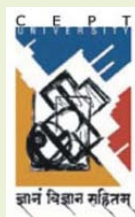# From Basic Services Delivery to Policy Advocacy –
Community Mobilisation in Pravinnagar-Guptanagar, Ahmedabad

Rajendra Joshi
Pooja Shah
Keren Nazareth
Darshini Mahadevia

April 2010

Centre for Urban Equity
(An NRC for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India)

From Basic Services Delivery to Policy Advocacy –
Community Mobilisation in Pravinnagar-Guptanagar, Ahmedabad

Rajendra Joshi[1]
Pooja Shah[2]
Keren Nazareth[3]
Darshini Mahadevia[4]

June 2010

Centre for Urban Equity
(An NRC for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India)
CEPT University

[1]   Managing Trustee, Saath

[2]   Research Associate, SPA Project on 'Inclusive Urbanization', CEPT University.

[3]   Coordinator, Research and Documentation, Saath

[4]   Project Coordinator, SPA Project on 'Inclusive Urbanization', and Professor, Faculty of Planning and Public Policy, CEPT University.

Box 1: Devuben: My Story of Debt to Development

Picture 1 Devuben Parmar, URC, Vasna

Devuben's story is a blend of the human spirit's desire to live a fulfilling life on one hand and also an example of facilitative role played by a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) in mobilising an entire community towards empowerment. Her determination to survive, come out of poverty, and progress goes hand in hand with empowerment of the community.

I belong to a small village called Sapar near Rajkot city. In 1988, my husband lost Rs. 70,000 in his electronics business and we had no means to repay the debt. One of our relatives gave my husband an offer to start an electrical business in Ahmedabad, which brought us to this city. For initial 15 days, we stayed with a relative in a slum house near the railway tracks. Then we moved out to a rental place in a hutment colony named Rajivnagar, where the living conditions were so deplorable including huge rats running around, that I stayed awake the whole night. On the next day, I forced my husband to shift out of this settlement and we shifted to Pravinnagar-Guptanagar (PG) in a rental hut. This settlement was also filthy; there were *kutcha* roads, there was no sanitation and drainage facilities, residents defecated in open dirtying the roads and garbage was strewn around everywhere. To add to these woes, there was no water supply and we queued up every day from 4 a.m. to 10 a.m. just to fetch just two pots of water. There were quarrels. Women got so tired every day due to fetching water and doing morning household chores that they could neither oversee their children's education nor take up employment to earn additional income for the household.

We had to survive in the city. Thus, my husband and I took additional loan of Rs. 50,000 from a local money lender. To repay that loan, we sold all mine as well as my mother-in-law's jewellery. Around that time, I came to know about the activity of *Papad*[1] and *khakhra*[2] making and joined the activity to earn Rs. 200 per month, working from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Additionally, I joined a sewing class, where, because I could not afford the fee of Rs. 25, I offered to sweep and clean the office instead. I was there for six months and when I found out that I was pregnant, I quit the *khakhra* making and asked my father to buy me a sewing machine. I worked out of home from then on.

1

One day, Sonalben[3], from Saath came visiting our neighbourhood enquiring about status of vaccinations in the slum and informing us about a camp to be held the next day. I took my daughter to the camp and then asked Saath members if there was any work opening for me. They told me that they were about to start a *balghar* (pre-school / nursery) in the slum. I told them that I had studied up to 9th grade and also enjoyed working with children and would therefore like to try working in it. They hired two women for the *balghar*, one was Kailashben from my area and other was me. We were first trained in various methods, techniques and also the theoretical aspects of childcare and development. I think my dedication and hard work made me popular among the children. Gradually parents began trusting me as well. After discussions on the Slum Networking Project (SNP) had begun in our area, I along with the rest of the Saath team began going to each house discussing with them about the programme and also holding community meetings. It was a new experience for me; I was interacting with people from different communities, irrespective of caste, class or religion. People started recognising me within the community and I knew everyone on a first name basis. It was a very fulfilling experience.

Meanwhile in 1995 we bought our own house for Rs. 35,000. It was a hut. Today we have built a *pucca* house on that land. I have two children, one daughter studying in 11th standard and a son who is in 9th standard. I want to educate them. I have told them that they can study, as much as they want.

I was appointed as the manager of *Sakhi Mahila Mandal* (SMM), when it was set up in 1996. After the 2001 earthquake, I remember collecting materials for the affected people in Kutch. We then went to Kutch and that was when Saath expanded its work in rural areas. During the communal violence of 2002, Saath initially collected relief materials from the households and when Rajendrabhai asked who among the Saath team was willing to work in the relief camp, I volunteered along with others. All of us knew that there was no compulsion whatsoever, but most of us joined in. I did not tell my husband, because I knew he would never allow me to go. So I told him that we were going for field work. A van would come to the settlement to pick us up and then drop us. After a few days my husband suspected what I was doing and I had to tell him. But I shared my experience of the camps; of how the victims were suffering, how the children felt threatened and so on. I also told him that it was safe to go there.

Working in the relief camps changed my life, it opened my eyes. I too had gone in with fear and prejudice to some extent, but all that changed the moment I stepped into the camp. The stories of horror that I heard shook me completely. We started activities with the children and women. Not many people in my community and area understood why I was doing it, and it was a struggle having to explain myself all the time. But, I did, I shared my experience of the horror of those camps. I feel that many people started understanding the gravity of what had occurred. Over a period of time Saath set up an office in Juhapura (2002 riot-affected Muslim area) and today we have all our organisation's programmes running in Juhapura. In the year 2007, I was appointed as a coordinator of the Urban Resource Centre (URC) for the whole Vasna area.

Today, I feel proud of myself and my work and I know my husband and children are proud of me too. I know that I am looked up to within my community, as a leader. I am not afraid to try new things and from working in the *balghar* to coordinating the URC at Vasna – I know I have come a long way.

Devuben Parmar, Co-ordintor, URC, Vasna

1.0 Community Mobilisation

Community mobilisation is an important process of democratisation in any society. This is all the more important in developing economies where mobilisation of low income communities is towards the agenda of development. In the tripod of urban governance, the state, civil society and market, civil society as an agency of change has been more proactive in poverty alleviation and empowering the urban poor communities than the state, as far as Indian experience is concerned. The state of Gujarat, as mentioned elsewhere, has been at the forefront in implementing the neo-liberal policy agenda of economic growth and has registered high rate of overall economic growth as well as per capita income in the last one decade. Gujarat state's approach to poverty reduction has been through trickle down and the idea of democracy remains narrowly confined to elections. However, the state has a long history of volunteerism whose roots can be traced to Gandhian philosophy and MK Gandhi[4]'s movement for national independence as well as of philanthropy whose roots can be traced to early capitalism. In particular, Ahmedabad City has a blend of both, volunteerism as well as philanthropy, both resulting in wide spread activities of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

This paper illustrates the process of mobilisation of slum dwellers around the question of their access to basic services, through the intervention of an external agency of change, an NGO named Saath based in Ahmedabad. The intervention did not however remain confined to organising community for service delivery but moved on to organising the community for policy advocacy and participatory local governance. In the normal course of development of cities of developing countries, low income residents continue to live without basic services for long periods of time, although the city governments have mandatory responsibility to provide basic services, in particular, water supply, sanitation, roads and street lights to all the residents of the city. Such a situation arises because of number of factors: lack of finances, lack of technical and managerial capability to provide basic services, lack of ability to implement city development plans, location of the low income settlement in inaccessible sites or peripheral sites making extension of basic facilities technically infeasible[5], and above all provision of the services generally restricted to 'legal' settlements and 'legal' residents of the city. Such 'illegal' communities then are unable to systematically advocate their cause with the city government and hence are left out of the access to mandatory basic services. An intermediating organisation, thus, in such circumstances have a very important role to play, as this case study illustrates.

A low income settlement, henceforth referred to as slum, is considered legal if it has been notified as a regular settlement by the local government. A slum resident is considered legal if s/he has a legal address, obtained through valid documents given to him/her by the different tiers of government, such as an Identity Card issued by the local government, a ration card issued by the state government for the purchase of commodities from the public distribution system and an election voter card issued by the central government. The resident may have individually accessed electricity, given that in the wake of economic reforms, Ahmedabad Electricity Company (AEC) has been privatised and individuals willing to pay have become clients of the electricity company. In short, the process of accessing basic services is a process of accretion. Over time, the settlement can be conferred with a legal land title, or a property right. The settlement under discussion in this paper, PG, yet does not have a property right, but, has a de facto tenure security. The research project is on tenure security. However, PG is not a case of community mobilization for land tenure security, given that this policy does not exist in Ahmedabad City. But, it has attained a high level of de facto tenure security on account of community mobilisation as well as public policy of extending basic services to the slum.

This paper narrates the process of community development in Pravinnagar-Guptanagar with the assistance of an external agency, gradual improvement of its physical environment, improvement in awareness and empowerment of the community in general but of the women of the community in particular, experience of women acting as agents of change and in the process empowering themselves to negotiate not just the public domain but also the private domain, and role of specific individuals in triggering this local change. The backdrop of this change is the introduction of a participatory slum development programme named Integrated Slum Development Programme (ISDP) by Saath, in conjunction with the Slum Networking Project (SNP) of the local government, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC).

Housing, in other words, shelter, is synonymous with the dignity and security of a family. This paper is also a documentation of Saath's experience of upgrading PG, a community of migrants from different parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan, the community's and Saath's difficulties in the entire process, the outcomes in terms of physical improvement firstly and then moving beyond it for encouraging and then empowering the community to participate in larger city level development processes.

What is Community Mobilisation?
The concept of community mobilisation is strongly linked to a development paradigm. For example, some community mobilisation efforts have laid emphasis on material improvement or income enhancement considering the latter as enabling condition for improvement in other conditions of life. Then, the objective of community mobilisation becomes economic empowerment. Some community mobilisation is for the objective of empowerment of the vulnerable population through education, whereas some others have the objective of deepening democracy

through laying emphasis on cooperative efforts of the people for development purposes. In the last two types of efforts, economic development is the by-product of the community mobilisation process whereas in the first one, the goal is economic development.

