

Dharavi Rehabilitation Project (2007–2009)

Mumbai, the financial capital of India, has a population of approximately 15 million people, with over 60% of its residents living in more than 2,000 slum settlements across the city. Among these, Dharavi is one of the largest informal settlements, spread across 239 hectares and accommodating nearly 60,000 families and commercial establishments in a highly dense and compact settlement pattern. Owing to its strategic location near the Bandra-Kurla Complex, one of Mumbai's major business districts, Dharavi has long attracted significant interest for redevelopment.

During 2007–2009, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) appointed MASHAL to undertake a comprehensive GIS-Based Biometric and Socio-Economic Baseline Survey (BSES) of all slum households and establishment owners residing in Dharavi. The assignment also included the survey of slum settlements located on railway lands between the Western and Harbour Railway corridors.

The project was awarded to MASHAL through a competitive tendering process, recognizing the organization's prior experience in conducting similar large-scale surveys for municipal corporations in Pune, Nashik, and Pimpri-Chinchwad.

Under the leadership of Shri Dinesh Prabhu, Project Coordinator, MASHAL deployed a dedicated team of more than 100 surveyors who successfully completed the survey of over 50,000 households and establishments across Dharavi. The project covered all five Planning Sectors identified under the Dharavi Redevelopment Project, with surveys conducted independently for each sector as per project requirements.

To ensure accurate mapping and documentation, MASHAL utilized satellite imagery, City Survey Department maps, and records from agencies including the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA), Rajiv Gandhi Nagar Parishad (RGNP), Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), and Survey and Land Records (SLR). Through this effort, MASHAL completed a detailed cadastral survey of approximately 57,000 slum structures spread across 239 hectares of land.

The survey was conducted in four key stages:

1. Cadastral Survey

- Mapping and documenting every structure to scale.

- Recording land use patterns and the number of storeys for each structure.

2. Socio-Economic Survey

- Collecting detailed demographic and socio-economic information of households and establishments using formats approved by the Dharavi Redevelopment Project.

3. Biometric Survey

- Capturing photographs of household heads.
- Recording left thumb impressions for identity verification and beneficiary authentication.

4. Photo Verification

- Digitally photographing each structure with a unique identification number displayed on-site to ensure authenticity and traceability of survey records.

The Dharavi Rehabilitation Project represented one of the largest GIS-enabled socio-economic and biometric survey exercises undertaken by MASHAL. The project established a robust database that supported planning, beneficiary identification, and informed decision-making for one of India's most ambitious urban redevelopment initiatives.