



GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS CASE STUDY

INDIA

URBAN WATER SUPPLY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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India: Urban Water Supply and Environmental Improvement Project

Summary

DEVELOPMENT AIMS AND IMPACTS. The Urban Water Supply and Environmental Improvement Project sought to provide basic services of water supply, sanitation, and garbage collection and disposal in four cities in Madhya Pradesh, India. Impacts include increased access to sustainable water supply and enhanced sanitation infrastructure in these four cities. Over 5.6 million people benefited from improved water supply, while half a million people benefited from an improved wastewater management system and 4.7 million people benefited from an improved solid waste management system. These changes positively impacted the lives of the local community, in particular women and girls, who are primarily responsible for water management. The active participation of women was encouraged and supported, and over 70% of the members of the community group committees (CGCs) were women. The CGCs were responsible for coordinating and overseeing the initiatives concerning water supply and sanitation, and they continue to operate even after the completion of the project, liaising with local government officials. Women built on skills developed during the social mobilization initiatives and other project activities to ensure improved income generation, with many of them continuing to be active leaders at the community level.

ADB PROCESSES AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS. The project design included a gender action plan. A gender manual was developed to guide the integration of gender in the project. Special measures were taken to ensure women's participation in community-driven planning and decision making. Targets for participation of women in community-based organizations or CGCs were closely monitored, and variations were followed up by both the nongovernment organizations—responsible for organizing, mobilizing, and capacity building of CGCs—and the project staff. The project also partnered with other organizations with capacities related to gender equality that helped in the initial gender analysis of the water and sanitation sector.

Main Aims and Approaches of the Project

The Urban Water Supply and Environmental Improvement Project (UWSEIMP or Project UDAY) was designed to rehabilitate and expand the urban water supply systems and improve the wastewater collection and treatment systems in four cities of Madhya Pradesh: Bhopal, Gwalior, Indore, and Jabalpur.

The primary objectives of the project were to

- promote sustainable growth and ensure poverty reduction in the four project cities;
- provide sustainable basic urban infrastructure and services to all citizens of the four project cities; and
- strengthen the capacity of the project cities to plan and manage their urban water supply and sanitation systems in a more effective, transparent, and sustainable manner.

Box 1: Project Basic Facts

Loan approval number:	2046
Supplementary loan approval number:	2456
Loan approval:	December 2003
Supplementary loan approval:	October 2008
Closing date:	December 2013
Executing agency:	Department of Urban Administration and Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh
Financing:	ADB loan: \$252 million
Government of Madhya Pradesh:	\$93.5 million
UN-Habitat (grant):	\$0.5 million
Gender classification:	Effective gender mainstreaming

Note: In this report, “\$” refers to US dollars.

Source: Project records, Project Management Unit

While the project aimed to benefit the entire urban community, some components focused on upgrading the living conditions of the poorest, in particular the neediest groups in slums. The project aimed to promote the active participation of women in municipal management and project implementation as both beneficiaries and agents. See Box 1 for basic information on the project.

The project had three parts:

- **Part A. Urban water supply and environmental improvement**, which covered the improvement and expansion of municipal infrastructure and services, including urban water supply, sewage and sanitation, storm water drainage, and solid waste management.

- **Part B. Public participation and awareness program**, which consisted of two community-level funds: the Area Improvement Fund and the Community Infrastructure Fund. Both funds have led to participatory planning involving the municipal authorities and the poor communities at the slum settlement level and have supported the integration of slum improvement initiatives with citywide infrastructure.
- **Part C. Project implementation assistance**, which served as support to the project management unit (PMU) at the state level and project implementation units (PIUs) at the city level. The Urban Administration and Development Department was the executing agency providing overall strategic guidance, technical supervision, and execution support, and ensuring compliance with loan covenants.

