



Local masons at work

Individual toilets for Balaji Nagar

Within the slum community of Balaji Nagar, 75% of male residents are masons by trade. Shelter Associates provided work for these residents by supplying the materials needed to build individual toilets to the community, leaving the construction of the toilets to each mason's skills and creativity. This process makes the community self-sufficient and reduces costs of construction, among other benefits.

The slum Balaji Nagar in Pimpri-Chinchwad is characterized by the poor condition of its Community Toilet Blocks (CTBs). While these community toilets were once an improvement over the common practice of open defecation, the sanitary condition of these facilities now presents a major problem. The CTBs are very dirty, sometimes damaged and they often lack electrical lighting. The unhygienic state of the toilets can lead to the increased spread of diseases. Furthermore, there have been complaints from the community's women concerning their safety when using the CTBs at night, when drunken men tend to gather around some of the CTBs.

This is why Shelter Associates, together with the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) introduced a pilot project for part of

Balaji Nagar settlement in Numbers

2,000 households

11,000 inhabitants

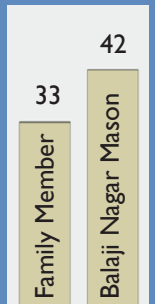
Masons: 75% of Balaji Nagar's male inhabitants

Shelter Associates' pilot project: 75 individual toilets

Toilets to be built within the next months under Shelter's supervision: 500

Average cost of mason's work: 3,500 - 5,000 Rs

Primary builder of individual toilet



the Balaji Nagar settlement. It consisted of the construction of 75 personal toilets, as well as the laying of a new drainage line - an improvement over the existing open gutter system, which was often clogged. Shelter Associates provided the material needed to build the toilets, but left the construction to the local community. This scheme is preferable over the simple distribution of

Four masons who were interviewed in Balaji Nagar



Mr. Gaiyawad

Age: 57 years old

Number of toilets built: 9, including 1 toilet for himself



Mr. Ghadge

Age: 29 years old

Number of toilets built: 17, including 1 toilet for himself



Mr. Jadhav

Age: 47 years old

Number of toilets built: 3, including 1 toilet for himself



Mr. Mhaske

Age: 48 years old

Number of toilets built: 13

Please Turn Over



money, since, in many cases, slum dwellers would use the money for more current needs.

Within a month, the majority of planned toilets have been built exclusively by local masons. As a community, Balaji Nagar has an advantage due to the fact that almost 75% of its male residents work as masons. Many of the residents could, therefore, build their own toilets by themselves or with the help of relatives, friends and neighbors, and were not dependent on masons from outside of their community. The ones who were not able to construct their toilet themselves could ask one of the many slum masons to do so for them - these masons were easily available and would charge a discounted construction fee for their neighbors within the slum. In addition, if a household faced great financial challenge, the masons would grant an even greater discount for their work.

For example, Mr. Ghadge, a mason in Balaji Nagar, has built 17 toilets within his community; of these 17 toilets, he has built 4 for half the price because the beneficiaries were unable to pay full price for construction costs. Mr. Jadhav, another mason working in Balaji Nagar, has built 3 toilets completely free of charge.

A further advantage of leaving the toilet construction to the community itself is the feeling of ownership that is created throughout

the process of construction for slum residents. Since they have built and customized the toilets by themselves, the residents have participated in the development process, and do not feel as if they have been disregarded by the authorities. The masons also have the feeling that they contributed to their community. Mr. Mhaske, for instance, enjoyed improving the lifestyle of his relatives, friends, and neighbors, and Mr. Gaikawad is proud that he could contribute and help his neighbors in need.

Shelter's scheme is highly regarded by the masons. They highlighted the quality of the building material. In addition, building material from Shelter is delivered all at once - these deliveries help to avoid supply shortages, reduce the number of stakeholders and keep costs low.

Even though there have been challenges, the pilot project can be considered a success and 500 more toilets will be built soon in other parts of Balaji Nagar to adjust to the tremendous demand.

The mason's work covers the whole construction process, from toilet seat building to tiles and door setting. The drainage line construction and connection to each household in Balaji Nagar is undertaken by the municipal corporation.



SANITATION



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