MAKING BHUBANESWAR SOCIALLY SMART

- Smart City: Safe City, My City!
- Youth and New Urbanization
- Putting Lives First
- Champions of Change
SMART CITY MISSION

is an initiative of Government of India to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life of people in urban areas by enabling local development and harnessing technology to create smart outcomes for people.

The city of Bhubaneswar topped the ‘Smart City Challenge’ of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to select hundred cities under the Mission.

Besides other components, the Mission lays emphasis on citizen centric approach for improving safety and security through community partnerships, deployment of safe city solution and promoting healthy living.

PARTNERSHIP

The partnership between Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL), Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is an attempt to establish a model of a “Socially Smart City” where people centric interventions are steered through various youth engagement programmes. The Socially Smart City model in simple term means that people, especially the vulnerable population groups, and their needs are at the centre of urban development. Humara Bachpan Trust, Bhubaneswar, an NGO is the implementing partner for the intervention in slums.
INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

One-fifth of the Bhubaneswar’s million plus population are adolescents and youth. The Socially Smart City Initiative aims to harness the boundless energy and abilities of these young girls and boys to mould the social and development landscape of the city by establishing effective platforms.

Bhubaneshwar, a city of young people (20%)

One third of city’s population lives in slums (35%)

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a youth-centric and youth-led integrated social intervention model to support citizens connect initiative.
2. Promote safety and security of girls and women in Bhubaneswar with specific focus on urban slums through community partnerships.
3. Increase availability and accessibility of social, health and other development programmes for the vulnerable and marginalized population sub groups.

COVERAGE

100+ Slums covered in 3 Years
80+ Educational institutes
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES

- Youth Connect
- City Changer Labs
- Youth Conclave

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN URBAN SLUMS

- Community Mapping
- Community Dialogue
- Youth Clubs
- Engaging Men and Boys
- Creating Safe Spaces for girls and women

CONVERGENCE AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Safety of Girls and Women
- Employability and Skill Development
- Access to Services and Basic Amenities
SMART CITY: SAFE CITY, MY CITY!
‘SATHI HATHA BADHEIBA’- Street Plays make combating gender based violence a community issue in Bhubaneswar slums!

Colourful street plays organized by young boys and girls, led by peer leaders trained under the ‘Socially Smart Bhubaneswar’ initiative have resulted in bringing up the issue of gender based violence as one of the concerns of the community.

The initiative helps young girls open up about their problems and engage more meaningfully with parents, peers and community representatives with regard to seeking actions and making their habitations safer. Decked up in colourful attires, boys and girls, enthusiastically enact these plays woven around a wide array of themes - gender discrimination, child marriage, violence against girls and women, their rights and entitlements with songs and drama in a story-format.

The play ‘Sathi Hatha Badheiba’ (meaning, “Friends let’s join hands”), enacted by the youth club of Shanti Nagar slum deals with the issue of women’s equality and fighting gender based violence. Their sheer enthusiasm and energy on display is an evidence of how common is the issue of gender discrimination in their homes and communities!

Street plays are one of the several tools the youth clubs in these slums use to generate awareness among their folks. Chat sessions with stakeholders from legal, law enforcement and gender domains, self-defence training for young girls, and community level meetings are other ways in which the young people have leveraged the opportunity provided by this intervention to come together and set an agenda for collective action under this new inclusive urbanization initiative in the city.
SAFETY OF GIRLS AND WOMEN
MULTI DIMENSIONAL APPROACH

Community Mapping
This is a process led by trained volunteers where the community meets together and develops a map of the slum identifying issues, needs and resources that they can tap into. The process involves intensive discussions with stakeholders such as young boys and girls, community gatekeepers, members of women self help groups, women’s health committees (Mahila Arogya Samiti) and frontline functionaries of key sectors. Though the interest of the community is on basic amenities for a decent living, issues around safety and vulnerabilities of girls and young women are brought into the discussions. The mapping exercise for a slum typically takes about three to four community meetings to complete. The findings from the mapping exercise is used as an advocacy tool to demand basic services and amenities in slums and address safety concerns of girls.

Creating Safe Spaces
Lack of safe spaces for young girls was identified as one of the key issues during many of the community mapping exercises.

