



Beyond the Handpump and Pit Latrines The Case of a Slum in Baroda

Summary

The Baroda Citizens Council (BBC) is an NGO of considerable repute with a record of service in the slums in different sectors. In water and sanitation, their approach was confined to providing a level of service based on norms and planners' perception of what is best for the poor. In early 1994 BBC brought an engineer-consultant to speak to the leaders from the different slums of Baroda about the possibility of piped water supply. This case study reviews the power of the people of a slum to reflect upon their plight and to think of solutions beyond the traditional variety. The people engaged the consultant in seeking information that will enable them to make a choice in line with their willingness to pay. The dialogue with the formal utility for accessing the trunk infrastructure followed. This has prompted UNICEF to come forward to assist the project. The city is poised at the threshold of an interesting experience in providing WSS infrastructure to low income settlements.

Introduction

1. Slums constitute 40% of the urban population in India. The conditions of physical infrastructure in these are appalling. The women and children often bear the brunt of the adverse health impact of such neglect. The resource constraint that is responsible for the urban infrastructure deficiencies alone cannot explain the gross imbalance between the slum and non-slum areas. What is often ignored is the capacity of the people to help themselves and the need to devise institutional mechanisms to harness this capacity. The experience of Ramdevnagar slum in Baroda demonstrates how solutions beyond the traditional options emerge as a community choice. The process has benefitted from a combination of circumstances such as years of good preparatory work by Baroda Citizens Council, the presence of well functioning community-based credit society and information sharing with community on the service level options. This has prompted UNICEF to come forward to support the initiative.

2. The population of Baroda city in 1991 was 10.2 lakhs. During the decade of the eighties the population grew at the rate of 39 per cent as against 57 per cent during the preceding two decades. In contrast, as shown in the table below, the rate at which the population in slums has been increasing is alarming.

3. One study indicated that 82 per cent are nuclear families in the slums with hardly a per cent of them living for three generations. Fifty six per cent of the families have their own toilets. Literacy is 80 per cent among males and 60 per cent among women.

Baroda Citizens Council (BBC)

4. BBC was established in 1966 as a voluntary, non profit, secular development organization. It was a unique coming together, at the instance of American Friends Service Society, of industry, (Gujarat Federation of Mills and Industries) an academic institution (MS University of Baroda) and the local body (Baroda Municipal Corporation) is to

encourage various groups, especially the urban poor to solve their civic problems. The strategy is to enable people to help themselves by developing their faith in themselves.

Demography of Baroda City

The details of slum population in Baroda

Year	Number of Slums	Number of Families	Population	Decadal growth (%)	Slum residents per cent of Population
1972	192	11,130	49,950	-	10.4
1982	210	21,292	94,700	90	12.8
1992	336	50,239	226,100	139	22

5. BBC has so far worked with more than 13,055 families involving a population of nearly 65,000 people in 33 slums. BBC is active in self employment, health and non-formal education. On the infrastructure front, BBC has previously spearheaded role in low-cost housing for the poor with support from Portsmouth Housing Trust in the International Year of the Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). The project involved community mobilization, beneficiary involvement in design and choice of materials, negotiations with the Municipal Corporation, arranging loans from a bank and use of skilled and semi-skilled workers from among the beneficiaries in construction. The loan recovery in the project is an impressive 96 per cent.

6. In the Water and Sanitation Sector the previous activity of BBC was restricted to construction of family toilets, hand pumps, soak pits and community drainage, training of community leaders in sanitation, health, hygiene and training of women volunteers in handpump maintenance. In all these schemes, the beneficiaries contributed upto 70 per cent of the capital costs. The remaining came from contributions from bilateral and other donors, routed through BBC. Usually the contributions per family are in the range of Rs 500 per family for an India Mark III handpump and Rs 250 per family for a community drainage scheme.

These handpumps and the community drains are fully maintained by the community and money is collected from the users for procuring spare parts or for engaging mechanics. BCC promotes single-pit pour-flush latrines as family toilets. Some of the pits with over 6 m deep have been in use for the past 13 years and are not filled up yet. The coverage figures as of 1996, in slums where BCC is active, are given below.

ACTIVITIES	COVERAGE	
	Numbers	Families
Family toilets	1,100	5,500
Family soakpits	250	250
Community Drainage		1000
Handpumps	50	1250

7. BCC is also a clearing house/forum for voluntary organizations within the city of Baroda. It aims to support voluntary action groups of Baroda in improving their program effectiveness, promotion of community participation and fund raising. BCC established the United Way of Baroda (UWB) and UNICEF With 80 voluntary groups of Baroda as UWB's members, BCC has helped many institutions in initial work and facilitated their development into full fledged organizations. BCC is now expanding its activities to other cities and towns of Gujarat and works as a training center for Urban Basic Services (UBS) of Government of India and UNICEF programs.

Community Savings and Loan Association (CSLA)

8. Access to finance was felt to be a major problem in the slums where BCC was intensively working. This led to the setting up of the CSLA in 1989. The objective was to organize a self-sustaining economic organization comprised of poor people to develop the habit of savings. It began with a minimum savings per month per member of Rs 10 which is Rs 30 now. A member is eligible of a loan six months after joining the association. The maximum loan in the beginning was Rs 1500 and has gone up to Rs 5000. While savings earn an interest of 6 per cent, loan

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carries an interest of 12 per cent. Loans are extended on the basis of a guarantee provided by two members of the association. The collections are made by the BCC community volunteer every month through door-to-door contact. Today, more than 6,500 households are members of CSLA. Over 1,000 members have availed loans for purposes such as house repairs, toilet construction, pregnancy, hospitalization and self employment. The total loan disbursed in the last six years amount to Rs 101 lakhs. Reportedly the loan recovery is about 70 per cent and there are no willful defaulters but cases of delayed payment.

