MHT’s efforts for last three decades has been to improve the infrastructure services, economic empowerment with better quality of life, through various interventions in the informal sector. These vulnerable communities live in low-income neighborhood, face the challenges of everyday living, and bear impact of climate change, in their daily lives.

Over the years, MHT has invested and built up its SOCIAL CAPITAL by mobilizing the disenfranchised communities, imparting technical knowledge to negotiate complex urban governance and planning. It enables them to procure better habitat services in a constructive dialogue and action. It has built up its ‘grassroots institutions’ to ensure sustained progress beyond its engagement.

Its methodology has been to mobilize and organize the women from slums, consisting of 100-250 households into Community Based Organization (CBO). A collective of 15-20 women from amongst the community, representing each household forms the Community Action Group (CAG).

The CAGs play a vital role by coming together to address individual, community, ward and city level issues by need assessment, mapping existing situation and probable solutions. It supports them in obtaining government approved documents like Aadhar card, PAN Card, ration card etc. It collaborates with government for collective community development and improved habitat. It identifies the ward and city level issues.

Ward level meetings are held to collect the slum level information, drafting charter of demands to present to identify relevant government officials and elected representatives. The charter of demands is according to the government requirement including the documents and estimated budget.

The women from community elect their leader - Vikasini (Development Leaders) for city level participation based on their willingness and ability. The Vikasinis form the city level manch.

To date,
States 7
Community Action Groups 906
City level Vikasini Manch 10
Vikasinis 150
Community members outreach 1899273

Nine CAGs in Odhav ward is collectively addressing the pressing issue of lack of accessible and safe PUBLIC TRANSPORT endorsed by 17 societies, challis, slums representing 25,000 people. It used geospatial data and surveys to build evidence for their demand to extend the bus –route and provide the bus stand.
Ayesha Park, Lucky Park and Shabnam Park CAGs came together to demand a new LEGAL WATER LINE with data and maps to AMC. It convinced the ward councillor to allocate a budget of INR 8 Lakh towards this need. It has resulted in providing water lines in all three areas, benefiting not only 1250 people in the community, but also five other communities.

A demand of 15 Anganwadi Centres with detailed proposal was made by 17 CAGs of Sarkhej and Odhav wards.

CAGs led model mobilized INR 1.4 Cr through Government subsidies to provide 1.5 crore meals, ration kits and generate COVID-19 awareness with the outreach of 13 lakh individuals.

The Social Asset of MHT is a strong network. It responds to crisis, action, campaigns, linkages with government and urban issues.

Cheers to CAGs and MHT team!

Happy New Year to all our members, leaders, supporters, funders, partners and friends!

-Lalita Krishnaswami

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**HOUSING**

Conceptualized in 2015, ‘Public Area Enhancement in the Heritage Precinct of Dhal ni Pol’ project has been completed with the support of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC), SELCO Foundation, HT Parekh Foundation, IOC, MS Khurana Engineering Pvt. Ltd. and technical guidance from experts from Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) University. The heritage features were enhancing the restoration of Chabutara (bird feeder), Kuvo (well), tanka (underground tank), refurbishment of chowk area as community plaza, water and sewage network, electrical cabling, installation of new fire-fighting system, streetlights fixtures, parking management and street paving with lower finish levels. The CAG of Dhal ni Pol celebrated Heritage week by organizing a Yoga camp for the pol residents. A drawing competition on cleanliness and hygiene was organized in the pol for school students.

MHT gave its suggestions in In Situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR) policy under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojna (PMAY) in UP:- The formation of CBO, minimum of 50% women’s participation, woman’s ownership, and criteria for the beneficiaries should be included.

To design inputs for climate change resilience. It emphasized the role of NGOs and other stake holders.

**WATSAN**

**Lucknow**

MHT with the support of HCL Foundation has been addressing the issue of polluted water, lack of sanitation facilities in Shrambihar Colony 2 in Lucknow. The base-line assessment indicated the incidences of common cold and diarrhoea in the community. 76% community reported spending more than Rs. 200 a month on health related issues.

The leaders of Community Action Group (CAG) initiated a campaign to generate awareness on personal hygiene in collaboration with Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC). To eliminate open defecation, MHT provided technical and financial support to construct toilets for 25 households.

As a part of the campaign on World Homeless Day, MHT organized training camps to mobilize, sensitize and generate awareness regarding health and hygiene amongst homeless communities in Ahmedabad.

To celebrate 75 years of independence - Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, MHT team, Community Action Group (CAG), along with officials from Amalner Nagar Palika (ANP) sensitised communities on waste segregation at household level and how to compost the waste.

**PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE**

Campaigns on urban governance and planning

Women led campaigns were organized by MHT in 10 slums of Surat to demystify and sensitize the communities on the concepts of Urban Governance, Budgeting and Planning. These campaigns, funded by Commonwealth Foundation aims at “Amplifying the voices of women community leaders in city planning processes”.

MHT - part of Task Force

As a part of Transport4All Challenge, MHT has conducted 7750 surveys across 300 wards in Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Surat through CAG women leaders. To capture voices of men and women from low, middle and high income and all age groups, including differently abled people, to enable them to have an inclusive and reliable data output.

