

**CEPT UNIVERSITY**  
**PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (PAS) PROJECT**

**Meeting Report**

**Expert Group Meeting on Universalizing access to water and sanitation for urban poor in Gujarat**

**10<sup>th</sup> March, 2010**

**Background:**

CEPT University under its Performance assessment system (PAS) project for urban water and sanitation in Gujarat and Maharashtra aims to develop better information on water and sanitation performance at the local level. This in turn will be used to improve the financial viability, quality and reliability of services. The research will focus on the use of performance indicators and benchmarks to facilitate consistent monitoring, reporting, planning, budgeting, and investing in water and sanitation services in all the 400+ urban areas of Gujarat and Maharashtra. The PAS envisaged in this project includes: Performance Measurement, Performance Monitoring, and Performance Improvement.

Improving the access water and sanitation services for urban poor is a key component of the PAS Project. The work under this component has been initiated through two simultaneous activities: first focuses on a framework for developing a performance improvement plan (PIP) to improve access of the poor backed by rapid documentation of good practices from across cities in India; and second to initiate support to a few cities that have shown interest in improving access to services for the poor.

**Meeting Outcomes:**

A meeting on “**Universalizing access to Water supply and sanitation for Urban Poor**” was organised on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at CEPT University, Ahmedabad. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the role of



civil society organisations in supporting state and local governments in meeting the goal of universal access to water and sanitation services. CSO representatives from Gujarat were invited to share their extensive experience and lessons related to universalizing access to urban water and sanitation for poor in the state.

The meeting started with a short film on PAS project. The film discussed objectives and components to be covered under the 5 year research project. This was followed by a brief presentation on work being done with AMC under PAS project. CEPT is providing support to Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) in developing a

citywide strategy for universal coverage of individual household level water and sanitation services across all slum settlements in the city. Ahmedabad is one of the few cities in India that has on its own initiated a number of innovative measures to improve access for the poor including its slum networking project that provides full infrastructure in slum settlements.

The presentation elaborated that the support under PAS Project includes: a) assisting AMC to develop a detailed and integrated information base on sum settlements to pull together and validate information from various departments and surveys on a GIS platform, and b) assist AMC to develop a citywide strategy for universal access to individual water and sanitation services particularly with a focus on appropriate financing and implementation mechanisms.

It is envisaged that partnerships with more forth coming city governments will be facilitated under the project to achieve objectives related to universalization of water and sanitation for urban poor.

The following issues were laid down at the expert group meeting for discussion and feedback:

1. Strategies to improve access and quality of service for urban poor
2. Developing a city wide slum information system for ULBs with periodic updation of data on access and quality of services for urban poor
3. Sharing of experiences of CSO representatives in small and big cities of Gujarat and their experiences and learnings
4. Way forward for materializing above strategies through action research type projects

Experts from CSOs, voluntary organizations and development consultants shared their experiences on possible ways to gather optimum data and strategies to universalize access and ensure equity in water service delivery in the state. The discussions in the meeting are summarized below:

#### 1. **Strategies to improve access and quality of service for urban poor**

- **Peoples Participation:** The participants felt the need for promoting people's action to achieve efficient delivery of services. In this context, RTI was pointed out as the most important tool. It was suggested to address demand side requirement. Initially overall city level projections should be assessed, followed by demand assessment and its type. This should be followed by assessment of demand spatially, assessment of distribution costs to all type & then quality should be provided.
- **Effective information system:** A robust people driven information system can be developed that involves citizens in data collection, analysis and its use for advocating improved services. Based on citizen reporting system, incentives to be developed like "awards for best performing ward in a city". This would help in linking people with governance of water. It may also be useful to highlight good practices already in practice to serve as an example for other peers and advocate the cause of universalization of essential services like water and sanitation.
- **Delinking WSS services from issues of land tenure:** The participants stressed about the importance of delinking the land tenure issue for universalizing UWSS services. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) and Surat Municipal Corporation have demonstrated this by delinking tenure with service provision. However, it was mentioned that this strategy has not been adopted by other cities in Gujarat. Case of Baroda city was discussed that doesn't allow provision of legal service connections on untenured land. In this context, it would useful to properly document and market the pro-poor schemes and strategies developed and implemented by cities such as Ahmedabad and Surat.

The participants discussed possibilities to initiate demonstration projects incorporating above strategies that can be further scaled up through a city wide approach.