9. BCC is attempting to help CSLA graduate from providing individual loans to financing community infrastructure by augmenting the total corpus of funds through raising additional loans from financial institutions. The Housing Development and Finance Corporation (HDFC) provides financial assistance at an interest rate of 10.5 per cent and BCC is accountable for this fund. HDFC also guides CSLA in streamlining its activities and improving its effectiveness.

Ramdevnagar case

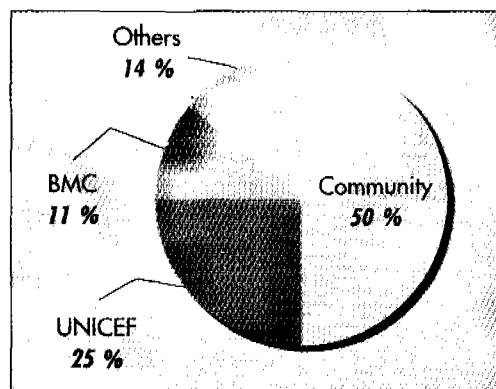
10. BCC wants to dispel the myth that slum dwellers are not willing to contribute toward their own development. The aim of the project therefore is to demonstrate that the slum dwellers are willing to contribute financially and physically towards their own development provided appropriate financial and institutional mechanisms are set up to stimulate self-help.

11. In Ramdevnagar, a slum of 820 families, community dwellers are willing to share up to 50 per cent of the capital costs for a higher level of service by means of piped water supply and sewerage network. The community was already thinking to increase the number of handpumps and each family has agreed to contribute Rs 1000/-. That is when an engineering consultant was invited by BCC to explain to the community leaders from the different slums of Baroda the possibility of higher service levels with options cheaper than the conventional solutions. The context was the preparation of a project proposed for

ODA assistance. The leader from Ramdevnagar who attended this meeting conveyed the idea to his community, and set them thinking. They could visualize a solution beyond handpumps. Service level options and how much they could pay started to dominate this thinking process.

12. The costs of providing environmental improvement services involving roads, stormwater drainage, water supply, sewerage, collection of solid wastes, filling of low lying areas and landscaping are estimated at Rs 44.66 lakhs. The community will contribute fifty per cent of the cost. Half of the remaining sum is provided by UNICEF and the rest of the money is to be raised by Baroda Municipal Corporation and other sources such as the local industry. The slum is established on Government land and the Collector has given no objection certificate for the services to be provided. The BMC has agreed to provide off site infrastructure support such as water supply main connection and sewerage connection. In addition BCC will also undertake extensive community development comprising health, employment, leadership development at about 10 per cent of the project cost which will be met on 50:50 basis by BCC and UNICEF. It is also proposed to strengthen the revolving fund of CSLA to provide short term credit facilities to enable the families to meet their 50% contribution.

13. The Project will be monitored by Engineering Sewa Trust, an NGO based in Baroda. At the slum level the Trust will give technical back up to the community and also identify masons and plumbers from within the slum to who can participate in the execution of works.



Linkage with the Formal Institutions

14. One of the interesting processes would be the negotiation with Baroda Municipal Corporation. It will involve, on the technical side, details of specifications regarding internal lay out of pipes keeping in mind the already available trunk infrastructure; facilitation by engineer-consultant to ensure that the solution suits the purse of the slum dwellers without compromising on minimum technical specifications. Some of the questions will relate to additional investments needed to tap the nearest existing trunk infrastructure and how BMC will face up to it. What incentives will make BCC proactive and what will determine its response.

Key Questions

15. What is unfolding in Ramdevnagar slum of Baroda city is of interest in as much as the understanding of the process leading to the choice, the delivery option and later the use and maintenance will be helpful in answering the following questions:

- Can the high level financial participation by slum dwellers (50% for piped water supply and sewerage and 100% for household facilities like latrines) be replicated?
- What are the key determinants of demand and how they emerge under some circumstances? Is this to do with NGO presence or access to information or access to credit or a combination or what else?
- The choice of WSS infrastructure under consideration at the slum level is beyond the hand pump and household latrine. Under what circumstances do people think beyond such traditional solutions?
- What are the criteria for selection of slums for similar projects in future? Can the selection criteria be objective without the Municipal Corporation being seen to be inequitable and favouring some?
- Negotiations are going to take place between the community, the technical consultants and the BMC. What will be the nature and

degree of facilitation by the technical consultant?

- In the negotiation with BMC on the particular aspects of linking with the trunk infrastructure what will be the precise role of the engineer-consultant? What are the financial and institutional implications for BMC to incur such costs?
- Are the costs of facilitation, training, UNICEF support etc commensurate with the benefits of cost reduction (through local supervision and use of local skills) and proper use and maintenance of facilities?
- Do people come together naturally in a group as water users? What is the role of credit societies or NGO presence in other sectors in developing a cohesive group which water sector can take advantage of?

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