Whatever may be the approach, there are some core elements in the community mobilisation process: these lay emphasis on self-help efforts of the people, planning on the basis of felt needs of the people, concern with integrated and balanced development of the entire community, training and development of local leadership (Kavoori 1974). The aim of community mobilisation should be all sided development of the community including social, political, economic, cultural and moral development, making the community self-sufficient and self-reliant (Mehta 1974). Though Gandhi has given this idea for a village but the same can be applied to an urban community.

Community mobilisation is in no way a new idea. It is often said that community mobilisation is an old wine in a new bottle. Local welfare mechanisms have been in existence for long and there is a long history of local organising actions for local improvement, mainly on voluntary basis. Community development as an idea has emerged from such local initiatives and has acquired special importance in recent times, particularly in the context of state failure in delivering welfare to the populace.

Community
- Community in urban context refers to a group of people with families who are dependent on one another in their day to day transactions of mutual advantages.

Community Participation
- Community Participation is active involvement of people in planning, implementing and monitoring the programme which is for their well-being. Community participation is not just utilization of services and being passive users.

Community Mobilization
- Community Mobilization is the process of bringing together or empowering members of the community to raise awareness on and demand for a particular development programme. It facilitates change and development taking into account the felt needs of the community.

Community Organisation
- Community Organization is the process of organizing the community in such a way that they can identify and prioritize their needs and objectives, develop confidence and will to achieve them by finding resources through cooperative and collaborative attitude, practices and community participation.
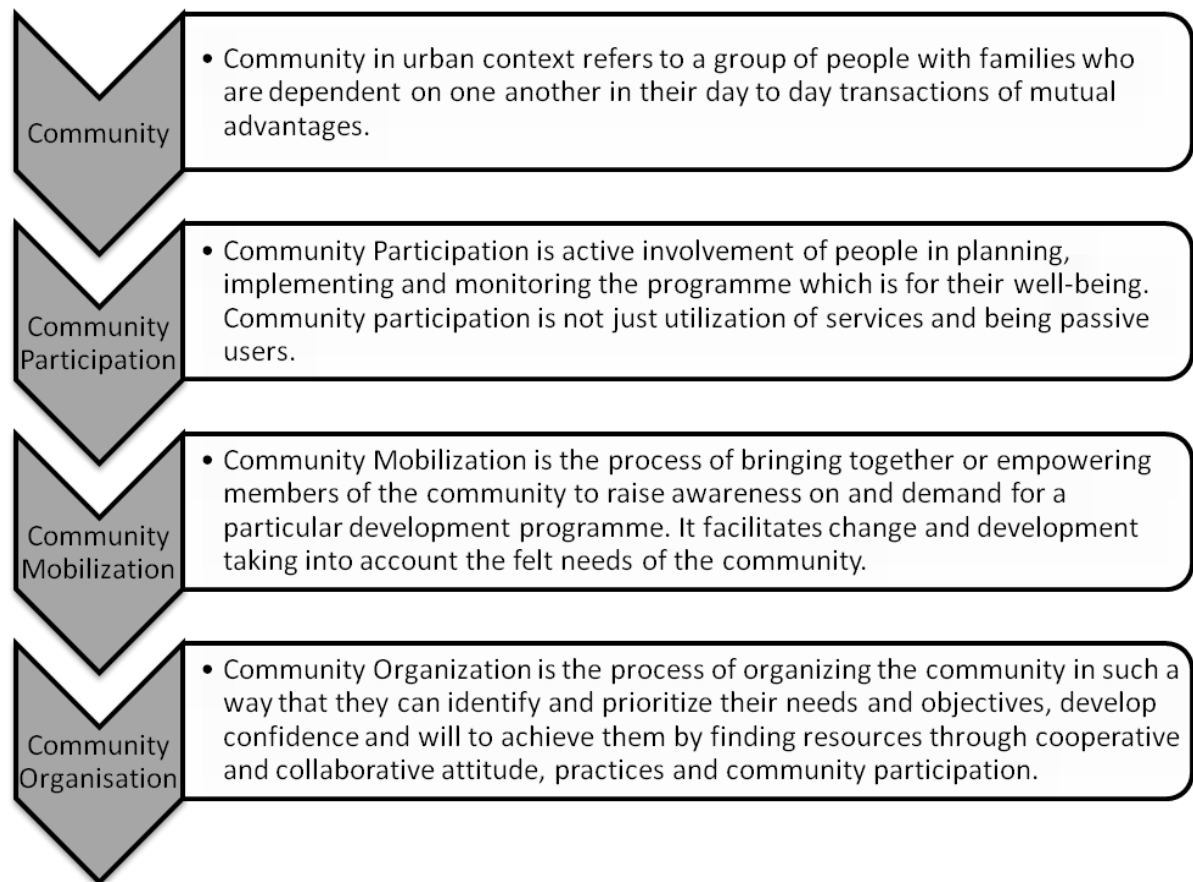
Figure 1 Community to Community Organisation

Community mobilisation is a part of a process that starts from a community and ends in community organisation. Part of the process includes mobilising necessary resources, disseminating information, generating support, and fostering cooperation across public and private sectors in the community.

What one person calls a community may not match another person's definition. From a sociological perspective, the notion of community refers to a group of people united by at least one common characteristic, such as belief and values, religion, language, territory, culture, occupation etc. Community therefore is a fluid and flexible concept. Communities may be viewed as systems composed of individual members and sectors that have a variety of distinct characteristics and interrelationships (Thompson et al 1990). Where there is a mechanism of local self-governance, important decisions are usually made at the community or settlement level by the community members themselves. This is called community participation. Proper management of resources is the best possible way for the development of the community and when people plan and do things, it is called community mobilisation. Where there is community mobilisation, people take charge of their local reality and transform their and their community's lives.

It is very difficult to define community mobilisation, although everyone knows what the term means in practice. Community mobilisation can be defined as a process designed to promote better living, if possible with the initiative of the community itself, but if not so, then by the use of techniques for motivating the community in order to secure positive, active and enthusiastic response for a movement for change. It is a process where, generally, as the experience shows, there is an external agent of change, who motivates and organizes community for a desired goal. In most case, the desired goal is improvement in the standard of living.

There are nearly as many definitions of community mobilisation today, as there are communities and organisations using it as a strategy. But here community mobilisation can be defined as, "a capacity building process through which community members, group or organisation plan, carry out and evaluate activities on a participatory and sustained basis to improve their access to basic amenities, education, health services and their overall standard of living either on their own initiative or stimulated by others" (Grabman and Snetro 2003). Thus, community mobilisation is a process by which, a community recognises its needs, prioritises them, develops confidence and will to work among the people, locates resources – internal as well external – and in doing so develops co-operative and collaborative attitudes within the community.

Participation is the essential element of any community mobilisation. As community participation increases, community ownership and capacity increases, resulting in community action and continuous improvement in quality of community life in a sustainable manner. It brings together policy makers and opinion leaders, local, state, and central governments, professional groups, religious groups, and individual community members. Community mobilisation empowers individuals and groups to take some kind of action to facilitate change.

6

A community mobilises when people become aware of a common need and decide together to take action to create shared benefits. Those concerned about the issue must create the momentum for mobilisation or else it cannot be sustained over time. Once it is decided to mobilise the community to conduct or expand activities, a community coalition is required to be built.

Further, a democracy can only flourish when it has deep roots in a self-reliant community with a sense of social responsibility. Community mobilisation makes it feasible and practicable to provide people a chance of practicing self governance and understanding its difficulties (Dayal 1960). In the spirit of Abraham Lincoln; community mobilisation may be defined as development of the community, by the community and for the community.

The process of community mobilisation in urban areas is more difficult than in rural areas, since the urban communities are characterised by occupational relations in contrast to the caste and kinship relations found in rural areas. But in India, the situation is not so critical, as even in the cities migrants assemble according to their castes, kinships and localities. The pattern is prevalent in almost all the slum areas. Many a times it is a challenge for the agency mobilising the community, to integrate it with other caste and religion people.

The genesis of any community mobilisation is an urge from the hearts of the deprived people for development and improvement. In cities, the slum dwellers see around themselves other people from the same city, living a much better quality of life than themselves - residing in better houses, using all the basic amenities, paved streets, good roads, better medical facilities, quality education for their children and all what is indispensable for better living. Most of the times the urban poor are not aware of the Government programmes and policies or they are not willing to pay for it. In such a situation, an external agency may present the community with handy salutations to their problems and show a possibility of change. The local community has to accept the idea and own the solution themselves. Any imposition from external agency, even for best solutions for the community would not work, if there is imposition and no time is given for ownership of the process of change. Imposition could take a meaning of self-interest of the intervening agency and this may not work. A good metaphor to represent the process of community mobilisation is 'One can bring horse to the river but cannot make it drink water, if the horse does not want to'. Hence, an important dimension of the process of change through community mobilisation is to constantly motivate and educate the community towards options and methods of change.

2.0 Ahmedabad and the Slum Networking Programme

Ahmedabad is the seventh largest metropolis in India, with a population of 4.5 million and an area of 466 sq km[6] with her expansion in February 2006 from 198 sq km and population of 3.5 million. The city has 600 years of history, but, is known in contemporary history for its role in the national freedom struggle. Here, Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, established an Ashram in Ahmedabad on his return from

South Africa and started his active engagement with the Indian freedom movement. His ideas of volunteerism, trusteeship and simple living found their roots in the ethos of the city, leading to large many Non-governmental organisations establishing their roots in the city. This case study of community mobilisation is therefore, in a sense, an outcome of the voluntary ethos of the city, linked to the Gandhian ideology that has dominated the public discourse in Ahmedabad City.