The project used the following strategies to meet its objectives:

- Preparing municipal action plans for poverty reduction, which included coverage for poor settlements with high infrastructure deficiencies.
- Linking slum settlements to city infrastructure and integrating them with the rest of the city and wider infrastructure systems.
- Introducing cost-sharing arrangements in infrastructure (sanitation) at the household level. Individual households paid part of the costs for provision of water and construction of toilets.
- Liaising with existing government programs to support vocational training, in particular expanding access to credit.
- Developing mechanisms for public participation and awareness, and measuring the benefits accrued to citizens.
- Linking with other initiatives, including the Madhya Pradesh Urban Services for the Poor (MPUSP) supported by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom; and other programs implemented by the Government of India.
- Strengthening institutional arrangements at the PMU and PIU levels to support program implementation.
- Partnering with nongovernment organizations (NGOs) to organize, mobilize, and build capacities of poor communities in the project sites.

Key Gender Equality Issues Related to the Aims of the Project

Gender inequalities, roles, and relations influence and inform how water is used within households and who is responsible for water-related tasks. For example, water shortages often mean that women wash less, with men having preferential access to household water supplies. Also, safe and accessible sanitation facilities are particularly important for girls and women. Specific issues associated with improving water supply and sanitation facilities include the following:

- **Gender roles in household water management.** In the project areas, women were reported as the primary users of water within the household. They are generally responsible for household water management—for drinking, preparing food, as

well as personal and household hygiene (washing and cleaning). For women, the timing of water availability is important, as different schedules can have an impact on their workloads. The lack of clean and safe water also leads to illness in the household and increased health care burdens for women.

- **The responsibility of women in water collection and transportation.** The partners of WaterAid conducted a baseline study and found that women and girls were responsible for water collection in more than 60% of the households.¹ They are required to walk long hours carrying heavy loads if water has to be transported long distances, and they could also be subjected to violence. Men mostly fetch water on bicycles or motor vehicles, whereas women and girls walk carrying buckets or headloads of water. Single, elderly, or differently abled women often have no help and face additional difficulties.
- **Lack of sanitation facilities.** The project baseline surveys found a high dependence of women and girls on open defecation sites (39% of surveyed households in Bhopal and 44% in Jabalpur).² Dependence on open defecation sites leads to health and safety concerns, especially for women and girls. They have to wait until after dark to relieve themselves, and this affects their health and also makes them vulnerable to violence. Furthermore, those accessing community toilets are inconvenienced by their unsanitary conditions and poor maintenance, and are vulnerable due to their inconvenient locations.
- **Women are often overlooked in water management structures.** Though women are primarily responsible for managing domestic water supply and promoting home- and community-based sanitation activities, they are often overlooked in the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects. Men traditionally have a greater role in decision making.
- **Women face specific obstacles when attempting to participate in productive and community initiatives.** Women have little time to participate in community-based initiatives, as their household responsibilities are very demanding. Also, women often have limited networking and training opportunities to build their capacity. Social attitudes and gender stereotypes influence the scope for women's participation and leadership. Thus, they often find it challenging to assume technical and management roles in water and sanitation projects.
- **Discriminatory labor practices work against women.** Despite a range of labor laws and initiatives, the construction industry remains male dominated. Women are discriminated against and are often offered lower wages and poorer working conditions. The health and safety concerns of women and children are often overlooked in construction sites.
- **Generally, institutions lack capacity on gender equality issues.** Institutions working on water supply and sanitation projects often lack both an understanding of gender issues and the capacity to take positive action. The gender analysis noted that water engineers were often contemptuous of people making the case for a gender perspective, asking "what do water tanks have to do with gender?"³ Allocating resources and building institutional awareness to promote gender equality remains a challenge.

¹ WaterAid India. New Delhi. 2009. *Baseline Survey: Status of Water and Sanitation in Slums of Indore, Bhopal.*

² Footnote 1.

³ UN-Habitat. 2005. *Navigating Gender in Development of Water and Sanitation in Urban Areas: A Rapid Gender Assessment of the Cities of Bhopal, Gwalior, Indore and Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, India.* P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya.

The project had an excellent initial study that provided a detailed overview of gender equality issues in general and how they relate to the water and sanitation sector in particular. The Water for Asian Cities program carried out a rapid gender assessment to document key issues—both quantitatively and qualitatively—in the four target cities.