Violence, stalking, teasing, girls not allowed to venture out alone and poor lighting were the other issues that came up during the meeting. In order to resolve these issues, a series of community advocacy programmes were organised. This resulted in creating awareness in the community on the challenges faced by girls and in finding solutions collectively. The girls now have a place identified in their locality to meet, play and spend time together.

Installation of streetlights was an immediate outcome of the community mapping exercise and was taken up by the peer leaders to the Municipal Corporator. In another example of creating a better environment for young people especially girls, illegal sale of liquor was stopped due to active participation of community and prompt action by the municipality.

Building Social, Health and Economic assets
Youth clubs consisting of about 15 to 20 young girls and boys from the locality are formed who meet on a fortnightly basis. Each club is led by trained peer educators (two girls and boys per club) who mobilise members, organise club meetings and transact sessions. The sessions are based on an assets building framework developed by UNFPA covering social, health and economic assets.

Community Dialogue
Women’s group, men folk, community based organisations and frontline functionaries are brought to a common platform to seek solutions to problems and improve basic services in slums. Through sensitization programmes and community meetings young leaders, elected representatives and the community engage in discussions and dialogues on social issues and to create an enabling environment for girls and women.
Engaging Men and Boys

Discussions are held with men and boys on themes such as violence against women, rights and gender equality. They are motivated to take on leadership role to change gender norms and prevent gender based violence, in their homes as well as in the community. Special sessions are being organised for young migrants to create awareness on opportunities, labour related rights and entitlements and to help them adapt to a new life in the city.

Self-Defence Training

A ten days intensive training on self-defence technique for girls in slums is boosting their confidence to deal with challenging situations in day to day life. Around 320 girls have so far been trained in self defence from the slums of Bhubaneswar.

Working towards Dignity and Privacy

“We don’t have toilets at our home and the community toilets are not functional. Boys from near-by slums gather around the site where we used to go for defecation, it was quite embarrassing but we had no other option. We often waited until it was dark. Now we have toilets and this has been a great boon for girls and women in our colony” – says a young girl from Shantinagar FCI Colony.

As in many slums of Bhubaneswar, most households of Shantinagar FCI colony did not have a toilet. The community toilet was defunct due to general apathy and neglect.

When the initiative of making Bhubaneswar open defecation free was taken up, peer leaders like Balia of Shantinagar FCI Colony actively participated in the campaign. They not only operationalised the community toilet but also motivated people to use it properly. Further, Balia together with his friends took up a massive cleaning exercise and converted the defecation site into a playground. This has now become a favourite place for young boys and girls of the slum to play and gather for meetings.
YOUTH AND NEW URBANIZATION
Bhubaneswar’s youth shaping transition into a Socially Smart City

With 365 million young people (10-24 years), India has the world’s largest young population, and has a huge demographic advantage in harnessing their energy and creative potential. Even as urbanization is emerging as a global platform for accelerated development, states need to recognize girls and boys as critical agents of change. Young people need to be involved in policy-defining processes affecting urban infrastructure, social protection, and opportunities to ensure cities become places of safety and opportunity.

The Smart City Mission in India offers a comprehensive platform to harness the potential of India’s young people to shape social and economic development, contribute to progress in social and civic norms, and ensure in achieving SDG 11 (making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable).

Tapping Youth Aspirations – Bhubaneswar’s Smart City Experience

In Bhubaneswar, which is fast transitioning into a smart city, every fourth citizen is a young person. Recognizing the stake and role of young population in shaping the future of the city, the citizen-centric, youth-led intervention is strengthening the social and people-centric facets of the cityscape, especially in the poor habitations.

YOUTH CONNECT

Designed to improve awareness and engagement of young people on social issues Youth Connect programmes are organised for students from universities and colleges of Bhubaneswar. The initiative aims at promoting active citizenship, leadership and volunteerism among young people. The Youth Connect program complements the “Citizen Connect Initiative” of the Smart City Mission plan of the municipal corporation by investing in capacity building and leadership of young girls and boys.