Ahmedabad, otherwise, is a prosperous city. Since, city level per capita incomes are not available for Ahmedabad; we have to look for proxy indicators of economic wealth. Ahmedabad is thus recognised as one of the few financial hubs in India. In the recent years, the city's real estate market has registered about 250 per cent to 300 per cent increase and the western periphery of the city is dotted with many high income 'gated communities'. The speculative land market has also penetrated the eastern periphery of the city. It needs to be mentioned that the city is bifurcated into two distinct parts, the western globalising part and the eastern industrial part under decline due to decline of large-scale industries and high level of informalisation of the work and economy (Mahadevia 2002a, 2002b).

Ahmedabad entered a phase of severe economic crises from late 1980s to late 1990s during which her main economic base, cotton textile mills closed down and a large section of labour force was displaced from organised to unorganised sector (Mahadevia 2002a). The retrenched labour shifted to the power loom industries at almost half the salaries and to self employment - 37 per cent of males and 65 per cent of the females were self-employed in 1999-00 (Mahadevia 2008b) without any social security. Regularly employed (a large section among them have some social security) workers among the males decreased from about 45 per cent in 1987 to 33 per cent in 1999, over a 12 year period and that among the females also decreased from 30 per cent to 20 per cent (Mahadevia 2008b). A survey of 1000 households in 1998-99 in Ahmedabad estimated that around 75.3 per cent of the total workers were in informal employment, which included 70.2 per cent employed in the informal sector and 5.1 per cent employed in the registered industrial units but having no social or employment security (Unni 1999).

A study done by Unni and Uma Rani (2002), on the income and employment in the city of Ahmedabad points out rapid growth of employment in informal sector than the formal sector. The share of employment in informal sector was 77 per cent and it generated 47 per cent of the total city income. In short, the poor contribute to the globalising economy of Ahmedabad as much as the non-poor. But the poor do so without receiving the due economic or other civic amenities or services at par with the well to do people.

An estimate of population living in slums in Ahmedabad puts this figure at 41 per cent living in the slums and *chawls* in 1990 (ASAG 1992). A more recent figure says that 25.77 per cent are living in slums[7], when the population census gives an estimate of 13.46 per cent living in slums in the city (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India 2005: 22). A primary survey of all the slums carried out by Mahila Housing Trust (MHT) on behalf of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) in early 2000 states that there are around 710 slums in the city housing around

0.9 million population[8]. The physical environment, in terms of housing conditions, availability of basic services determines the productivity and consequently the quality of life in these slums require significant improvement.

Among the many firsts, the city has an innovative slum development programme, initiated by the AMC in 1996-97 with the participation and partnership of the NGOs of the city. This is the Slum Networking Programme (SNP) (See Acharya and Parikh 2002, Joshi 2002, Dutta 2002). This programme is for improving physical infrastructure in the slums and also social infrastructure wherever the NGOs are present. The idea of SNP is to integrate the slum dwellers into the mainstream of the society. It was felt that the fragmented efforts made to provide infrastructure facility to the slums during the last few decades did not have desired results and therefore could not change the character of the poverty in the city nor did it help in improving education, health and sanitary conditions in the slums. This partnership-based slum development programme has community at its core, partnering with the social institutions, industry organization (private sector), local government (here the AMC), and the NGO that acts as a facilitator, for extending physical and social infrastructure in the slums. SNP aims at giving dignity to the community and desires to treat the slum dwellers as partners rather than beneficiaries in the project. So the project was treated as a participatory planning and implementation programme rather than simply a charity programme.

The Slum Networking Project had mainly two components:

1. Improvements in Physical Environment: This component contains the following seven facilities, (i) water supply to individual households, (ii) sewerage to individual households, (iii) individual toilets, (iv) roads and paving, (v) storm water drainage, (vi) street lighting and (vii) tree plantation

2. Community Development and Social infrastructure: This component consists of formation of neighbourhood groups, women's groups (*Mahila Mandal*) and youth groups (*Yuvak Mandal*) with the active involvement of NGO (s). Through this, the slum residents were encouraged and convinced to share the costs of the project, participate in the decision-making and then post-project maintenance of the assets created. NGOs also took up the work of extending education and health facilities like non-formal education programmes, maternal and child health. They also engaged themselves in providing vocational training. The cost for community development component was around Rs. 1000/- per dwelling unit, out of which, NGOs shared 30 per cent of the cost. The cost of additional activities was also borne by the NGOs. The slum dwellers were extended the facility of micro finance at their doorstep by SEWA Bank. The community is expected to pay Rs. 2,100 as their contribution to the project and they have to pay this amount upfront. Those who cannot do so are extended the credit by the SEWA Bank.

Under this project slums selected for upgradation were given an assurance that they would not be displaced by the AMC for at least 10 years. In other words, the slum dwellers have been assured a de facto slum tenure for 10 year duration. This has been

done through a resolution by the AMC. This 'no demolition' policy has acted as a major incentive for the slum dwellers to participate in the project.

3.0 Introducing Pravinnagar – Guptanagar, Vasna

In essence, the story of Devuben is the story of empowerment of the women in Pravinnagar Guptanagar (PG) and consequently, development of this settlement. The slum Pravinnagar – Guptanagar is located in Vasna ward, in the west zone of Ahmedabad municipal area (see map 1). It was formerly on the west-south boundary of the city, but, now within the city with the extension of the AMC limits in 2006. On its one side is on the Ashram Road, a major thoroughfare of the city, running parallel to the river, and eventually joining Ahmedabad- Rajkot highway in the south and national highway number eight going to Delhi, in the north. The southern part of the slum abets one of the ring roads of the city. The Ashram road section is a very busy road, with the city's public transport buses as well as also inter-city buses, both of the state owned State Transport Corporation and the private companies, operating on it. There are large commercial establishments on this road side. This main road therefore is always very crowded. To add to the traffic problems is multiple modes of transport, of both fast and slow speed, operating on the road. There is a large city bus terminal nearby and also a public health centre of the AMC nearby. In terms of access to public facilities, this slum is very well located.
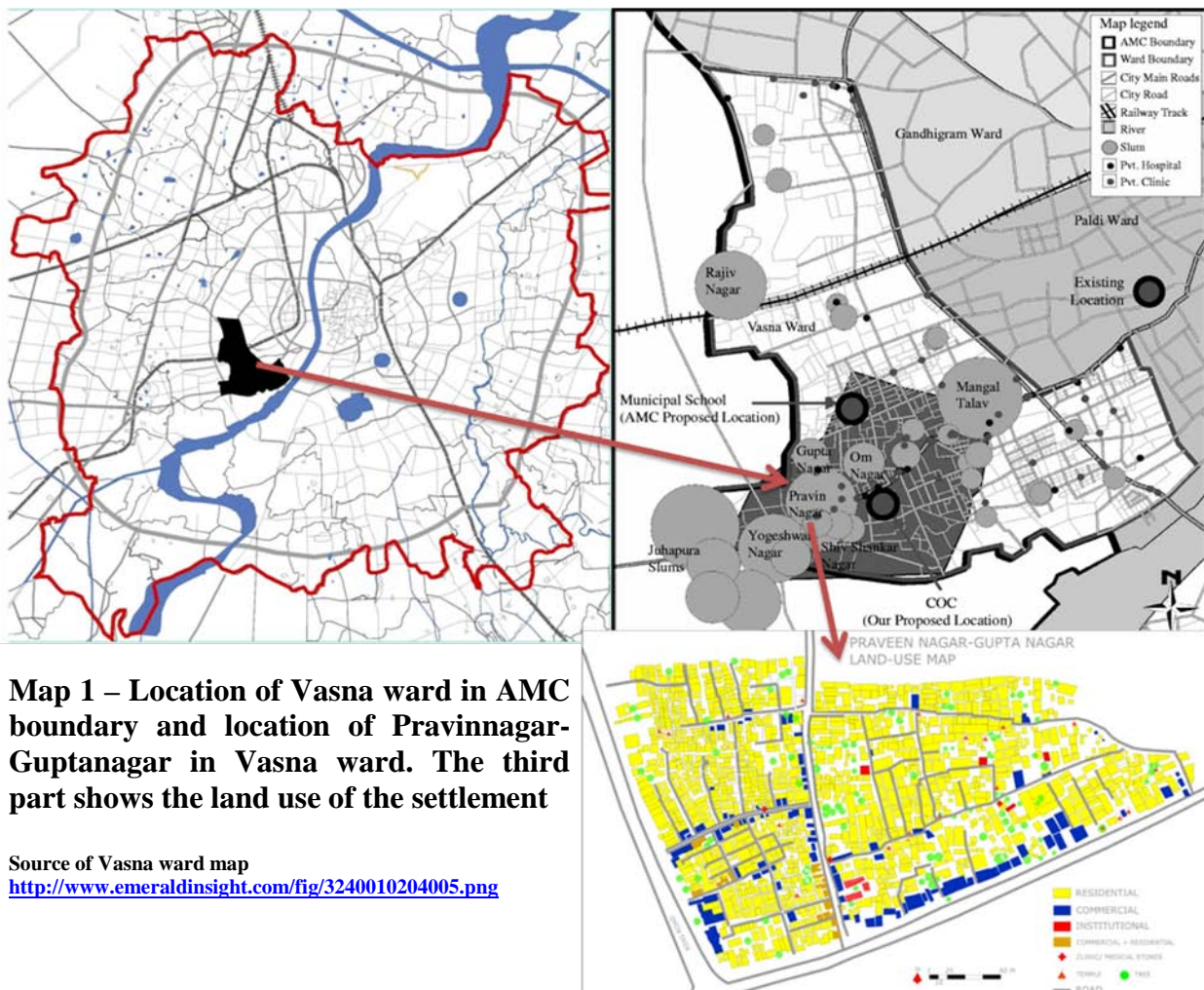
Map 1 – Location of Vasna ward in AMC boundary and location of Pravinnagar-Guptanagar in Vasna ward. The third part shows the land use of the settlement

Source of Vasna ward map
http://www.emeraldinsight.com/fig/3240010204005.png

The population of PG is 7,416 persons in 1,314 households in the area of approximately 80,000 sq.mt. The sex ratio of the settlement is 996 with an average household size of 6. The literacy rate in PG is 75.5 per cent in which male literacy rate is high as 85.0 per cent and female literacy rate is 66.2 percent which is lower than average male and female literacy of Ahmedabad of 87.8 per cent and 71.1 per cent respectively.