Project Plan to Involve Women and Address Gender Disparities

The project design included several key elements that helped to address gender inequalities:

- **Evidence-based approaches and strategies.** Under the memorandum of understanding between the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UN-Habitat, the project collaborated with the Water for Asian Cities program in drafting a gender mainstreaming strategy, which was used as a practice tool to plan and implement pro-women community-based initiatives. The project strategy and actions incorporated the gender equality issues that emerged from a rapid gender assessment of four project cities undertaken (footnote 2). In addition to these studies, a baseline survey was conducted. The project design was informed by the evidence of women's priorities from all these sources.
- **Development of a gender action plan.** A comprehensive gender action plan (GAP) was included in the loan design with provisions for each component and the majority of outputs. Several strategies were included to facilitate the participation of women and to ensure that activities identified and responded to their needs. Targets were set for participation of women in all activities, including decision making. Women's needs were prioritized with at least 50% of all civil and small-scale community infrastructure activities being based on priorities identified by women and incorporated in the microplans. The GAP required all project-related training to include a module on gender awareness aimed at creating a supportive environment for the participation of women.
- **Formulation of a gender field manual.** The manual was a practical guide for integrating gender in 10 stages of the Municipal Action Plan for Poverty Reduction processes—from formation of community group committees (CGCs) to problem identification and analysis to strategy formulation to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This was to support the preparation of the municipal reforms and environmental infrastructure proposals. The manual also identifies some gender concerns for consideration during the construction of water supply infrastructures and other facilities, such as the provision of separate toilet and wash facilities for women and men employees as well as nursery rooms for children below 6 years old of female workers.
- **Community mobilization included a focus on women.** Social mobilization was a core strategy within the component of public participation and awareness. The most vulnerable communities were targeted. Sixty-four resident CGCs were formed to respond to community concerns relating to water and sanitation and to support participation in the construction, maintenance, and vigilance of community toilets and other civic amenities. The CGCs were composed of 760 community representatives, of which 73.1% were women. These committees

gained legal status and were registered under the State Societies Registration Act, 1973. The CGCs were trained on pro-poor governance at the settlement level and were involved in collecting baseline information, microplanning, and the development of detailed project reports. Water and sanitation activities, including hygiene education targeting children and the larger community, were also organized.

- **Partnerships with NGOs.** The Department of Urban Administration and Development of the Government of Madhya Pradesh signed a memorandum of understanding with UN-Habitat and WaterAid to collaborate with their partner NGOs in the four cities to expand the coverage for participatory planning and promoting community participation throughout the project.
- **Convergence with other slum improvement programs.** To address the infrastructure deficiencies in some slums, the project worked with the Madhya Pradesh Urban Services for the Poor (MPUSP) program. Both Project UDAY and MPUSP targeted the urban poor. Examples of complementary investments include roads and a community hall in Ram Nagra, which were supported by the MPUSP program. Similarly, to provide water to the slums that the MPUSP program had prioritized, it connected its tertiary network to the main water pipelines laid under the Urban Water Supply and Environmental Improvement Project.

In addition to these broad design elements and approaches, there were specific elements and activities that also addressed gender equality issues:

- **Institutional commitment to promote gender-sensitive working conditions for laborers.** Contracts were governed by labor laws mandating equal wages for equal value of work. Contract documents included clauses outlining the contractor's responsibility for the safety of the workers and obligations to ensure protective measures as well as the provision of water and sanitation facilities for all workers. On-site training regarding hygiene and safety of male and female workers was provided. HIV/AIDS awareness was also organized for laborers at Indore.
- **Institutional awareness and capacities to promote gender equality.** Investments were made in staff positions and capacity-building initiatives. The project management unit (PMU) had dedicated staff positions for community development and social and gender equality. Experts on community development and gender equality issues assisted both the PMU and the project implementation unit. Public relations and awareness consultants were also engaged. Communities were trained on participation, leadership, water and sanitation management, health and hygiene, and rights and entitlements. The CGCs received training on leadership, microplanning, participatory learning methods, self-help group strengthening, record keeping, financial management, masonry skills, and operation and maintenance.
- **Vocational training and skills development under the Community Infrastructure Fund.** Through Community Infrastructure Fund, vocational training was provided to men and women on computer skills, tailoring, embroidery, beauty salon skills, and others. Entrepreneurs were offered support for placement and getting established by linking them with existing loan schemes.

