

Innovative Approaches to Cost Effective Housing: A Case Study of Kudremala Slum, Mysore

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Abstract: In developing countries like India, the number of slums and squatter settlements are increasing particularly in large cities. Mysore City one of the large cities in India and there are large number of slums and squatter settlements. Kudremala slum is one of the squatter settlements and the housing and development of infrastructure was not addressed by the Karnataka Slum Clearance and Improvement Board due to its land tenure problem for quite a long time. Kudremala had 120 households when the project was initiated. The innovative housing project was initiated by the local community jointly with the Non-government organisation by mobilising funds from international funding agency SELVIP and government agencies. The paper presents the processes of innovative approaches to cost effective housing in Kudremala slum through partnership of CBO and NGO, resource mobilisation efforts and use of cost effective technology including the self-help techniques in promoting housing and development of infrastructure.

Keywords: Community Based Organisation, Self-help Housing, Nongovernmental Organisation, Land Tenure, Cost-effective Technology.

I. BACKGROUND

In India, problems of housing including basic services in slums are ever increasing with the growing population. The population growth of slums and squatter settlements is over 7 percent, whereas the growth of urban areas is around 3 to 4 percent. The Urban Local Bodies are required to be empowered to meet the requirements of urban poor under the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act but transfer of powers from the government to ULBs yet to realise. The housing providers in the government departments namely housing department, slum boards are striving hard to solve the problems of slums including its land tenure, housing and infrastructure. Though, housing problems of slum dwellers have been addressed to a considerable extent by the slum boards and ULBs, the problems of squatter settlements remains unattended either due to land tenure issues or weak resource base coupled with inadequate legislative provisions to address the squatter settlement issues. The Government of India's National Housing and Habitat Policy has been articulated to meet the objectives of United Nation's Global Shelter Strategy. The emphasis was to redefine the roles of state governments, housing/slum boards or departments and house financing institutions and urban local bodies as 'facilitators' rather than 'providers'. In the meanwhile, the Community Based Organisations (CBOs), which emerge from local initiatives, are a part of the social tradition. These organisations are usually committed to have direct impact on the constituent lives by embracing their interests. On the other hand Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) tend to be external intermediaries or negotiators or facilitators and collaborators with the CBOS,

networking closely with the governments and international donors. The NGOs have an inherent capacity to integrate people into organised structures of voluntary group action for self-reliance and development. The partnership between NGOs and CBOs contribution has been acknowledged by the government and multilateral organisations. The partnership of CBOs and NGOs is seen to be very crucial for mobilising resources and providing enabling environment for development informal or squatter settlements. They have also demonstrated their ability to manage the highly participatory projects in which the government departments have found that they are unsuited the issues. In this context, development of partnerships among NGOs, CBOs and financial institutions is inevitable for promoting innovative and cost effective technologies as an enabling strategy to meet the objective of National Habitat policy in solving the shelter problems.

II. SLUMS AND SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS IN MYSORE

The City of Mysore is situated in the southern part of the Indian sub-continent. The city had 9.89 lakhs population as per the Census of India 2011 provisional figures. Presently, the City of Mysore to consist of 70 slums of which 40 slums have been declared by the Slum Improvement Clearance Board for providing basic amenities and housing facilities. Kudremala slum was a squatter settlement when the project was initiated. It consisted for 120 households and there were hardly 52 slums of which 24 were squatter settlements. The housing project was initiated in a partnership approach with CBO and NGO in collaboration with international funding agency. The partnership of CBO and NGOs, resource mobilisation efforts and use of cost effective technology including the self-help techniques for promoting housing and basic services in Kudremala slum was very much crucial.

III. BACKGROUND OF KUDREMALA SLUM

Kudremala Slum was an un-declared squatter settlement, situated on southern part of the Mysore city and began developing 40 years ago. Most of the people of this slum were migrated from the neighbouring state, Statyamanaga of Tamil Nadu State. Later, they had established relationship with local residents of Mysore. The people have started settling down in a low-lying area of 2.10 acre extent. The majority of them were economically weaker sections of the society. Their main economic activities to include construction work, kitchen gardening, rag-picking, sweeping, hostel works and utensils cleaning in the near-by residences.