The Transport4All Challenge—an initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs of the Government of India—aims to bring together cities, citizens, and startups to develop solutions that improve public transport to better serve the needs of all citizens. The Transport4All Challenge aims to make public transport—formal as well as informal-safe, convenient, and affordable for all.
MHT is replicating the grassroots model in other cities and supporting CAGs to lead change

Case study: Homeless

For past ten years, Kalavati Nai, a domestic worker and a migrant from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, resides with her husband and their six years old child in a semi-enclosed space, under a bridge in Naroda, Ahmedabad. For most homeless population, major challenge is to have an identity proof along with lack of a permanent address. MHT, with the support of Comic Relief facilitated her husband to get Aadhar Card – his identity proof to enable him to get shelter, better sanitation and linkage with social security schemes. It encouraged the family to start micro saving by opening a bank account. Several meetings with MHT created trust with the family, who requested to enrol the child for a formal education. Since the child could speak only Hindi, the women leaders enrolled the child in Noble Nagar Hindi Shala no 2. The child, Laxmi Nai ii excited to attend the school and flips her book, many times in a day. We wish the future of Laxmi is bright and assures her a dignified life in a home.

LIVELIHOOD

MHT is engaged in enhancing the quality of life, raising economic strength, productivity by up-scaling skills of women workers in the construction industry.

MHT with support of Dalyan Foundation organised workshops and events in Ranchi for better livelihood opportunities for women construction workers. City level linkages with contractors, developers, trainers, government employees were made with the women construction workers.

The events exposed the work potential of the women construction workers to other stakeholders. It generated awareness and willingness amongst developers and contractors in hiring women workers not just as labourers but as skilled workers.

Air Quality Index (AQI) Ambassadors

Construction work is one of the first few activities to be stopped when air pollution rises. While it temporarily reduces the pollution, it drastically impacts the livelihoods of construction workers in the cities. Delhi has over 1.5 million construction workers, who are directly impacted due to air pollution in the city.

MHT, in collaboration with Clean Air Asia Fund (CAAF) and Purpose, conducted a research study of 370 women construction workers to understand the causes, seriousness and impacts of air pollution on human health. It was found that the women construction workers were aware of the causes and impacts of air pollution, but continued to work in vulnerable situation to earn their livelihood. On hearing about Standard Operating Protocols (SOPs), provided by state government for controlling air pollution, they were surprised. They would appreciate the implementation of SOPs in the industry, but not at the cost of compromising their livelihood.

To equip the construction workers with the air quality-monitoring device, a training in Air Quality Index (AQI) device was conducted. Five CAG members of three areas, who are construction workers were trained and provided with the AQI device. They are now known as AQI Ambassadors. They monitor the air quality of their residents and workplace regularly. When it indicates high risk, they inform the communities and co-workers. The vulnerable, elderly and people with respiratory diseases can take extra preventive precautions.

Delhi Green App, launched by State Government of Delhi to generate awareness and register complaints against the activities contributing pollution in the state. MHT and its CAG freely use this app to generate awareness.


AWARDS

MHT for its women-led community based climate resilience model, consisting of six cool roof technologies - bamboo roof, solar reflective white paint, thermocool roof, air light ventilation, mod roof and green roof, was conferred ‘Ashden Award for Cooling in Informal Settlements’. It was presented by President of Costa Rica at Glasgow, COP 26.

Harriet Lamb, CEO, Ashden says, “At this year’s Ashden Awards, climate pioneers in Asia excelled in transforming access to low cost, accessible energy and addressing the need for urgent and life-transforming techniques to keep people and buildings cool. Their bold initiatives show how societies can reduce emissions while also dramatically improving people’s lives. We are delighted to have MHT from India among the Ashden winners. Their practical and affordable home cooling solutions are something so many countries can learn from and replicate.”

MHT organized and participated in several WORKSHOPS/WEBINAR

Bijal Brahmbhatt, shares her perspective and MHT’s approach on #EradicationofPoverty on International day for the Eradication of Poverty.

An excerpt: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5wkXx2mCY by SIRAZ HIRANI on: ‘Role of NGOs in Resilience Capacity Building’, in a webinar on
‘Building Resilient Urban Communities in Transforming Cities’ by BReUCom

An excerpt: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziXbDq6NfSg%E2%80%A6 by Bijal Bhatt on: ‘Awas par Samvad on Inclusive Housing’ by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on Oct 6, Lucknow.

Bijalben was a speaker at WRI’s event: Launch of ‘Towards a More Equal City’ Synthesis Report.

The launch event for the synthesis report will feature global leaders exploring the urgency of closing the “urban services divide” in ways that meet local as well as global goals on climate and sustainable development.

UN-Habitat India invites you to join a Webinar on “Accelerating Private Sector Participation in Resilient and Inclusive Housing” on Friday, 22nd Oct 2021 | 4.00 - 5.45 PM IST as part of #UrbanOctober2021. Bijalben spoke

MEDIA

Media and print coverage – online and printed forms:
https://fb.watch/8w_jvu28Au/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uhMxP82088
https://unfccc-cop26.streamworld.de/program
divya-b.in/bhaskar-quiz
https://www.ted.com/talks/gautam_bhan_a_bold_plan_to_house_100 million_people/trans

Dhal ni Pol coverage:

5. Divya Bhaskar Web: https://divya-b.in/0AHfllh1lb

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