minutes walk in another settlement. The inconvenience of distance coupled with limited availability of goods and poor information about their arrival limits the benefits of PDS.

In general there is localised disposal of garbage that finds its way to the front of the Kutto ka Bada facility and from there it is cleared only once a year. Garbage is thrown around the houses on hill slopes.

The sloping terrain diverts the storm water towards the Kutto ka Bada area which is flat with no outlet. This creates water logging in the monsoons and increased dog stink from the Bada facility.

The design constraints uncovered, during the course of the planning include
- Squatter status of the residents would mean land transfer or relocation. Relocation, however, remains a contentious issue due to multiplicity of land ownership and the politics behind it; as well as absence of slum regulatory legislation or authority;

- Lack of documentary evidence with the poor; and
- Presence of land mafia, resulting in speculative land transfers and forcible evictions.

The suggested phased design interventions for development include:

i) Infrastructure development through provision of pedestrian access, extension of potable water line, street electrification and measures for garbage disposal. This requires little legal documentary provision, can be undertaken at low cost and involve limited community contribution.

ii) Housing and site layout design would involve street realignment, service alleys and street level design intervention to protect and promote street activity, community fabric and restore and reopen avenues for neighbourhood engagement.

iii) Community level integrated development programme based on the results of household level survey. This includes adult education, home based economic activity and facilitating access to social security benefits.

In conclusion, we may say that the implementable solutions emerge not from the design interventions, but from simplifying the administrative procedures; in furthering legislative security to the poor. This would also call for beginning to reconsider the poor, not as squatters on our land, but as contributors to our economy and services. Most of all, it calls for the restoration of the political rights of the urban poor and opening democratic spaces for negotiation and deliberation.

AFTERWORD

Over the years, there has been increasing privatisation of services. At the same time, the governments have been ineffective in developing regulatory controls. The civil society, despite its best efforts, has had limited success in mobilising the urban poor. The local bodies are being increasingly disempowered, with low resources and no political autonomy. As a result, the voice of the poor is becoming 'fractured' and is increasingly 'unheard'. In many a community meetings, while discussing their impending eviction in the name of 'development' and 'beautification', we have heard the question: *"ab kahaan jaayein, bataiye."*

This resource book grew out of the need and our experiences of engaging with the urban poor. We have shared with you four forms of civic engagement. They can be used for different purposes: data collection, participatory planning, public awareness, creating citizen interfaces, monitoring basic services and discovering solutions. However, the underlying principle is the same: To enable the poor to ask questions, make demands, raise issues and make decisions, about their lives, themselves.

It is important to remember that the methods must be used creatively. Feel free to change the sequence of steps, add new ones where necessary. Instead of surveys, use participatory tools. Instead of collecting data yourself, train the community leaders to do it. Instead of analysing data using expensive software, enable them to research their own lives, in their own ways. Encourage them to present their case. Pay special attention to ensure that the voices of women, children, the old and those living with disabilities are included. Make special effort to give them a chance to speak and be heard.

About Us

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UNNATI - Organisation for Development Education, is a voluntary non-profit organization registered under the Societies Registration Act (1860) in 1990. It is our aim to promote social inclusion and democratic governance so that the vulnerable sections of society are empowered to effectively and decisively participate in mainstream development and decision making processes.

It is an issue based, strategic educational support organisation, working in Western India with people's collectives, NGOs, elected representatives in local governance and the government. Collaborative research, public education, advocacy, direct field level mobilisation and implementation with multiple stakeholders are the key instruments of our work. The interventions span from the grassroot level to policy level environment in ensuring basic rights of citizens. In this, inspiration is drawn from the struggles of the vulnerable and strength from our partners. Presently, all the activities are organised around the following programme centres:

Social Inclusion and Empowerment

The initiatives include:
- Dalit mobilisation and organising in Western Rajasthan in collaboration with local NGOs and people's organisations to fight discrimination;
- Educational support for mainstreaming gender at all levels—internally and for our partners;
- Promoting civic response in mainstreaming disability through educational support to agencies working with persons with disabilities and other civil society organisations;
- Facilitating formation of craft based producers' group of women affected by the Gujarat earthquake for livelihood promotion.

Civic Leadership and Governance

We work in the rural and urban areas. The activities include:
- Community mobilisation for participation in decision making forums and monitoring of basic services to ensure social justice;
- Support elected representatives especially women and dalits to promote accountability through reform in local governance institutions. The support includes capacity building for equitable implementation of development programmes, participatory planning and facilitating social audits;
- Promotion and strengthening of forums like association of women elected representatives, Social Justice Committees and Village Development Committees for facilitating collaborative action.

Social Determinants of Disaster Risk Reduction

We facilitate adoption of sustainable and affordable innovations in the field and research to promote community-based practices for disaster risk reduction. The activities include action research on current community practices, documentation of best practices and research and advocacy on disaster response policies and packages.

The learning derived from our field experiences are consolidated and disseminated in print and electronic forms for wider sharing through a Knowledge Resource Centre. It is our endeavour to build an academy for community leaders, especially dalits and women, so that they can effectively address local issues.

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