- **Construction of community halls.** The CGCs, in discussion with communities, realized that a space was needed for public participation, cultural programs, marriages and events, and cultural exchange. Plans to rejuvenate community toilets were expanded to include a community hall. The existing dilapidated community toilets were abandoned due to faulty design; inappropriate location, which made women and girls vulnerable; and the lack of maintenance. The new structures were designed to include a community hall in the front and a sanitation block at the back. The community halls now serve as spaces for community development where the CGCs can meet and plan their activities.

Project Achievements

Overall, there were a number of important project results. The project improved access to sustainable water supply and sanitation in the four cities. Over 5.6 million people benefited from improved water supply, while half a million people benefited from an improved wastewater management system and 4.7 million people benefited from an improved solid waste management system.

Specific outcomes were the following:

- **Improved access to water.** Along with improvements in water supply at the city level, the project also led to increased access to water in poor slums. The water supply was extended to individual households with subsidized connection tariffs and flexible payment arrangements. For example, at One Tree Hill, Bhopal, 2,000 households had increased water pressure, availability, and quality by switching over to the new pipeline connections. The community-managed water supply schemes in two slums of Jabalpur provided 1,714 households with water supply at their doorsteps. With improved household access to water, women have reported increased frequency in bathing and washing clothes. Women in Ram Nagra also reported the additional benefit of being able to bathe in privacy as they were no longer dependent on the river.

Jabalpur has two successful examples of community-managed water supply in Ram Nagra and Nai Basti–Ranjhi. The project supported the infrastructure to ensure the availability of water at the household level. A neighborhood group or CGC with a high representation of women manage these activities. CGC members were encouraged to enroll their households in the respective lanes/clusters and were motivated to become change agents. Each household paid an annual membership of Rs200. The CGCs established vigilance committees to oversee construction activities. The CGC and the community agreed on the monthly cost to cover operation and maintenance charges, and they also instituted a system for bill collection that includes collection at the doorstep (thus minimizing the collection costs) and follow-up with defaulters.

- **Improved sanitation practices and environmental conditions.** Overall, the rate of open defecation was reduced. The availability of water encouraged

households to construct individual toilets. In the four cities, 3,505 households contributed 10% of the total cost involved in constructing individual household toilets. The CGCs worked toward generating demand for sanitation facilities through health and hygiene education; capacity building; and encouraging cost effective, pro-poor, and appropriate models of sanitation. Also, the CGCs with significant participation from women identified households that could benefit from new toilets and supervised the construction of these toilets. For their part, the household members partially funded the cost of a toilet, monitored construction activities, and contributed labor. This resulted in improved sanitation practices and environmental conditions for the households as substantiated by the end line beneficiaries monitoring and evaluation survey, which reported a decrease in the rate of open defecation in project cities.

In some cases, limited space at the household level led to the rehabilitation of community toilets. Twenty-five community toilets were rehabilitated, benefiting more than 4,000 households. The CGCs monitored the procurement process and the construction activities to ensure that the material used is of good quality and that construction was carried out properly. The operation and maintenance of the community toilets is primarily focused on raising contributions from the users to cover the ongoing operational expenses (including cleaning, maintenance, and the cost of a caretaker). Moreover, 1,316 women and 2,184 men were trained on the operation and maintenance of community toilets.

- **Improved hygiene practices at the household and community level.** Hygiene education at the slum level encouraged improved hygiene at the personal, household, and community levels. Though community waste management is still a challenge, households are conscious of the importance of proper garbage disposal. Women's groups demonstrated vigilance in their neighborhoods and motivated households to dispose of garbage in allocated locations. Households have also begun sweeping of portions of roads in front of their houses or hiring sweepers for maintaining cleanliness of roads. See Box 2 for related statement of a CGC official.
- **Time savings for men and women.** Access to reliable and quality water services has significantly reduced the workloads of men and women and helped them to reallocate the saved time and energy for household, productive, and community work. This is particularly important in slums where people, primarily women and girls, who had to make multiple trips to collect water now have a well-functioning water supply system.

