



SAshelter
associates



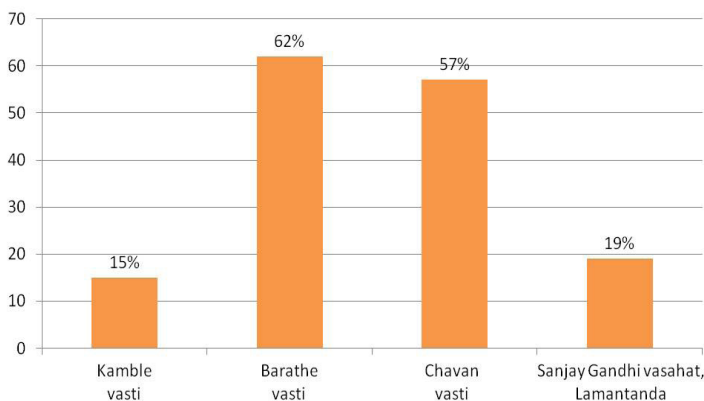
Safe Sanitation for Adolescent Girls in Urban Slums

How does lack of access to adequate sanitation facilities affect the lives of the most neglected demographic of our country-- the adolescent girl-- in urban poor India?

With slums popping up overnight, cities are struggling to cope up with planning for informal settlements. This has made it very difficult for the urban poor to access basic facilities such as sanitation, water, and electricity. This matter of social justice remains neglected in our country even today. India continues to be the country with the highest openly defecating population—597 million followed by a far second, Indonesia—54 million.

Open defecation is still increasing amongst the poorest segment of the population and one of the biggest and most neglected demographic in this category is the adolescent girl child.

SA has drawn findings specifically from the experiences of adolescent girls living in 15 of 313 settlements in Pune, India, where SA has conducted socio-economic surveys.



% of households with Adolescent girls where SA has provided individual toilets in 4 slums of the Aundh Ward.

There are 63 million adolescent girls in India without access to private toilets. That is more than the population of Italy, and roughly equivalent to the population of the United Kingdom.

Sommer et al. WASH in Schools Empowers Girls' Education: Proceedings of the Menstrual Hygiene Management in Schools Virtual Conference 2012.



Girls during the workshop conducted by SA in PCMC

Findings reveal that where sanitation facilities are sorely lacking, adolescent girls face many deprivations (education, free time, privacy and independent mobility) and risks (sexual harassment and assault, health risks, etc.), and that this inadequacy can be a structural pathway for cyclical gender-based disempowerment and injustice. Through our 'One Home,One Toilet' project we have reached over 1000 households in total with adolescent girls

Please Turn Over

Adhering to our OHOT model, we began conducting workshops and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Gosavi vasti slum. Soon after we began the workshops we interacted with adolescent girls in that slum and found that many girls had been victims of sexual harassment and/or had witnessed kidnappings. We had never seen this degree of gender based violence being practiced in any slum in Pune.

Different kinds of activities were taken up during the workshops—power walks, where the girls were asked questions that highlighted disparity between the freedom men and women enjoyed, gender violence mapping, where girls marked all the spots in their community where they felt unsafe on their own.



Above: Map showing spots where girls feel unsafe
Below: Girls mapping these spots during a workshop



“One day, 4 boys kidnapped a girl from the community. she was missing for about 4 hours. When they brought her back, everyone suspected that they must have done unspeakable things to her. Even then, neither her parents nor she filed a complaint with the police. Boys take advantage of this kind of silence.”



There are many girls that use toilets only at school and avoid using toilets during the night because they are unable to make the long walk to the CTBs due to the possibility of harassment. They rely on others in the family to accompany them to the CTB during emergencies. They don't dare to walk alone even to the market, let alone to the toilet block. With all the public places being swarmed with lecherous men and boys, these girls are living an entrapped life. Building an individual toilet has been the first step taken towards ensuring their safety.

Poor sanitation also has grave implications for the nutritional status of adolescent girls, as it leaves their bodies susceptible to infections that reduce their ability to absorb nutrients.

Haider, R. and Bhatia, S. (2006). Adolescent Nutrition: A Review