Thematic programs are organised at universities and colleges providing a platform for students to discuss and debate on social issues, ideate and engage in socio-development processes, and articulate their needs as an integral part of the urban social development processes.
YOUTH CONNECT: LEAD THEMES

In the year 2018, the Youth Connect program reached out to students and faculty of 77 educational institutions across the city. The modus of engaging young people ranged from talk shows to chat sessions with experts, street plays, youth conclave and novelty platforms like the City Changer Lab designed to showcase innovation and enterprise among youth.

Safe City, Safe Campus

Seminars, workshops, debates and discussions, campus audits, poster competitions, slogan writing and essay competitions in educational institutions are platforms where students deliberate on issues around gender equality and violence, sexual harassment at workplace and cyber-crimes.

Gender equality and Violence against women

Evoking some of the most enthusiastic participation of youth, a variety of events and activities were organised in a number of colleges. Students, both girls and boys, take the lead in organising events, identifying topics for discussions, and mobilizing peer participation.
Healthy Life, Better Style

Designed to tap into young people’s penchant for style, this theme promotes awareness on the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, avoiding risky behaviour, preventing diseases, promoting healthy diet, physical fitness through yoga, aerobics and other activities. Comprising mainly of interactive sessions with doctors, nutritionists, motivational speakers and psychologists, these events also help orient students on aspects of stress management, substance abuse, wellness and healthy lifestyles.

City Changer Labs

A platform for young people to participate and present innovative ideas that can address some of the social and development concerns of the city. A city level competition where young people are provided an opportunity to demonstrate technology based solutions for a better urban living.

So far, 54 technology-based ideas were presented in the two editions of City Changer competitions. The topics covered solid waste management, safety of girls and women, innovation in traffic regulation, alternate energy sources, and bridging the digital divide.

Youth Conclave

Conceived as an annual event, these mega events bring together hundreds of youth and students from across colleges and universities in Bhubaneswar to share experiences, achievements and challenges in the ‘smart city’ journey and present stories of young people as change makers. These exchanges are aimed at engaging youth in social development issues in the new wave of urbanisation and changing urban landscape.

"The idea is to make young people active participants in ensuring a safe and just society “
- Opines a Principal of a Management School.
INCLUSIVE URBANIZATION

Nearly 31 percent of the India's 1.2 billion population live in urban areas and by 2030, approximately 600 million people are expected to be in cities. While urbanization has the potential to transform urban landscapes into centres of modern living with evolved infrastructure and connectivity, large scale migration from rural areas puts immense stress on urban governance and challenges to provisioning of services. The most adverse impact of this is often borne by the urban poor who live in unorganised habitations in the cities.

In this context the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and resilient assumes immense significance and within that the SDG 3 (ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being of all) and SDG 5 (achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls) are equally important.

Urbanisation is both an opportunity and challenge, were inequities are more pronounced among the urban poor. For a city to be smart, it has to be socially smart first that means the city needs to address issues of exclusion, violence against girls and women, aspirations of young people and ensure availability of services. Therefore, access to services, opportunities and safety to the poor, especially for the girls and women is of prime importance.

ENHANCING ACCESS TO HEALTH, EDUCATION AND BASIC CIVIC SERVICES

Community outreach services such as the Urban Health and Nutrition Days are being strengthened, through demand and supply side advocacy. Increase in immunisation coverage of children in Masjid Colony is a case in point. Training and orientation of ANMs and ASHA on the reproductive health needs of women is helping in promoting informed choices and enhancing access to newer contraceptives especially for the young and newly married couples.
28 drop-out adolescents from Kedarpalli and Bapuji Nagar Railway colony were enrolled back into schools to continue their education.

Inadequate access to drinking water, poor sanitation facilities and unsafe neighbourhoods emerged as common concerns across slums during the community mapping exercise that is part of the socially smart city project. Stakeholder meetings brought together the slum community, the civic authorities, government functionaries and members of civil society on a range of issues that needed attention. These forums also helped the slum inhabitants identify and prioritize issues and to galvanize local actions. Besides collectively pursuing matters around civic amenities with local authorities, the slum community led by young peer leaders and members of the youth club actively engaged in the “Open Defecation Free” campaign that was being undertaken by the BMC and other agencies.

More than 25 cleanliness drives and many awareness activities organized in the project area over the last two years created greater momentum and impact out of the sanitation campaign.

The peer leaders motivated the community for construction of dustbins and this resulted in people using them to dump waste and improving cleanliness of the area remarkably.

