

Slum Sanitation Project

Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), Maharashtra (1999–2000)

Maharashtra Social Housing and Action League (MASHAL) implemented the **Slum Sanitation Project** in partnership with Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) during 1999–2000 to improve access to safe sanitation facilities for residents living in underserved slum communities across Pune city.

The project was initiated to address the acute shortage of sanitation infrastructure in urban slums, where inadequate toilet facilities and poor environmental conditions posed significant public health challenges. The intervention sought to improve sanitation coverage, reduce open defecation, promote hygiene, and enhance the overall quality of life for slum residents through a community-managed sanitation model.

Project Background

At the time, many slum settlements within Pune Municipal Corporation limits lacked access to adequate sanitation facilities. Existing infrastructure was either insufficient or poorly maintained, resulting in unhygienic living conditions and increased health risks, particularly for women, children, and vulnerable populations.

Recognizing the need for a sustainable sanitation solution, PMC partnered with MASHAL to facilitate the planning, construction, and community management of sanitation infrastructure in selected slum settlements.

Project Objectives

The project aimed to:

- Improve access to safe and hygienic sanitation facilities for slum dwellers.
- Reduce health risks associated with poor sanitation.
- Promote community ownership and management of sanitation infrastructure.
- Improve environmental hygiene within slum settlements.
- Provide gender-sensitive and child-friendly sanitation facilities.
- Establish sustainable mechanisms for operation and maintenance.

Project Implementation

As part of the project, MASHAL facilitated the construction of **60 community toilet blocks** across selected slum settlements within Pune Municipal Corporation limits.

The sanitation facilities were designed to meet the diverse needs of the community and incorporated several innovative features, including:

- Separate toilet facilities for men and women.
- Dedicated children's toilets to improve access for younger users.
- Caretaker rooms to support regular maintenance and supervision.
- Water supply arrangements.
- Electricity connections to improve usability and safety.

The construction activities were financially supported by Pune Municipal Corporation, while MASHAL facilitated community participation and mobilization throughout the implementation process.

Community Participation and Management

A key feature of the project was its emphasis on community ownership and participation.

MASHAL worked closely with residents and local Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to:

- Mobilize community support for sanitation improvements.
- Facilitate user participation in planning and implementation.
- Establish local management structures.
- Promote hygiene awareness and responsible usage.
- Develop systems for operation and maintenance of facilities.

The project encouraged communities to take collective responsibility for maintaining sanitation facilities, thereby improving sustainability and long-term functionality.

Infrastructure Support

To ensure uninterrupted operation of the toilet blocks, Pune Municipal Corporation provided:

- Free water supply.
- Free electricity connections.
- Technical support for infrastructure development.

This institutional support enabled the community-managed sanitation facilities to function effectively and serve a large number of urban poor households.

Outcomes and Impact

The project achieved significant improvements in sanitation access and environmental health within participating slum communities.

Key outcomes included:

- Construction of 60 community toilet complexes.
- Improved access to safe sanitation facilities for thousands of slum residents.
- Enhanced hygiene and environmental cleanliness.
- Reduction in open defecation practices.
- Strengthened community participation in sanitation management.
- Improved safety and convenience for women and children.
- Establishment of community-led operation and maintenance systems.

Project Significance

The Slum Sanitation Project became an important example of collaborative urban sanitation management involving local government, civil society organizations, and community institutions. The initiative demonstrated the effectiveness of combining infrastructure development with community participation and contributed to improving public health outcomes among vulnerable urban populations.

The experience gained through this project further strengthened MASHAL's expertise in urban sanitation, community mobilization, infrastructure planning, and participatory development.