Antecedents of the settlement

The land of PG and surrounding settlements was a grazing land of Vasna village, now merged within the AMC. PG is one of the four slums in a cluster of about 5,000 slum households. This cluster was formed after the flooding in the River Sabarmati in 1973 and the slum dwellers on the riverbank, who lost their houses shifted to PG and nearby areas, forming slums. Some of the flood affected households were shifted to Sankalitnagar, a new settlement designed and facilitated by a NGO, Ahmedabad Study Action Group (ASAG). The first occupants of the PG were the Bhils, a Tribal Community, and 250 to 300 households of this community begun to stay here. Their settlement is now a *chawl* of the PG and is called *"Ranavas"*. Subsequently, people of *Kathiyavadi* community (from Kathiawad, now called Saurashtra region) came to live in PG. They formerly lived in Ambawadi area of Ahmedabad. These *Kathiyavadi* people called their relatives from within and outside of Ahmedabad city and the community enlarged. As of now, this community has the largest number of households compared to other communities; 517 out of 1314 total households in PG (See Annexure I).

| Kathiyavadi | Vaghri | Vanjhara | Marwadi |
| Rabari | Harijan | Bhil | Mixed Community |

Map 2 Community mapping of Pravinnagar- Guptanagar

This site developed as a slum because of its proximity to central Ahmedabad because of availability of a public transport hub at Vasna as well as affordable land prices. Further, there was no legal owner of the land present at the time of encroachment on this land. The land belongs to a category called "*Inamdar Zameen*[9]", which was given as a gift by the former feudal lord under the Moghul rule. But, over time, some of these giftees died and the lands remained without formal land owner. The land parcel was assessed for property tax, but, no one came forward to pay tax. Incidentally, in 1976, a person named Hirabhai Govindbhai Patel paid due tax for the entire land and received informal rights on the land. He sold the land, on the Rs. 10/- stamp papers to people who wanted to stay here. There was an intermediary in the process, a slum lord, who then begun collecting Rs. 20 per month from every household, as protection money. While such land transactions were going on, the AMC, in its Development Plan of 1976, reserved part of the land of the settlement as a Green belt, and froze any legal land development on the plot. But, the informal transactions continued. Thus, the land tenure is locked between reservation in the city's Development Plan and informal landowner.

After the SNP implementation started, the residents had begun receiving property tax bills from the AMC. Once that begun, they questioned the slum lord validity of his rent (protection money) collection. The residents also began asking him to give them rent receipt. He could neither answer their questions nor give them the rent receipt. Gradually, the residents stopped paying him the protection money. After all, the settlement was semi-legalised by the local government and the people needed no protection. People did not say that they benefitted from giving protection money to the slum lord; in general case they are supposed to get protection against eviction. In the city's Development Plan, part of PG is on the land reserved as Green belt. Although, the Green Belt reservation has been lifted, the settlement's status has not been legalised.

The settlement started expanding because of influx of the relatives of the residents of PG and of surrounding settlements. Unlike in the other areas of Ahmedabad, different communities settled here. There are different chawls (Vas) for different communities (See figure 3), so in one slum people stay in their respective community *chawl* or lane like in a village. In 1970s and 1980s communities like Kathiyawadi, Marwadi, Dantani, Patni, Bhil, Harijan, Vaghri, etc. settled here. There were approximately 100 houses of Muslims also who shifted to Juhapura, across the road from PG, after the 2002 communal violence in Ahmedabad. The settlement received new residents from Juhapura, the Hindus who shifted to PG from Juhapura after the same event.

Every human settlement has an organisational structure that attends to the various issues of the community. In PG the households are usually heterogeneous in character, kinship, caste, religion, origin or regional affinities and the caste/ community forms the core of the social network. These networks are informal associations set up based on these ties and affinities. Each network functions as per its size, leadership and interest of the group for which the association is formed. For example, a network named Ram-Krishna Sewa Mandal was working in PG earlier. But, its activities were limited to only Kathiyawadi community. It was working for

religious purpose. Subsequent to the Saath's intervention in the settlement, a major change in associational forms of engagement can be seen in the settlement.

4.0 Chronology of Interventions

The Entry Level Intervention (1991-1993)
Saath started its activities in Ahmedabad from Behrampura area. Saath's initial activity was to mobilise the youth through an action research course. This led to the formation of a youth group called Ekta Yuvak Mandal (EYM). The youth prioritised the needs of the area as sanitation, tuberculosis and affordable credit. EYM acted as a facilitator of AMC's 90:10 toilet construction scheme. This was followed by TB elimination programme and later a credit cooperative society was established. Saath worked for one year in Behrampura on TB elimination activities and the credit programme, along with extending basic services.

After this initial start up, Saath sought suggestions from the residents of Behrampura on another location where it could start its activities. The predominant community in Behrampura being Marwadi, they suggested another location that had concentration of Marwadis and that was PG, where Behrampura residents had relatives. Thus, in 1992, Saath visited PG for the first time. The process through which Saath came to PG was therefore quite accidental. And such good accidents happen.

It was indeed difficult in the initial stage to convince the residents of PG to join the development programmes. Thus, the first activity of Saath in the settlement was to just have a talk with the leaders of the various communities living in the settlement as everyone's involvement was required for the development of PG. Saath members would visit PG everyday and discuss with people how they could assist them in bringing a positive change in their lives. The task was stupendous on two counts. Saath was new to the area and did not have any record of interaction with the people. The question was why people would trust some external agency that talked about change and change through participation when the political parties always talked about free welfare to the poor! The second difficulty was getting all the residents together for a discussion on the settlement. To address the latter, Saath decided to conduct a household survey to understand the immediate needs of the residents of PG. In April 1992, four women of the settlement carried out a household survey of 100 households in PG, charging only Re 1 per household.

Box 2 : Snapshot of Saath

SAATH is a non-governmental organisation, registered as a Public Charitable Trust (E-7257) with the Charity Commissioner, Ahmedabad in February 1989. In Gujarati the word Saath means, `Together, Co-operation, a Collective or Support'.

SAATH conceptualised Integrated Development Programme aimed to address all developmental aspects of a slum by converging state, NGO and private sector resources with community needs for the slums of Ahmedabad in 1989. Saath is present in two states – Gujarat and Rajasthan; 17 towns and cities, 160 villages, and 2

---

districts in Gujarat; and in 6 districts in Rajasthan.

Right from the beginning, Saath has envisaged development as a participatory process and defined its role as that of facilitating these processes towards improvement in the quality of life of the urban and rural poor. Saath runs programmes for women, children, men and youth in areas of livelihoods, capacity building, health and education, physical infrastructure improvement, Urban Resource Centres (URCs), slum development and natural resource management. It also has a documentation and research cell and provides development support to other organisations or agencies.

Coverage of Saath's activities is10:
- 4 Urban Resource Centres (URCs) reaching out to 100,000 population in slums. This number could increase to 200 URCs across Gujarat in 7 Municipalities.
- 48 Ummeed centres in Gujarat and 8 in Rajasthan
- 7 Pre-school Education centres in Ahmedabad
- 1 Community Video Unit reaching approximately 100 people every day, through day and night screenings.
- 5 Microfinance branches with more than 10,000 members
- 200 Urmila Home Managers and 200 clients
- 155 Self Help Groups in rural areas with artisans
- 5 Youth groups with 148 members
- 3 Education Centres for child labour in Ahmedabad and actively participating in 'Curb Child Labour Campaign' in Viramgam and Dholka talukas of Gujarat state.

The results of this survey suggested that Saath should start health and education programmes in the settlement. Thus, Saath started a health centre in the settlement in 1992. Not having any infrastructure in the settlement, Saath started the vaccination programme under a tree while the organisation was searching for a place in PG to start a health centre. Saath employed three women of the settlement to help out in health programmes. Simultaneously the NGO also started education programme. Initially Devuben and Kailashben worked in the education programme. The settlement residents did not trust the health initiative and because of superstitions did not want their children to be vaccinated. Hence, the task of convincing the residents to take benefit of Saath's health programme was difficult. They also did not trust the education initiative because Devuben and Kailashben were from the settlement itself and the residents suspected their ability to teach their children. But, Saath persisted and made every effort to win the trust of the residents; some members of the organisation would visit the settlement every day, discuss with the residents about their issues, noted their requirements and in the process also convinced them to participate in their programmes.

In 1993, Saath rented a dwelling in Valmiki *vas* and started a health centre there, addressing the health concerns of women and children. Deliveries were done at home attended by untrained *dais*. All types of superstitions related to pregnancy and childcare were prevailing among the people. There was an immediate need to bring

scientific approach to health care, particularly of women. There was also need to convince people to vaccinate their children. The health centre, besides carrying out its regular work of conducting two health camps every month, holding health check-ups of pregnant women and regular consultation on gynaecological problems, also engaged in educating women about maternal and child health care. Arrangement was made for a lady doctor to monitor pregnant women and conduct sonography. Complications if any were treated. Pregnant and feeding mothers were given nutrition supplements twice a month, which consisted of 2 bananas, 500 ml milk, 100 gm dates, dry coconut and 1 ½ kg sprouts. Initially, women would sell-off the free nutritional supplements given to them by the centre to a nearby shop for small amounts of money. But, Saath's field workers made great effort to make these women understand the importance of nutritional food for them and their unborn child.