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Fig. 1 Kudremala Slum (Source: Google map 2012)

IV. PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

The Community Based Organisations namely Neighbourhood Groups and Neighbourhood Committee have been established in Kudremala Slum by the Mysore City Corporation under the centrally sponsored schemes of Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP) in 1990-91 and Swarna Jayanthi Shahari Rozgar Yojana in 1997. The slum was considered as a neighbourhood unit for overall socio-economic and physical development of low income settlement. The community structures were established to consist of 8-10 Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs), 20-25 families in each NHG and a Neighbourhood Committee (NHC) at slum level. A woman who represents the NHG

who selected among women is a Resident Community Volunteer (RCV) and Neighbourhood who selected among RCVs is a Convenor. The Neighbourhood Committee is basic unit of development at grass-root level where planning, implementation, monitoring and feed back is done at the slum level. The convenor facilitates Neighbourhood developmental activities through action plans including liaising with convergent departments identifying felt-needs, prioritizing and developing action plan for a slum.

An NGO namely Rural Literacy Health Programme (RLHP), which was actively involved in forming men, women, teenagers groups and other informal organisations in the slums in 22 slums in the City of Mysore and district as well. The RLHP has formed two organisations in Kudremala slum namely Shri Krishna Rajendra Harijan Abhivruddi Sangha (for men) and Yukti Mahila Sanga (for women) and networked them with the Mysore Slum Dwellers Federations (MSDF). It has extensively involved in creating awareness among the community members to promote active participation and also played a key role in establishing the partnerships with the neighbourhood committee, men’s and women’s organisation and MSDF. The RLHP took the responsibility of facilitating to solve the problem of land tenure, resource mobilisation, planning and implementation of a housing project and overall development of Kudremala slum.

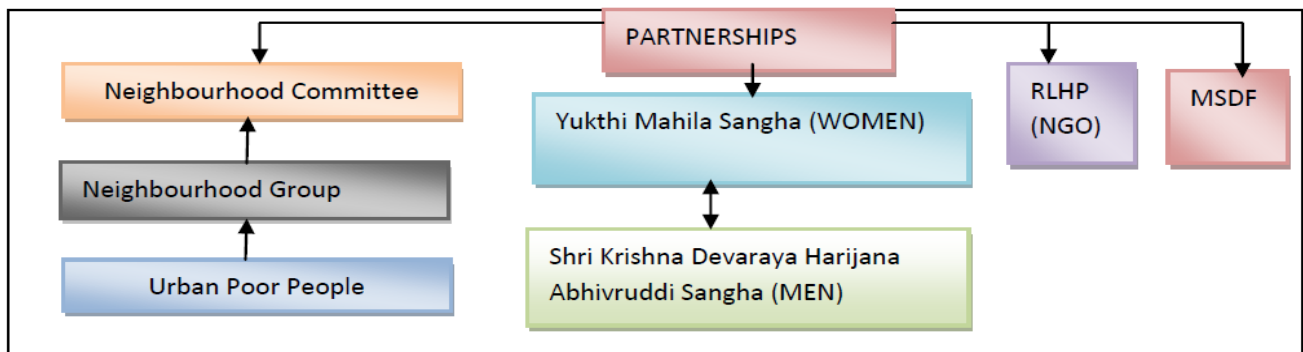


Fig. 2 Partnership Model of CBOs and NGO in Kudremala Slum

V. INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EFFECTIVE HOUSING

The partnership of community based organisations namely neighbourhood committee, men’s and women’s organisations, Rural Literacy Health Programme, and Mysore Slum Dwellers Federations has enabled the slum dwellers to explore the various options for solving the problems such as land tenure, resource mobilisation for housing, facilitate to the transfer of cost effective technologies from lab to land developed by Nirmithi Kendra and Centre for Appropriate Technology and promote self-help techniques by involving local community members for sustainable housing including the provision of basic services and infrastructure development in the Kudremala slum. The details are as follows:

A. Solving the Land Tenure Problems

The settlement was not a declared slum to undertake the improvement by the Karnataka Slum Improvement Board

and it had the problem of land tenure because, the ownership of land was not known by people. The people were under the impression that the land belonged to the Prince of Mysore, but when they met prince, it came to known that the land belonged to the University of Mysore. The people of the locality along with NGO and MSDF approached the University Authority to grant the land. The proposal was agreed by the University, but the CBOs and MSDF went on strike with a drum beating on the day of Senate meeting and also obstructed the movement in Crawford Hall. Later, they entered the Senate Hall to plead their demands. The University of Mysore took decision to grant a piece of land measuring 2.10 acres to the slum dwellers.

B. Efforts for Mobilisation of Resources to Housing Project:

The Community Members and RLHP approached Mysore City Corporation to avail the benefit of scheme namely Dr. Ambedkar Housing scheme for construction of houses. The City Corporation has agreed to take up housing scheme with a condition that it going to erect

296 dwelling units of two-storey buildings to accommodate other houseless people of other localities in the city. The proposal was not convinced to the community members and they rejected, because they had some reservations for accommodating other locality residents in Kudremala slum. The Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO, Bangalore) was approached to get financial support (loan) for the project, but each household were required to repay the unit cost of Rs.32,000. The community found that it was difficult to repay and the proposal was turned down. The Karnataka Slum Clearance Board (KSCB) was also approached. The KSCB had agreed to take up the project with financial assistance from the House Financing Institution, but the estimated unit cost was Rs.45,000/- per unit which was not affordable and acceptable to the community members.