The community water connection installed at Behera sahi slum caters to the drinking water needs of at least 35 households. This inspired peer leaders of another slum to get their redundant water points repaired and activated. Relentless follow-up by peer leaders with the Public Health Department benefitted nearly 60 households with clean drinking water in another slum.

Active participation of peer leaders and young people of Shantinagar basti, resulted in converting an open space used for defecation into a playground. The initiative has largely contributed in addressing concerns around sanitation as well as safety of girls and women.

**SKILL DEVELOPMENT TO STRENGTHEN YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY**

The need for States to invest in the education and employment of young people to reach their full potential as means of realizing the demographic dividend is universally recognized. A special emphasis of the socially smart initiative has been to link youth to skill development training programs. Line listing of young people from the slums helped in creating a basic profile of youth and to recognize their aspirations. Thereupon meetings were organized with skill development agencies and exposure visits conducted to motivate youth especially women to enrol in such programs.

In the last one year, 181 girls have enrolled in various skill development programs. Most girls have enrolled into programmes offered by National Skill Development Corporation, Urban micro-business centre, ICICI foundation and Government ITIs. Some of the trades that have been picked up by young people are beauty and wellness, food processing, AC and refrigeration mechanics, driving, office administration and welding.
CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

Young People in the slums of Bhubaneswar shape urban poor’s participation in the Smart City Mission
The journey to recognize and articulate ‘their’ needs soon motivates the young minds to take up issues affecting the community at large; they venture beyond their basic needs to issues of sexual and reproductive health, gender equity and women’s safety, making lives better for girls and women here.

"WOMEN’S SAFETY AND GENDER EQUALITY ARE HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSIONS......
Thanks to Peer leaders like Pratibha Dalei.

For Pratibha, a peer leader from Jagannath slum, the social intervention has not only helped her individual growth but also enabled families in the neighbourhood to come together on common concerns. "Earlier, our problems remained within our homes and there was barely any joint action to solve community issues.”

Pratibha narrates the role of her peers in collectivizing residents of the neighbourhood. People realized that most problems faced by them are common to all households and should evoke collective response. “The project has aroused a sort of we-feeling among us. It has helped us maximise use of the platforms provided for sharing our concerns and being heard,” says Pratibha.

“We took part in social mapping which helped us understand our surrounding and neighbourhood better, she goes on to elaborate on the engagement of young people. Safety was a major issue faced by youngsters and older women alike. As Pratibha narrates, community mobilization and various gender-focused initiatives is bringing about a change. "Women’s safety was a big concern. It was difficult for us to stay outdoors in the evening... thanks to the gender sensitization programmes and the interesting street plays. women safety and gender equality have now become a common topic which everyone talks about and tries to find solutions too."

A proud father and a resident of the Jagannath slum for the past 25 years, Dayanidhi Dalei, spoke about his daughter’s (Pratibha) work and participation in community development programmes. “Initially I had little knowledge about these activities. One day, the local NGO team showed up and told us that they are mobilising a group of girls to work on and lead community level activities. I never realised the worth of these activities until I saw the changes these youngsters brought about in the slum.”

Pratibha wants to lead the change for a safe and equal society where the girls don’t feel helpless or inferior in any way. “Every day, she would come to me and share exuberantly her day’s activities,” says Pratibha’s mother – a homemaker. “She would often encourage me to accompany her to these programmes. I have now attended many of these programs and feel happy to see the change in the lives of many youngsters here including my daughter.”
"I WILL MARRY WHEN I FIND THE RIGHT GUY.....
Says Sunita, of Shantipalli basti, a girl with disability trained as a peer leader.

Sunita, a disabled girl in her twenties from Shantipalli basti is a trained peer leader and is now working proactively to address issues of the slum. Infact it is owing to her efforts that a broken tube well was repaired and a streetlight which was defunct for months was finally replaced by the Municipal Corporation.

Sunita recounts the closure of an open liquor shop in the slum as one of the major victories of her club. The place is now converted into a community meeting centre. The closure of unauthorised liquor shop has brought peace to all of us. Although this was resisted by the men folk, families appreciate the effort and tough fight that was put up by us. I am now personally called to the community meetings, because they feel that if I or any other peer leader is present in the meeting, we then work towards resolving issues that come up. ’Sunita, a girl with physical disability, who was shy and timid is now transformed into a vocal leader in her community.