#### 2. **Slum information system on access and quality of services for urban poor**

The group felt that at the ULB level, data collection and updation processes are a function of their day to day functioning. This is usually linked to programmes / census operations; hence the data does not get updated on a periodic basis. There is also a need to evolve a way to make CBOs and community access the data base for meaningful engagement on service delivery and improvement issues.



Thus under the given circumstances, PAS project can play a role to support the development of a local level information system with urban local bodies. This is currently being done with AMC. Involvement of citizen groups and community was emphasized to create a participatory and robust information system. The members also pointed out specific capacity building requirements needed to put such a system under practical implementation and use. It would also be useful to explore the use of new technologies such as SMS-web server to encourage CBO participation in regular updation of slum information system.

### **3. Sharing of experiences of CSO representatives in small and big cities of Gujarat and their experiences and lessons**

- CEE mentioned about their work related to participatory budgeting in Pune. Creation of citizen groups has helped them to assess quality and coverage of services for poor households in Pune. In this context, the CEE, people's groups and Pune Municipal corporation have worked together to create a participatory centralized information system. This information system is managed and updated by the youth groups in the community and feeds to the centralised information system at Pune Municipal Corporation. It was pointed out that PMC has a very capable and well functioning Urban Community Development (UCD) department which has helped to develop and support NHG-NHC-CDS type of structures across all sum settlements in Pune. Such a base is likely to be available in only a few cities.
- Representative from SEWA Mahila Housing Trust (MHT) felt that for urban water and sanitation, there is an over emphasis on infrastructure creation. However capacity building needs of the sector take a back seat in this allocation. Based on their experiences, there is no programme that provides funds to construct paved roads for slum settlements. At present the only possibility is to access the Councillor funds for such type of projects. In absence of this provision, it is difficult to provide for sewerage facilities for non poor households. Similarly for the new expansion limits in cities, the municipal officials are not adequately aware of policy provisions for expanding services in these outgrowth areas. This is a major impediment to provide new water and sewerage connections in expansion limits.

In case of Gujarat, MHT also suggested that there is sufficient budgetary provision under Nirmal Gujarat to provide HH level toilets. However water and sewerage provisions are considered to be functions of municipal corporations (respective ULBs) and toilet construction is being promoted under state schemes. There should be a better link between toilet construction and city level service availability.

MHT representative also pointed out that under JNNURM, relocation of slums was being done outside city limits, where infrastructure network is not available. For all such relocation projects, the local bodies have to play role of implementer as well as facilitator. The current initiative through “Rajiv Aawas Yojana” also lays down conditionality related to tenure as well as town planning bye laws.

- In Mehsana city, Young Citizens Initiative works in 24 slum locations, the database for which was created by the citizen groups. The collector has been involved in the data collection and verification process. The CSO has facilitated creation of area wise CBOs that may be able to take up issues related to water and sanitation.
- Unnati representative shared their experience of working in smaller towns in Gujarat. A common characteristic of such towns is location of slums along the water bodies that get polluted in absence of proper sanitation / sewerage system. Most of the slums in these smaller towns are dependent on shared stand post or public tap and pressure is a major problem during supply hours. Water quality testing provisions are also adhoc in such smaller towns in the state. Furthermore the cities refer to various data sources including CDP, data for IHSDP projects and data base from Swarnim Gujarat. There is a need for a consistent database to support ULB in strategy development for universal access to water and sanitation services.

Unnati is currently working in three cities including Modasa, Sabarkantha and Dholka with CBO groups to develop and update citizen group monitoring cards that give a status update on water and sanitation service provision and quality levels. Their experience suggests that if CBOs are provided with necessary resources and training, they can be an effective channel to improve efficiency of local governance and service provisions. It would be good to explore their participation in regularly updating the slum information systems with ULBs for access and quality of services.