Box 2: Reflection of a Community Leader

There was no development work in the slum in last 30 years. This is the first time that we as a community have improved our environment.

—60-year-old Iqbal Bano, Community Group Committee President

Iqbal Bano has had no formal education but now confidently manages the documentation related to the project. She and other community group committee members were trained on water and sanitation management.

Other Gender Equality Results and Achievements

In addition to significant benefits for women and girls due to the increased access to water and sanitation facilities, improved hygiene practices, and time savings, the project also achieved other gender equality results:

- **Women's participation, leadership, and decision making in the water and sanitation sector increased.** The project addressed gender stereotypes related to women's and men's abilities by ensuring representation of women in leadership positions within the CGCs. Sixty-five CGCs with 760 members, 73.1% of whom were women, were formed. This is a significant advance, as in the past there were no instances of women and men working together to improve water supply and sanitation.

The women involved reported that the project, other than improving their living conditions, also improved their sense of empowerment, self-determination, and self-esteem. Both men and women report a change in gender relations, especially the men who have an increased understanding of household issues. See Box 3 for related statement of a woman CGC member.

Box 3: Reflection of a Woman Community Leader

Initially we faced a lot of resistance from the men folk. It took 2 years in preparation and people raised questions on our operations. Our men folk asked us to stay at home. But we were determined because we were facing the hardship. We had to leave our small children every day, risking their lives from dogs and ants to collect water.

—Community group committee member from Nai Basti–Ranjhi, focus group discussion, December 2013

- **Reduced safety risks for women and girls related collecting water, bathing, washing, and toileting.** The project placed improvement in sanitation and hygiene high on the list of household investment priorities. This was a marked change from the past. Women and girls suffered indignity and were exposed to safety risks due to the lack of water supply and sanitation facilities. Individual household water tap connections have greatly increased the access to water. This, in turn, has reduced the safety risks associated with collecting water, bathing, washing, and defecating. Location of sanitation facilities has also reduced the risks and threat perceptions associated with the safety of women and girls. Individual household toilets (3,505 in four cities) have positively impacted the lives of girls and women in these households. In the case of community toilets, the design and location decisions have incorporated concerns on the safety of women and girls.

- **Women and men benefited equitably from capacity-building activities.** The project provided equal opportunities for men and women for training at the local level. See Box 4 for related story. Specific information on participation includes⁴
 - Community preparatory capacity building involved 953 community members, 727 of whom were women (76.2%).
 - Vocation training was provided to 4,490 people, 3,610 of whom were women (80.40%).
 - Educational support (coaching classes) benefited 1,228 school-going children, including 740 girls (60.2%).
 - 24,356 slum dwellers (16,604 women, or 67.3%) participated in health camps.
 - 302 people (250 women, or 82.7%) took part in an exposure visit to view good practices in participatory slum improvement.

Box 4: A Woman's Story on Benefits from the Project

We used to make cotton battees (twigs used for religious rituals) used for pooja. After spending about 6–7 hours a day, we could earn a meager amount of Rs500–Rs600 a month. Moreover, the cotton dust produced during the process was affecting us and our children's health. Then, we got the opportunity to undertake training in tailoring under "Project UDAY." After training, we took job work for two months and then decided to start on our own. We took a loan of Rs10,000 from the bank and procured the sewing machine. Now, we get orders for stitching school dress, salwar (pleated trousers tapering to tight fit around the ankles), blouses, and so on, and easily earn Rs4,000–Rs5,000 per month. We get continuous work orders not only from our slum but also from nearby areas. Our husbands and family are very happy.