These were not the only hurdles. The health centre was also working on TB and in this case also, they had to overcome the false notions of the residents regarding the disease. Thus, health care programme included not just vaccination of pregnant mother and infants, nutritional supplements to pregnant and lactating mothers and treatment of diseases such as TB, but also massive health education to inculcate scientific view about health.

Box 3: In Madhuben's Words

"When I finished my 10th standard exams, I had noticed that Saath members visited our settlement. A lady named Ramilaben, one of my neighbours, informed me about the survey Saath wanted to do in PG and then she suggested that I should go for the survey as I had studied till 10th grade. She said they were also going to pay for it. The economic condition of my home was not so good so I thought it is a good chance to earn some money. I joined the survey team and my work for the settlement began.

Madhuben
MFI (Micro Finance Institute), Vasna

Simultaneously a crèche was started in Bharwadvas. Five women; Devuben, Madhuben, Ramilaben, Kailashben and Ramilaben joined the school as teachers. As discussed earlier the slum dwellers were sceptical about the ability of these women in imparting education to their children. Residents thought, "How could these women, who were living among them, could give professional education?" However, these five women were given an intense training of fifteen days on how to deal with the children, what should be the atmosphere of the class, language skills, how to teach math, curriculum development, how to tell stories, and overall development of the children based on an approach of seven steps of child's development.

These women were trained by one Mr. Suresh Majumdar, a child psychologist. He emphasised Montessori Method of teaching, which had tools of teaching such as storytelling, drama, etc. A conscious decision was made by Saath to hire more people. Pravinbhai, was the only man working at the community level along with Madhuben, two Ramilabens, Kailashben and Devuben.

It was not easy to get the children to school. They had to visit each and every house in the settlement to enrol children. But, with great patience and hard work, they managed to enrol some 32 children, which consisted of their first batch of students. The team conducted 3 home visits daily, meetings with the parents, exposure visits – taking children on bus rides, visits to the zoo and a steady stream of dialogue with the parents to build the confidence of the families. Subsequently the enrolments increased.

Improvement in their children's ability made the parents believe in the teachers and Saath's efforts in education area. And hence, from 1993 onwards, the education programme became more intense than before. After one year of starting the education programme, parents asked Saath to introduce meals as well, thinking that if the children got some meal in between then they could attend the school for longer hours, say for three to four hours a day. In order to sustain the *balghars* a fee of Rs.10 was introduced to cover the food costs, which the parents willingly accepted to pay. Eventually, parents started paying the monthly fees for pre-school, supplementary and special classes and also the conveyance cost for picnics to gardens, zoo, post office, bus station etc. Teachers began holding regular meetings with the parents. Parents were regularly informed of their child's progress; every day, one teacher would go to the house of three students to meet the mothers and tell them about their child's behaviour in the class, progress in different subjects and interests. Today parents pay up to Rs. 75 per month for each child.

From Children to Women (1993 – 1996)
Saath also felt that there was an urgent requirement of the residents in PG to acquire skills that would increase their incomes. Three types of courses to impart such skills were started in 1993 itself; tailoring and embroidery, electric gadget repairing and scooter repairing. The tailoring and embroidery course has continued since then. The participants in this course have been women and adolescent girls, who use these skills at home or for taking up earning from home. The course has also provided an important forum to the adolescent girls to also talk about their issues relating to different aspects of marriage. Like other programmes, for this programme also, participants pay fees and bear the material costs making the effort financially self-sustainable.

All these activities by Saath in the settlement brought recognition for the organisation and also trust of the residents. To bring about a sense of community, local workers, mostly women, were chosen from almost all the six different communities. This approach went a long way in reducing traditional myths and hostilities amongst different communities leading to an understanding that the issues the communities faced were common to all communities, especially for women. Through this process, for the first time, residents from different communities started to communicate with each other.

Seeing the progress of the active women members of Saath from the settlement and their increased respect in the family as well as the settlement, other women of the settlement showed their willingness to join the development programme. In 1995,

general consensus had veered around setting up a *Mahila Mandal* in the settlement. The main objective was to bring women from the community together and give them a platform to tackle their own issues and have their voice heard in the community. Saath adopted a strategy to take men of the community into confidence before setting up the *Mahila Mandal* so as to avoid conflict. As most traditional communities, PG was and still is largely a male dominated community. The women as individuals and as a collective were not strong at that point to counter or stand up to the opposition within their homes or the community. Saath arranged a meeting with the men to inform them that they were setting up a *Mahila Mandal*. This worked well, there was no opposition and the *Mandal* began it is work smoothly. Some might call that process as seeking permission from men like in any patriarchal society, but, it indeed worked. It is hard to take an ideological position in this matter.

On 8th May, 1996, Sakhi[11] Mahila Mandal (SMM) was formed. SMM, a women's organisation is the Community Based Organisation (CBO), which sustains the slum development programmes. The core group of SMM is formed with the workers of the various programmes like, health workers, teachers etc. During the course of implementing the various integrated slum development programmes the women acquired technical and managerial skills essential for sustaining the CBO and very importantly, have gained trustworthiness as leaders. The governing committee is regularly elected and the accounts are regularly audited. Members pay an entrance fee and annual subscription.

Box 4: On SMM

In 1996, when Sakhi Mahila Mandal was started, the men of the settlement thought that this organisation will work against the men. They were not allowing their wives to join SMM. These men were made understand that this group is not against men but they are working for the welfare of the women. They were informed about the objectives of the SMM. Gradually women started joining SMM.

-    Madhuben

Starting the SNP (1996-2001)

While working on health in the community Saath realised that all health problems evidently emanated from the complete lack of basic services, water supply and sanitation, in the area. This is when the idea of SNP struck roots in 1996. Lack of water supply resulted in people not taking a bath regularly, there was no sanitation and hence there was open defecation and garbage was not lifted. Devubhen's story narrates the situation of when they had moved in the settlement. Saath identified a pressing need for basic services like water supply, sewerage, storm water drainage, individual toilets and bath space. However the resources required were extensive and exorbitant for the slum dwellers and the organisation. Discussions with the residents about installing a drainage system showed that residents were ready to pay for the facilities. In fact around 300 houses had already installed their private, illegal drainage system and a few houses had unapproved water connection.

Saath initiated talks with Mr. Himanshu Parikh, the man behind the Indore Slum Networking Project. There was a general understanding that it was technically impossible to get infrastructure into slums where the open space was limited. This misconception was cleared after learning in details about the Indore project. Meanwhile, Saath, by then, had already participated in the first Slum Networking Project in a slum called Sanjaynagar, Naroda ward, in Ahmedabad in June 1995 and realised that this was a feasible approach for PG as well.

The 1996-2002 period has been a major turning point in the lives of the residents of PG. Discussions for getting the basic services were going on with the residents of PG. After intense discussions it was decided that SNP should be initiated in the settlement. Saath negotiated with the AMC and Arvind Mills (the private sector participant in the first SNP in Ahmedabad) to include PG in the pilot project because it felt that the strategy of the project, which is cost sharing and payment by residents, provision of basic services at a household level and the lead by the urban local body were really sound and sustainable.

AMC gave an estimate of Rs. 14,000 as per household, which includes Rs. 2,000 as the household contribution and Rs. 100 in addition (to Rs. 14,000) as one time maintenance charges. As discussed above, some households had already spent to get unapproved water connection while some had paid Rs. 500 to the community leaders to get the connections. These households therefore, were not ready to pay more towards the water and sewerage connections. The field workers of Saath made them understand that what they would get through SNP would be legal and then no municipal officials would come to demolish the facility, as now it had become a AMC project.

There was initially resistance from the residents to chip-in their share of the SNP. This is usual; some or the other households are duped by the local politician or a strongman of money through a promise of some or the other infrastructure. In PG also, some households had paid Rs. 500 to some persons who had promise a pipeline but, had vanished after collecting the money. But, by then, Saath had worked in the settlement for already five years and the residents had begun trusting the organisation. Gradually, all households paid up their share of Rs. 2,100 for the SNP and Rs. 3 lakhs were collected by July 1997 for the purpose.

However, the first crisis occurred when Arvind Mills pulled out of the project due to differences with AMC during the implementation of the pilot in Sanjaynagar, Naroda. This caused the project to almost come to a standstill. In order to continue the project it was necessary to secure the remaining Rs. 6,000 (of the total Rs.14, 000 on each dwelling), which was originally meant to have been Arvind Mill's contribution. The AMC bailed out the situation by accepting to meet even the private sector's share (that is Arvind Mill's share), so that the project could go on. With the AMC deciding to bear the share of the costs of the private sector partner, the project once again took off. The AMC officials visited the area to start the project.

To give confidence to the residents that their share of money would not be taken away by Saath, a way out was found; women were asked to open an account with SEWA

Bank, where the household would deposit their contribution to the project. SEWA Bank was invited and it set up a kiosk in the settlement thrice a week to mobilise the community contribution. Over a year all the money had been collected. The money was given to the AMC only when the work was completed to the satisfaction of the slum residents.

Inspite the collection of money, AMC had not begun work. This caused uproar in the community and Saath had to step in and strongly follow up with the AMC. Work commenced in 1998 and slowly people saw the infrastructure construction. The community members were so deeply involved in the process that they went to the extent of checking the materials used. There were instances when the work was stopped because the materials used were of poor quality.

The work completed in 2000 and the water was sourced through a bore well. Total of 1227 households benefitted in PG from SNP. In 2001 a function was organised by the AMC to hand over the services to the people. Finally, the project had received big publicity as a novel project and the settlement received lot of attention and hence visitors.

Post-project maintenance of infrastructure is always a main problem and for that purpose, Saath and SMM helped the residents form five housing associations - Ekta, Navsarjan, Valmiki, Jaybhim, and Rishi, in the whole settlement with the objective of keeping a check on upkeep and maintenance of the infrastructure.