- Representative from Bhavnagar shared their experiences of city level slum survey undertaken by their organization in 116 slums in 2002. The organization is involved in advocacy with ULBs for ensuring equity in service provisions for such slum locations. The organization also felt that data gaps on service levels also rendered tool like RTI ineffective at city level as there is a lack of information on these aspects.
- CMAG representative felt that identification of urban poor is a critical aspect to suggest any improvement strategy. Currently there is no standardized list for BPL families in urban areas of Gujarat. Further the slum lists available with the local bodies, only comprise of slums in their jurisdiction / boundary. Slums outside the municipal limits are usually not included. Their experiences suggest that staff availability at the ULB level is also a serious concern. In smaller ULBs, there is limited staff to conceive and implement service improvement programmes. The database on service coverage and quality of service for urban poor is also inadequate and serves as a major impediment to design and implement universal coverage.
- Representative from SAVE referred to the first generation watershed programme in India. This included not only institutional funding but also capacity building opportunities/provisions to collect and update data systems. This database was used to design and implement effective watershed programmes throughout the country. A similar approach was needed for UWSS programmes. He also mentioned their interest in working with small entrepreneurs in setting up kiosks that can be used to provide data on service levels and quality in urban poor settlements. These could also be used as complaint reporting mechanisms.

- The participants based on their experiences also stressed that solutions for universal access to sanitation will have to consider the terrain, existing geographical and soil conditions. This is significant given the fact that many cities have partial sewerage system and depend largely on decentralized solutions or onsite waste water treatment.

#### **4. Way forward for action research projects**

The participants felt that it is essential to make community an integral part of data collection, updation and its use for improving service delivery for urban poor. It may be useful to initiate small action research projects to test and try out some of the ideas discussed particularly for improved slum information services that provide regular information on access and quality of services. The participants agreed that non availability of authentic database may be a major impediment in developing universalization strategies for access to water and sanitation services.

In this regard it was noted that Government of Gujarat has already embarked on carrying out a biometric survey for all slum settlements across all cities in the state. It was therefore suggested that once the biometric survey is completed, an authentic and latest data base on urban poor will be available. While biometric survey is expected to be completed in larger cities first, one may look at smaller ULBs by partnering with interested CBOs to initiate projects. Also there will be opportunities to work with ULBs to develop CBO-linked systems for regular updation of information related to change in access as well as quality of services.

One clear opportunity identified was through engaging citizens through “Citizen monitoring projects”. This can be pursued in a non threatening mode through inviting participation of the ULB from the beginning of the project. Subsequently the capacity of the citizen groups can be built up to work with ULBs to improve service delivery for urban poor citizens. It was suggested that with help of this updated information system, the action research project can propose low cost solutions (pertaining to awareness, information etc.) to improve service delivery.

Another idea suggested by the SAVE representative was to use existing telephone booths as dedicated information kiosks for slum settlements. These could act as facilitation centres and charge a minimal fee to help the urban poor to access, pay, advocate and resolve grievances for water and sanitation services with their urban local bodies.

MHT also mentioned about their CBO training package that has been developed to address service delivery related to ULBs in a comprehensive manner. The CBOs are trained on aspects related to information collection, updation, administrative structure at ULB level and available channels for grievance redressal within the existing provisions of ULBs. The training programme equips them to advocate with the service providers for improved service levels for slum settlements.

It was decided to share materials, publications or reports with PAS team on the topic under discussion. Subsequently dialogue will follow with the participants to identify potential action research projects. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks from the PAS team.

**List of Participants**

Sr. No	Participants	Name of Organization
1	Ms. Madhvi Joshi	CEE-Centre for Environment Education, Ahmedabad
2	Ms. Alka Palrecha	People in Centre
3	Mr. Rajesh Shah	SAVE
4	Ms. Manvita Baradi	UMC
5	Ms. Meghna Malhotra	UMC
6	Mr. Amar Vyas	Young citizens group, Mehsana
7	Mr. Pravin M. Rathod	Bhavnagar Mahila Sangh
8	Ms. Alice Morris	UNNATI
9	Ms. Trupti Jain	CMAG
10	Ms. Bharti M. Bhonsale	Mahila House Sewa Trust
11	Ms. Bijal Bhatt	Mahila House Sewa Trust
12	Dr. Dinesh Mehta	CEPT University
13	Dr. Meera Mehta	CEPT University
14	Ms. Madhu Bharti Sharma	CEPT University
15	Ms. Mona Iyer	CEPT University
16	Ms. Chandan Chawla	CEPT University
17	Mr. Niraj Naik	CEPT University
18	Ms. Maitri Patel	CEPT University
19	Ms. Anitha Immanuel	CEPT University
20	Mr. Dhruv Bhavsar	CEPT University
21	Ms. Jaladhi Vavaliya	CEPT University
22	Mr. Dheeraj Kapoor	CEPT University