



India



Parivartan: Providing Basic Services to the Urban Poor

Gujarat Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT)   

The Mahila Housing Trust's (MHT) Parivartan program works with municipal corporations to convert slums into residential societies, enabling equitable access to WASH services.

Launched in 1994, Not-for-profit , Policy & Governance , Informal Sector Workers , Informal Settlements , Women's Empowerment , South Asia: India

Partners: Municipal governments in program areas are directly involved in the implementation of the program.

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Problem Addressed

Urban policies often fail to recognize the rights of slum residents, as city dwellers and slum development projects are side-lined in favor of mainstream urban development models. According to the 2011 census, 18 million urban households do not have access to tap water and 12 million urban households do not have access to any toilets. Another 5.5 million urban households depend on community toilets.

Often, government support is restricted to specific slums and only provides access to community toilets that are seldom maintained and often unusable. The problem is compounded by the fact that slum communities lack awareness and access to finance to build water and sanitation infrastructure for their households. Individuals in these communities live in unhygienic conditions that negatively impact their economic productivity, health, dignity and safety.

Innovative Approach

The most critical innovation of MHT's program is the creation of social capital in urban areas. By building capacities of slum dwellers, especially women, and mobilizing them to form their own organizations, MHT facilitates demand creation for water and sanitation. More unique is the provision of the supply side as well, to provide an end-to-end solution that supports hardware aspects such as water, toilets and drainage and software aspects such as behavior change and financing solutions. Recently, MHT introduced the use of GPS and mobile technology to create transparency in the sector and promote efficient practices. They are also working to develop a climate resilience perspective in WASH infrastructure.

Program Solution

The Mahila Housing Trust's (MHT) Parivartan program works with municipal corporations to convert slums into residential societies by facilitating the creation of household and slum level water and sanitation infrastructure in ten cities across five states. MHT works to achieve this through community mobilization: organizing women in slum

communities to form community based organizations (CBOs) and training them to interface with urban local bodies (ULB) and demand better services for themselves, including improved water and sanitation infrastructure.

MHT educates communities on existing government schemes, and provides financing options to CBOs to enable them to enter cost sharing agreements with an ULB for infrastructure building through the '500 NOC', 'Nirmal Gujarat Abhiyan', and Integrated Slum and Housing Development Programme (ISHDP). In this way, MHT facilitates the provision of a bundle of seven services to slum households at affordable costs, including an individual toilet, sewer connection, water connection, solid waste management facilities, storm water drainages, paved roads, and streetlights. Additionally, MHT also works with the government to influence urban planning and policies to ensure that slum communities are upgraded to become an integral part of the city, and to un-link water and sanitation infrastructure from land tenure, so that even residents of non-notified slums can apply for government support under approved schemes without having to justify land ownership as they often have to under the current systems.

Please visit this program profile at:

<http://washinnovations.r4d.org/program/parivartan-providing-basic-services-to-the-urban-poor>