—Chetna Bhargav, Anita Rathore, Manu Yadav (beneficiaries from Guru Nagar)

- **Strengthened institutional capacity to ensure women and men benefit equitably from water and sanitation investments.** As part of the gender mainstreaming strategy, the PMU included the positions of community development officer, gender officer, benefit monitoring and evaluation officer, and public relations officer. The goal was to ensure that the unit had the capacity to promote pro-poor governance and mainstream gender perspectives throughout project activities. This institutional arrangement proved useful and ensured that the implementing agency had the capacity to consult with women and men before responding to the priorities of women. The project placed greater emphasis on pro-poor governance, water demand management, integrated urban environment sanitation, and income generation in the four cities. This collaborative framework facilitated NGO partnerships and strengthened the capacity of project staff and communities.

Public participation consultants worked closely with the PMU, project managers, and specialists to produce knowledge management products, such as newsletters and brochures, and to disseminate good practices. The benefit, monitoring, and

⁴ Project Gender Action Results and Achievements submitted by the executing agency, April 2014.

evaluation framework designed and operational at three levels—baseline, midterm, and project completion—assisted the PMU in monitoring and evaluating benefits to the target population (including sex disaggregation).

- **Increased understanding of gender issues in water and sanitation.** The project contributed to increased understanding of gender equality issues in water supply and sanitation among project staff and public representatives. With training, orientation sessions, and cross-learning from other urban development projects, the project staff and partners were able to address the social, legal, technological, financial, and institutional barriers faced by poor people in accessing water and sanitation.

Project Features that Contributed to the Achievement of Gender Equality Results

In addition to the design elements, there were additional strategies and elements that helped the project to progress on gender equality results:

- There was adequate time and resources for meaningful consultations with the community. The project realized that close monitoring is necessary during social mobilization to ensure measures are taken to encourage women to attend the meetings. Other special measures were also necessary to create a gender-friendly environment so that women felt confident about presenting their ideas in public discussions. Raising awareness of men and women within communities was necessary along with additional training for implementing NGOs to make sure that this approach was fully and consistently implemented. Gender awareness and training conducted by NGOs for communities has encouraged strong commitment to gender equality aspects of the project.
- The executing agency demonstrated its commitment to the GAP by ensuring a gender mainstreaming approach across project initiatives. Community organizers and sociologists with gender expertise ensured that participation targets were met and that needs assessment and other activities included women. See Box 5 for examples of project activities with strong participation of women.
- Senior project team members attended gender mainstreaming lateral learning events organized by ADB. These sessions provided opportunities to present their achievements as well as learn from other similar projects about how to overcome challenges.
- Information systems and data collection were important. The project used several participatory tools to gather and analyze information. However, more efforts could have been made to collect and use sex-disaggregated data to guide future policy and investments.

Box 5: Examples of Activities with Strong Participation of Women

- Women-led participatory Area Improvement Fund/Community Infrastructure Fund proposals were developed in 65 selected slums (Bhopal: 15, Indore: 16, Jabalpur: 17, Gwalior: 17).
- Health camps were organized, involving 24,356 slum dwellers with 16,604 (67.3%) women.
- Exposure visit of 302 members to explore good practices in participatory slum improvement with 250 (82.7%) women.
- 750 community members, of whom 556 (73.1%) were women, formed 65 groups and registered as community group committees (CGCs) with bank accounts in 4 cities:
 - Bhopal: 15 CGCs—167 members with 86 men and 81 women (49.0%)
 - Indore: 16 CGCs—180 members with 21 men and 159 women (88%)
 - Jabalpur: 16 CGCs—190 members with 7 men and 183 women (91.5%)
 - Gwalior: 17 CGCs—213 members with 80 men and 133 women (63%)
- All CGC members (above 70% women in all 4 cities) participated in collecting baseline information and provided data inputs to project reports.
- Community-level events/workshops were held with 739 participants of whom 489 (66%) were women:
 - Bhopal: 150 participants with 50 men and 100 women (66%)
 - Indore: 160 participants with 22 men and 138 women (86.25%)
 - Jabalpur: 210 participants with 45 men and 165 women (78.5%)
 - Gwalior: 219 participants with 133 men and 86 women (39.2%)

This case study was produced by the India Resident Mission in consultation with the executing and implementing agency. It builds on information included in the project progress reports and related gender action plan updates and on direct consultations with the executing and implementing agency and the beneficiaries, as well as inputs from Asian Development Bank project officers.

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