Getting legal electricity connections by the PG dwellers has an interesting history. Electricity connections in most slums were illegal because of high onetime cost of Rs. 10,000 for getting a connection. Thus, instead of getting an individual electricity meter at the household level, people were paying money to the middlemen who were pilfering the electricity and extending lines to individual households from a single point. These connections did not have any earthing and had already caused death of a child and injuries to livestock from electrocution. In 2003-2004 Saath put forth a proposal to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to get support for Slum Electrification. The USAID did support and extended assistance of Rs. 8,000 on the condition that the household contributed Rs. 2000. This is how each household obtained legal meters.

Initially the Ahmedabad Electricity Company (AEC) resisted this attempt to extend individual metered connections to the slum dwellers. Saath and MHT together intervened and took the matter to the court. Judgement was in favour of the slum dwellers and the AEC had to extend metered connections to the slum households. The USAID, as mentioned above, contributed towards meeting major part of the expenses for an individual metered connection. After this initial success of the programme, Saath pushed for a reduction in the cost of the connection. Realising the potential of a large market at the bottom, AEC, which is now a private company, has reduced the initial one time connection cost to just Rs. 2,500 from Rs. 10,000 earlier. Now, the slum dweller directly goes to the power company, which is now Torrent power (formerly AEC), to get individual power connection Today over 80 per cent of the slums in Ahmedabad have legal connections.

The SNP had a spill-over effect. Saath was formerly engaged in training the women and youth for income generation, of which the women's training achieved success and women were getting work at home. Thereafter, a collective income generation programme was started in PG in June 1998. The organising for SNP helped in organising for income generation. It was decided to concentrate on the services sector of the economy, which is the fastest growing sector in urban India and not on the traditional home manufacturing of *bidis, papads, khakhra and aggarbattis*, as was the practice in many NGO led income generation activities. It was decided to introduce tailoring, market research support, vegetable sorting and home managers (domestic help) programme for income generation. These programmes have taken new and more organised form now than before. This will be seen in the next section.

A micro credit programme was another fall out of the SNP. It was started in July 1998 by the SMM. It is known that a micro credit programme meets the regular needs of finance for various purposes for low income households. In PG, the SMM initiated a one-year savings activity. The membership target for the savings group was set at 95, this target was overshot and 100 women joined the savings programme. SMM had an account with SEWA Bank in which the savings were credited bi-monthly. Each member had their own SMM passbooks, which were regularly updated based on their deposits or withdrawals. The *Mahila Mandal* decided to start a loan committee and offered loans in the range of Rs.2000 to Rs.5000 at the monthly interest rate of 1.5 per cent in 1999. Loan was made available for even the resident's contribution for SNP. Norms for credit were also decided in consultation with the savings group members and a committee was set up to oversee the programme. The committee is elected annually. This programme dovetailed well into the SNP programme and both together led to housing upgradation.

Box 5 Story of Ranjanben

Picture 2 Ranjanben on left

Ranjanben (33 years old), lives with her husband Babubhai (35 years old), a plumber and a daily wage earner making about Rs. 2,000 per month. Ranjanben does tailoring (stitches computer covers) earns around Rs. 2,000 per month. They live with their three sons; Prakash, who is a plumber and earns Rs. 2,000 per month and Mukesh who does light fittings and earns Rs. 1,500 per month. The youngest son Ketan is studying in a public school and stays in a hostel.

Ranjanben started a savings account in Sakhi around 12 years back (1997) with a savings of Rs 25. She first took a loan from Sakhi for a paltry sum of Rs. 800 for the construction of her house. Within two months she was able to return the loan and then took another loan of Rs 15,000 which she took against her house papers. This loan was taken by her to get back the jewellery she had mortgaged with a jeweller's for taking a loan at the monthly rate of 5 per cent. She had borrowed this amount for constructing her house. She returned this loan to Sakhi within two years after which she took a loan of Rs. 5,000 for renovating her home, which she returned in 7 months.

> Currently, she has taken another loan of Rs.15, 000 for constructing a terrace on her house. Only Rs. 7,000 remains to be paid back.

In fact, a housing upgradation programme supported by a microfinance programme works very well for the low income communities and without the latter success of the former is limited. A few households also took loans from SMM for paying off other loans. But such cases were in small and most loans from SMM were taken for setting up a business, education of the children, home improvements such as adding a storey, strengthening the walls, terraces, etc and to get legal electricity connections. In short, the microfinance programme supplemented the housing programme and together led to significant improvement in the living conditions of the dwellers of PG. The quantitatively measurable change on account of the SNP and microfinance programme has been presented in a separate article under this project.

Box 6: Story of Khaniben's Family

Khaniben Atmaram Solanki opened a savings account with Sakhi Bachat Mandal 6 years ago, in 2002. She began with a saving of around Rs. 100. She has three children, the eldest (Kokila) is married, the middle daughter (Charul) is 22 years old and has completed her B.A. and has a diploma in aviation from the Frankfinn Institute. Her youngest daughter, Deepika is 18 and has been suffering from severe mental stress.

Picture 3 Khaniben and Charul

When Charul decided to undergo the course at Frankfinn, they found out that it would cost them Rs 100,000. After the initial round of interviews Charul was selected for the course wherein they paid an amount of Rs. 13,000 at the beginning and then had to pay an EMI of Rs. 8,000 thereafter.

At some point they took a loan from Sakhi Bachat Mandal of Rs. 15,000 at the rate of 18 per cent per annum as they were unable to arrange for payment of her fees. The security offered for this loan was Kisan Vikas Patra12 of Rs 10,000. Without much of paper work, the family got the loan and Charul completed her aviation studies.

Khaniben's husband works in BSNL as an accountant and earns a salary of Rs 15,000 but gets just Rs. 5000 in hand at the end of the month. Charul was employed as a ground hostess with Singapore Airlines at a salary of Rs. 5,000 per month. After Charul got the job their lives have changed. Charul is the first girl in their community to have become an air hostess in a well reputed international airline. This has made a big difference in their social standing within their community. It has also opened newer opportunities for Charul. She has become a different person now as she has gained in self-confidence.

The next loan that they took was of Rs 15,000 in order to take back the jewellery that they had pawned at the jeweller's, as already mentioned. When the eldest sister Kokila got married 12 years ago they had taken a loan of Rs. 80,000 from the Central Bank at a high interest rate.

Consolidation (2002-2004)
The year 2002 was a critical turning point in Gujarat's history because of the communal violence, wherein approximately 2,000 people died in the whole state and Ahmedabad too had witnessed large scale violence. The communal tempers were high and there was a deep polarisation of the communities. Large scale violence was concentrated in the Muslim localities, which also witnessed large influx of population that came seeking refuge. Hence, relief camps were started in many Muslim localities and one such relief camp was set up across the road from PG in Juhapura area.

PG itself also felt the direct impact of this severe event. Approximately 200 Muslim families moved out of PG to Juhapura area or elsewhere for personal security reasons. Similarly the last few non-Muslim families living in Sankalitnagar (Juhapura) moved to PG. Thus, this microcosm of Ahmedabad was also homogenised on the basis of religion due to large-scale political happenings.

The Muslim neighbourhood of Juhapura, which housed approximately 2.5 lakh population, is just across the road from PG. In the volatile period of February end 2002 to about June 2002, this road had become a boundary between the two communities; some called it a border. The residents of PG had seen violence, heard gunshots and spent sleepless nights during the peak of violence and so was the case on the side of Juhapura. But, once the violence had stopped, a community meeting was held in PG to discuss whether the community members had participated in violence or not. It was concluded that the perpetrators of violence in the neighbouring Juhapura area were the outsiders and not members of their community.

Meanwhile, in response of the need of the hour, Saath begun relief activities in the camp in Juhapura, where the Muslims affected by communal violence had congregated. The atmosphere was very tense as it was known that the violence had some sort of state's ruling party's support, if not engineered by the ruling party. To work in the relief camps to support the Muslim population could be seen as a 'pro-Muslim' act, not any humanitarian act, and likely to bring wrath of the ruling party or if not that at least censure of the ruling party. But, Saath, courageously and in true humanitarian spirit, operated this relief camp although it did not have any prior experience of working with any Muslim community.

Once the violence had subsided and the new state government was in place by the end of the year of 2002, Saath decided to carry forward its development experience to Sankalitnagar in Juhapura. It decided to work for long-term rehabilitation and with that purpose setup its office in Sankalitnagar. Thereafter, it formed local-area committees and started negotiations with the AUDA to bring in trunk services in Sankalitnagar. The residents were willing to bear rest of the costs of services. But, narrating this experience would be digressing from the community mobilisation story

of PG. But, this engagement with Sankalitnagar had another deep impact on the community activities in PG itself.

One of the larger challenges for Saath at this point was to create a secular team, which could work in both areas – PG and Juhapura. Saath fell back on it is time tested strategy of mixed teams formed of members belonging to different communities. Saath had done this earlier, when the residents' committees for maintaining the SNP assets were set up, and it did the same now. But, the challenge this time was tougher. Post 2002 violence, every *Ahmedabadi* (resident of Ahmedabad) viewed himself or herself as a Hindu or the Muslim, and the Hindus considered the Muslims as the others and vice versa. To bring communities together in times of such heightened inter-community tensions and mistrust was going to be a difficult task. But, this hurdle was overcome successfully. Local area development teams were thus formed. While doing so, even gender balance and caste balance was looked into. This helped build rapport at the professional level and eventually at the community level as well. In other words, associational network was put together for a common purpose of local development and negotiations with the local government. People, who did not interact with each other earlier, began sharing more informal relationship than before after working together as a team for a common purpose.