When her marriage was fixed to a man much older than her a few months back, she convinced her mother not to force her to marry just because she is physically challenged. “Right now I’m focussing on my career and I will marry when I find the right guy,” says Sunita with a promising smile.

“SMARTNESS IS ABOUT BUILDING SMART NEIGHBOURHOODS”
Laxmipriya Swain, Peer Leader, Shantipalli slum.

For Laxmipriya, who wants to be a role model for other girls, the socially smart initiative is shaping her life. Earlier, her parents were uncomfortable about her leaving home after it gets dark, but today they harbour no such qualms or fears. “Our adolescent club meetings often get stretched into evenings. Parents who were reluctant to allow girls to go outside in the evening, feel much more confident about our safety as we get involved in community campaigns.”

Parents today are allowing young girls to interact and work with boys – something they sternly objected in the past. Laxmipriya asserts, “Our participation in community initiatives work are as important, if not more than that of the boys. We work as a team, and there’s no such thing as segregation of boys and girls.”

The journey for these adolescents began with the task of ‘self-identification and recognising their strength and weakness’ – which proved to be a fruitful endeavour. “We learnt to effectively communicate and that helped us stand up for our rights. Had it not been for these efforts, I would not have gained the courage to speak up in the community like I do with ease now,” says Laxmipriya who was trained on life skills as a peer leader. Many adolescents in these slums narrate the importance of being able to interact and express their thoughts freely.

When Laxmipriya was asked what a smart city meant to her, she replies, “Smartness is not about wearing new clothes, hanging out with friends and taking selfies, something I used to relate with smartness before. Its about creating a smart neighbourhood where basic facilities are available, people are supportive of each other and where everyone feels comfortable living there!”

Exposure as a peer leader and regular community interactions was a turning point for Laxmipriya who recounts how it helped establish her identity.
“I DISCOVERED MY CALLING IN LIFE – TO LEAD AND REPRESENT MY FOLKS”
Baliya Singh, 18 years, Peer leader of Shanti Nagar slum.

A school dropout at 8th standard, Baliya worked as a rag picker when he was young to support his family. By 17, he was an apprentice at a motor workshop. When the socially smart project was being initiated, Baliya developed an interest to work for the community and got associated as a peer leader.

“I understand the importance of education and when I got an opportunity I immediately grabbed it and restarted my studies.” This young lad, through tireless community campaigns, couldn’t have emphasized the value of education better!

As a peer leader of Shantinagar slum, one of Baliya’s celebrated achievements has been leading a campaign to reclaim a 4000 sq feet open field (that was once a squalid dumping ground used for defecation) and turning it into a thriving playground for children and young people. Young girls and boys also got the first community toilet in the slum functional and clean. These facilities had gone into disuse due to general apathy and neglect.

“Even with functional toilets, we had to ensure that our people shun the practice of open defecation,” adds Baliya, also mentioning this as one of the solutions to widespread concerns regarding safety of girls and women they had noticed in the community mapping exercises.” Besides ensuring privacy and dignity this was a sure way of minimizing harassment of girls and women, Baliya quips.

Even though he had tough challenge for his own education, he insisted on continuing education of his younger siblings. He is emphatic and firmly proclaims, “I dream of being a leader among my people!”

Losing his father during his adolescence, young Baliya is symbolic of many young people with a spark to make a change. For them, socially smart initiative has created a platform for bringing about a visible change.

“LEARNING ABOUT HEALTH AND HYGIENE DURING MENSTRUATION ….
Priyanka Priyadarshini Sahu, a peer leader.

Priyanka Priyadarshini Sahu, a peer leader says, “Our community meetings have helped us understand the importance of health and hygiene especially during menstruation. We were earlier using old clothes during periods and dried them inside the house. This exposed us to the risk of infections. There are many taboos and social restrictions for girls and women associated with menstruation. We are not allowed to play, visit religious places and touch many items. Today we understand menstruation is a normal biological process, that needs to be managed hygienically and there was nothing to feel ashamed about.”

We are now working towards changing the mindset of elders on menstruation.
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