Besides consolidation on the communal harmony issue, other consolidations could be observed in the settlement. In this phase SMM's role increased greatly to the extent of becoming facilitator for local development activities and Saath began consciously moving towards supporting and facilitating large programmes. The change was visible because as compared to the hands-on work in 1992, Saath took a step back and more of the programmes were being implemented by SMM. SNP was the beginning, where SMM took an active role in mobilising the community, carrying out meetings and through this their confidence had increased. Simultaneously, the residents of the communities observed the permanent changes through SNP and this cemented their trust in the work that SMM members were doing.

Another visible change in PG seen during this phase was increased investments in the home improvement. This was an outcome of the SNP that provided community level infrastructure and de facto tenure security for 10 years. Individual household's access to water and toilets at the house level brought down the incidence of diseases and reduction in health expenditure. The SNP intervention and community associations led to general increase in awareness leading to increase in number of families sending their children to schools – both private and government and most importantly an increase in enrolment of girls in school. Also, women's time being freed because of water supply coming to the homes also led to women paying more attention to their children's education. On the whole, the SNP intervention through community processes led to remarkable change in the physical and social development of the residents of the settlement (See Joshi 2002 for more details on these aspects).

With basic services taken care of, people were able to focus on important needs such as employment, education, improvement of their houses. SNP in Ahmedabad and elsewhere has shown that when water, sanitation and infrastructure are provided to people, there is independent change in the status of education, employment and

health. What had started out as a health intervention for the women and then as livelihood project for women and young girls had expanded to building of women's capacity, housing conditions improvement and eventually community mobilisation for managing their settlement locally.

In this consolidation phase, a new programme was initiated and which was training women working as housemaids to become professional home managers. Urmila Home Managers trains women from slums in how to be more efficient home managers. The programme also ensures job security for these women through formal, legal contracts with clients. So far it has created steady income of Rs. 3000 (average) for 200 women in Ahmedabad.

Saath had also begun to work with youth, as mentioned earlier. A large number of young people in slums either dropped out of school at an early age or quit studying after the tenth standard. This led to them joining the casual labour force with very little bargaining power and no chance at improving their skills. The vocational training programmes at the time, focused on skill enhancement, but with no linkage to the market or component of enabling youth to identify potential job options. What this meant was that the circle of poverty continued to the next generation. Saath's intervention with youth aimed at making a dent in this very trend.

The Ummeed programme was designed and implemented as a market based product. It was started out as *Ek Mouka Udaan* with its first centre in Behrampura and a batch of 120, in 1995. It has since then grown to over 60 centres across Gujarat and Rajasthan, with multiple funding partners and has reached over 25,000 youth since its inception. The innovation of Ummeed is in its strategy. Every centre is initiated after a period of intensive market research, which aims at finding out about how many youth are in need of the programme, what kind of courses exist in the area and the status of various industries. Based on the findings of the market scan, the curriculum is designed, courses outlined in details, trained faculty hired and marketing done within the community. The course is for a period of three months and it targets youth (both men and women) between the ages of 18-35 years. Each centre is physically set up within the slums, which makes it accessible to the youth.

The programme goes a step beyond traditional and other vocational courses, by providing the assurance of placement at the end of the training. The Vasna centre was set up in 2007 and has enrolled 1009, trained 770, and placed 410 youth so far.

Box 7: The Achievements of Bipin

Nitin Patel is a 23 year old visually challenged student. He participated in the fourth batch of training programme for BPO course at the Vasna Ummeed centre. He was studying in the 2nd year of B.A. He comes from Dhoraji town in Rajkot district and was staying in a hostel for visually challenged students at Chandkheda area in Ahmedabad. He learnt computers through JAWS (Software to help visually challenged students to operate computers). After completing his course he is presently working at Blind People's Association (BPA), an NGO in Ahmedabad that works

---

Linking Phase - From Settlement to Community-based Urban Governance Structure (2005-2009)

This phase of the work in PG is similar to the Linking-up and Self-Evaluation phases described by Oakley (1991). The linking phase focuses on networking, building outside contacts, building alliances, articulation with outside support. Self-evaluation is about adjusting strategies, its replication and expansion.

The organisation, post-SNP, moved from a programmatic mode into a sectoral one. Livelihoods, microfinance, information dissemination, health, education were focused on with various programmes undertaken with different target groups. For example, in livelihood sector, the programmes worked with women, youth and men to build their capacities and further help link them with employment.

The SMM over a period of time had evolved from a platform for women in the area, into a decision-making body and also a recognised authority on different issues within the PG. It has been recognised also as an organisation engaging with the government on Slums and Urban Poverty issues.

Formation of URC

URCs were set up by Saath in 2007 creating a link between the state government, local government (the AMC) and the people. They play a dual role, that of bringing information, services and schemes to the people and allowing the service providers (government, corporate, private) to understand specific needs of various target groups.

The local structures of urban governance envisaged are the Community Resource Centres. While there are a large number of resource institutions at the national and state levels catering to the capacity development requirements of various stakeholders, the need for attending to capacity building at the city/community level has remained largely unattended. Hence, the Comprehensive Capacity Building Programme for Improved Urban Governance and Poverty Alleviation in the JNNURM programme provides for establishment of Resource centres at city and community levels with the close involvement of the Urban Local Bodies concerned. These institutions are called Urban Resource Centres (URCs), and they are expected to develop and nurture the human and knowledge resource base to support capacity building for improved city governance on a continuous basis, with an emphasis on increasing access of the urban poor to basic services and create space for their participation in the developmental process[13].

Box 8: URC Reaching Out to Physically Challenged

Eight year old Alpesh Thakor resides in Pravinnagar Guptanagar, Vasna. His father, Rameshbhai is an employee AMC while his mother Laxshmiben is a homemaker and takes care of his siblings. Alpesh suffered his first convulsive attack while he was just

---

six days old. He was given an emergency treatment, which helped his condition but after six months he suffered one more but a severe convulsive attack. In the meantime it was discovered that Alpesh suffered from a cerebral palsy, a disorder which affects the child's motor skills. Motor skills may be affected to the extent that the common "developmental milestones" like sitting, crawling, rolling over, and smiling and walking are all delayed. Some children are impassive; others do not react to noises while some children experience difficulty in following the movement of objects. As these attacks continued the family had to bear with huge expenses for Alpesh's treatment which led them to finally sell their house and move on to a rented house.

Laxshmiben heard about the Urban Resource Centre through community meetings and came to know that the URC was doing work on disability. She approached the URC where Kiranben guided her with detailed information related to disability. She also took Laxshmiben to the Polio Foundation in Astodia which gives physiotherapy treatment. Alpesh received physiotherapy treatment for seven months. After this, some improvement was found in him. He is now able to move, speak a few words and even understand what others speak.

With Kiranben's guidance, Laxshmiben has also got a disability identification certificate for Alpesh, which will make him eligible to access various government schemes. Alpesh has a savings and loan account in "Sakhi Bachat Mandal" in his mother's name. Laxshmiben deposits Rs. 50 rupees every month as savings. She is happy and thankful to the URC who supported and guided her on her son's disability.

Like families in Guptanagar, and those of persons with disabilities, such as Alpesh, there are thousands of households that have nowhere to go and have no understanding of their rights and services meant for them. The URCs are reaching out to these families and linking them with the necessary information and support to access their rights.

The community-based organisations set up in this development journey by Saath, have not become programme partners of Saath. Saath's role has become that of a facilitator, focussing now on networking with external agencies, fund raising, expanding the programmes, advocacy at local, state and national level and partnering with local and national level organisations for various joint programmes. The CBOs manage their own programmes.

5. Approach that worked and learning

This case study presents a case of improvement in living conditions through women's empowerment on one hand and also increase in aspirations and vertical mobility of those at the bottom of the urban hierarchy through an agency, namely a development NGO. The settlement has remarkably changed and so has the lives of its residents. Women's agency has played central role in this process of change.

Ahmedabad is a city with an ethos of volunteerism, rooted in the Gandhian value system. This ethos has led to establishment of voluntary agency that would channelize people's own energies and initiatives into constructive direction. Many agencies have

followed a path of 'struggle and constructive engagement' whereas some others have followed the path of 'constructive engagement'. This case study is engagement of an NGO, Saath, for constructive engagement with the community.

This case study also shows that a process of change through external agency mobilisation is gradual and incremental and not instantaneous, as some of the government programmes want. Also, it indicates that the process has to be internal to the community. Further, patience and setting small short-term goals are necessary in a community mobilisation through external agency intervention. In the end, however, the results can be a significant transformation of a settlement in physical terms as well as the community in terms of social development. Today, some individuals in the community have been able to forge links with the globalising society.

For transformative change, women's agency is extremely important. The case of PG clearly shows the transformation in individual women's lives as well as transformation in the settlement in terms of physical and social development.

The external agency entered the settlement with a very immediate purpose and a very small goal of extending health care. In other words, the Saath sought entry in the settlement for service delivery, but, went on to mobilise the residents for slum development and eventually towards participatory governance. The last full step has to taken as yet.

Incidentally, the local government had a programme of slum development through extending short-term tenure security and seeking community participation, which assisted the community mobilisation. The residents could be mobilised for a common goal of slum upgradation, which then has expanded to involve the community in general but the women of this community in particular, in urban governance programme. Thus, a civil society organisation alone cannot also not deliver welfare unless the state comes forward with proactive policy and supporting financial resources. The SNP is a scheme that represents this development governance that rests on the tripod of the local government, the community and the facilitator NGO as three main actors. Such mutually agreeable and beneficiary partnerships are needed and they work. The key learning is that the state is a predominant actor in a development process and it cannot pass on its responsibility to anyone else.

The case of PG, as illustrated by Joshi (2002) also indicates that there is a need for having an integrated approach to increase the welfare of the urban poor. Micro finance alone, or health care alone or even basic services alone would not be sustainable. The mobilising actor could enter a community to mobilise on a particular development aspect, determined through the felt need of the community, and then build synergy around it through other interventions. This has been crucial to the success of intervention in PG.

A shelter intervention, particularly when there is tenure security element attached to it, along with community mobilisation has a great transformative potential. In the interim stages, it also has potential to reduce vulnerabilities and hence has also promotional potential. A community-based functioning along with micro finance also

has protection element to it. The experience of Pravinnagar-Guptanagar development is a strong case representing all four types of Social Protection.

Table 1: A Chronology of Integrated Development

Year	Activities, Project, Programmes	Issue/Sector
1991	Social animator course for youth, EYM Registered	Youth Health Local Institution Building
1992	Via referrals of the marwadi community in SC focus on PG – out of corporation limits, needy area. Survey conducted	Community Development
1993	Based on survey activities started in PG – Community Health Centre started and 1 Balghar	Health Education
1994	Health Services Education – Supplementary classes Livelihood intervention – sewing classes, electric, automobile repair	Health Education Livelihood
1995	Process of forming CBOs initiated. Talk about SNP was underway	Health Education Livelihood Local Institution Building Physical Infrastructure Services
1996	Introduction to Sanjaynagar as a pilot-study. Savings were initiated Registration of Sakhi Mahila Mandal, as a Community Based Organisation	Health Education Livelihood Local Institution Building Physical Infrastructure Services Savings
1997	SNP was started Health, Education programs were started in Sanjaynagar Process of starting Urmila and livelihood programs initiated Savings and Loans	Health Education Livelihood Local Institution Building Physical Infrastructure Services Savings & loans
2000	Slum Electrification Project SNP,	Health Education Livelihood Local Institution Building Physical Infrastructure Services Savings & loans
2002	Communal riots in Gujarat- relief, rehabilitation. Registration of Cooperative, CBO Human Rights Education Program	Communal harmony Disaster Management Local Institution Building
2003	Working in riot affected areas – developmental activities	
2004	Jeevandan, RCH, ICDS merged with Balghars SEP	Health Education Physical Infrastructure

2005	Ek Mouka Udaan	Youth Employment
2006	URC Process Initiated Saath Livelihood Services (Regd), Top Care, Swadisht, CVU initiate	Internal Governance Livelihood Community Video
2008	Handing back ICDS centres to government. Increase in services at URC Initiation of talks for URC expansion Construction worker registrations Child Labour initiative - urban Youth group formation	Disability Services Creation of Business Plans Internal systems

Annexure

Annexure I - Community wise Household Distribution

Community	No. of Households
Harijan /Bhil / Vaghri	290
Vanjhara / Marvadi	307
Bharvad	200
Kathiyavadi	517
Total	1314

Terminologies

Agarbattis = Fragrance sticks
Balghar = Pre school
Bidi = Tobacco rolled in a leaf. Indian version of cigarette
Ekta = Unity
Khakhra = Food item
Mahila = Woman
Mandal = Organization
Papad = Food item
Sakhi = Female friend
Swadisht = Delicious
Ummeed = Hope
Udaan = Fly
Yuvak = Young Man

References

Acharya, S.K. and S. Parikh (2002); "Slum Networking in Ahmedabad: An alternate Approach", in A. Kundu and D. Mahadevia (eds.) *Poverty and Vulnerabilities in a Globalizing Metropolis: Ahmedabad*, (Delhi: Manak Publishers), pp. 349-72

Bardhan, Kalpana (1985). 'Women's work, Welfare and Status Force of Tradition and Change in India', Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XX No 50, December 14.

Blood, Robert and Donald Wolfe (1960); *Husbands and Wives: The Dynamics of Married Living* (New York: The Free Press).

Dayal, Rajeshwar (1960); *Community Programme in India* (Delhi: Kitab Mahal Publisher).

Dey, C.K (1962); Community Development (Delhi: Kitab Mahal Publisher).

Dutta, S.S. (2002); "Partnership for Urban Poverty Reduction: A Review of Experience", in A. Kundu and D. Mahadevia (eds.) *Poverty and Vulnerabilities in a Globalizing Metropolis: Ahmedabad*, (Delhi: Manak Publishers), pp. 237-67

Gangrade K.D. (1971); *Community Organisation in India* (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan).

Hirway, I and D. Mahadevia (2005); *The Gujarat Human Development Report, 2004*, (Ahmedabad Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute).

Howard, Grabman L. and G. Snetro, (2003); *How to Mobilize Communities for Health and Social Change,* (Baltimore, MD: Health Communication Partnership, USAID) viewed on 13th March, 2009 on pdf.**usaid**.gov/pdf_docs/PNADI338.pdf

Joshi, R. (2002); "Integrated Slum Development: Case of Pravinnagar-Guptanagar", in A. Kundu and D. Mahadevia (eds.) Poverty and Vulnerabilities in a Globalizing Metropolis: Ahmedabad, (Delhi: Manak Publishers), pp. 268-308

Lal, Ramavtar (1963); *Community Development: Principles, Practice and Problems* (With special reference to state of Bihar) (Patna: Bookland pvt. ltd.).

Kavoori J.C (1974); "Objectives of Community Development and Democratic Growth" in seminar paper in NR Inamdar (ed.); *Community Development and Democratic Growth* (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan) pp. 1-8.

Mahadevia, D. (2002); "Changing Economic Scenario: Informalisation and Increased Vulnerability" in A. Kundu and D. Mahadevia (eds.) *Poverty and Vulnerabilities in a Globalizing Metropolis: Ahmedabad*, (Delhi: Manak Publishers)

Mehta Usha (1974); "Gandhi and Community Development", seminar paper in NR Inamdar, N.R. (ed.); Community Development and Democratic Growth (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan) pp.8-11

Reddy Ranga (2002); Empowerment of Women and Ecological Development, (New Delhi: Serials Publications).

Sharma Ursula (1983); *Women's work and Poverty in North West India*, (Delhi: Tavistock Publications)

Thorbek, Susanne (1994); *Gender and Slum Culture in Urban Asia*, (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications – A division of Sage publications India private limited).

Thakur-Joshi, Savita (1999); *Women and Development*, (New Delhi: Mittal Publications).

Unni, Jeemol and Uma Rani (2007), "Informal Workers in Ahmedabad City", in Annapurna Shaw (ed.), Indian Cities in Transition, (Hyderabad: Orient Longman), pp. 217-37.

Slum Population, Series -1, Census of India, 2001; Office of the Registrar General & census Commissioner, India, New Delhi.

Toolkit for Financial Support for Comprehensive Capacity Building for Improved Urban Governance and Poverty Alleviation of JNNURM; Annexure – VII, To the minutes of 65th CSMC (Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee) dated 15th July2009.
https://jnnurmmis.nic.in/jnnurm_hupa/jnnurm/Toolkit%20for%20Capacity%20Buildings.pdf accessed on 17th December, 2009

Notes

---

[1] A food item, made from lentil dough, rolled into thin round flat six to ten inch round pieces, which are dried and then packed for marketing. Papad is fried or roasted before serving for food.

[2] Khakhara is also food item. It is dry chappati, prepared in such a way that it can be stored for long in room temperature.

[3] Community mobilizer from Saath.

[4] Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, and the pre-eminent political and spiritual leader of India's independence movement, started his activities from Ahmedabad after he returned back from South Africa. He was the pioneer of satyagraha—resistance to tyranny through mass civil disobedience, firmly founded upon *ahimsa* or total non-violence—which led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. Gandhi is commonly known around the world as **Mahatma(Great Soul) Gandhi.** His philosophy has left deep imprints in Ahmedabad City, her ethos, and her institutional development. The voluntary organization movement in Gujarat has its antecedents in Gandhian philosophy.

[5] Many low income settlements are on the river banks, banks of encroached lakes, low-lying areas that get inundated in monsoon, and on other lands unsuitable for human habitation.

6   From the AMC budget of 2009-10, see http://www.egovamc.com/amc_budget/Budget_2009-2010.pdf, accessed on March 16, 2009.

7   1998 slum estimate is from Swarna Jayanti Shehri Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY) survey and 2001 estimate is from the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) as given in Ahmedabad's CDP (http://jnnurm.nic.in/missioncities.htm).

8   The number of households residing in a slum was found out through a survey conducted by SEWA and SAATH. The total slum population has been calculated considering a family size of 5. As per Census figures of 2001, a population of 439843 resides in slums. This figure has not been considered as it includes only those slums which have clusters of more than 60 houses.

9   Inamdar Zameen = Land given as gift, in the times of kingdoms, the ministers were sometimes given the land by the Kings as a gift for their deeds. Now some of these lands do not have a legal owner and encroached by a person or group of people.

10   Some of these activities will be described at length in due place.

11   Sakhi means a female friend.

12   An Investment scheme of the Centre Government of India

13   Source: Toolkit for Financial support for Comprehensive Capacity Building for Improved Urban Governance and Poverty Alleviation of JNNURM, 2009.

List of CUE Working Papers

WP 1 Subversive *Urban Development in India - Implications on Planning Education,* by Darshini Mahadevia and Rutul Joshi, December 2009.

WP 2 *Approaches to the Lands for the Urban Poor, India: A Workshop Report,* by Darshini Mahadevia, Rutul Joshi and Rutul Sharma, December 2009.

WP 3 *Integrating the Urban Poor in Planning and Governance Systems, India A Workshop Report,* by Darshini Mahadevia, Rutul Joshi and Rutul Sharma, December 2009.

WP 4 *Land Reservations for the Urban Poor: the Case of Town Planning Schemes in Ahmedabad,* by Rutul Joshi and Prashant Sanga, December 2009.

WP 5 *Housing Options and Mobility of Urban Migrants in India and China,* by Darshini Mahadevia, Zhiyan Liu and Xiuming Yuan, April 2010.

Centre for Urban Equity (CUE) advocates a human-centered and equitable urban development paradigm. The activities of CUE are research, policy advocacy, training and capacity building and data documentation and dissemination. The Centre is a National Resource Centre of Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India.

Centre for Urban Equity
(An NRC for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India)
CEPT University
Kasturbhai Lalbhai Campus, University Road, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad – 380009