C. Financial Assistance from the International House Financing Institution, SELAVIP, Japan

The community members of CBOs and RLHP pursued rigorously and explored to get financial assistance from different funding and financial agencies and finally they came in contact with an International Non-Governmental House Financing Agency, an organisation from Japan, SELAVIP. The SELAVIP came forward to provide grants routing through RLHP. The RLHP has taken up entire responsibility and facilitated in planning, implementation, getting technical know-how, promoting cost-effective technologies in the project site by involving and fixing the responsibilities to the local community members including monitoring the low-cost housing project. The approved project cost was of Rs. 22,000/- which comprised building materials component of Rs.15,000/- and labour component of Rs.7500/- each. The CBOs and RLHP decided to adopt cost-effective technology which was adopted in Kerala State. As a resource mobilisation effort and commitment from the local community, each household had contributed an amount of Rs.100 per household as a token of advance to participate in the project and the amount was kept in the joint account of Krishna Rajendra Sangh and RLHP. It was agreed upon to complete house construction project of 120 dwelling units in a span of 2 years by the community members using self-help technique.

D. Planning of Residential Layout and Dwelling Units

The community members have decided jointly with the RLHP to develop layout and plots of 20'x25' size for accommodating all 120 households of the slum by keeping in view the available land, requirements of space for roads, public and semi-public and civic amenities. A layout plan was developed on a grid-iron pattern and a group housing plan was evolved to consist of 8 dwelling units in each group. The accommodation includes sit-out, living, bedroom and individual toilet cum bath to meeting the minimum comforts. The foundation was laid down using cement concrete 1:4:8, size stone masonry in mud mortar, damp proof course in CC 1:3:6, superstructure built with solid cement blocks for walls and asbestos sheets for roofing. The proper drainage facilities were provided.

E. Self-help Housing for Construction of Houses

The community members have agreed to adopt self-help concept by sharing their labour as individual contributions.

All 120 households of the locality were organised themselves into four groups, each group to consist 30 members with a condition that there will be a participation of one person from each of the households to contribute the labour share. The strategy was to engage the first batch on first day followed by second, third and fourth batches on second, third and fourth days respectively. Thus, members of the each of the group contribute on every fifth day alternatively by making them free on rest four days to earn their livelihood. The masons, skilled labours were employed for use of the cost-effective construction materials namely soil-cement bricks for walls, mud mortar etc. The community member's labour was utilised for preparation of soil cement bricks on-site and construction works as well.

F. Transfer of Cost-Effective Technology

The Mysore Nirmithi Kendra has involved for imparting skills on low-cost housing cost-effective techniques for preparation of soil cement blocks in the site itself and Centre for Appropriate Technology (CART) has involved for achieving the quality preparation of soil cement bricks using mud locally, construction works, and monitoring the project. Four members were given skill-training to launch the work.

G. Project Monitoring

The RLHP jointly with the Community (CBOs) have monitored the project regularly by conducting community level meeting. The CART (Centre for Appropriate Rural Technology) at the National Institute of Engineering, Mysore has also involved in advising, monitoring and controlling the quality of the low-cost technology.

H. Efforts for Mobilization of Additional Resources

While executing the housing project, it was realized that the funds provided by SELAVIP was not sufficient to complete the project work; hence, there was need arisen for mobilizing additional resources. RLHP and CBOs approached the Social Welfare Department, Government of Karnataka and succeeded in obtaining grant of Rs. 5000/- (U.S \$ 116) per dwelling unit (per family) to complete additional works such as wood work, painting and miscellaneous items. With this additional input from Social Welfare Board, the RLHP and community were able to complete the project in 1998.

I. Provision of Basic Services

The earlier efforts of mobilizing resources were only for construction of dwelling units for each of the families. The Zilla Panchayat and Mysore City Corporation were involved in providing bore-wells and school buildings as convergence strategy. There was no proper sanitation, access to road and water supply in the slum. The CBOs and RLHP pleaded with the Mysore City Corporation for getting basic services under Asian Development Bank assisted project. The City Corporation heeded to include this slum under ADB project and completed by the end of 2000.

J. Actors Involved in the Project

SELAVIP – Japan House Funding Agency	Provided a grant of Rs. 15,000 per unit for 120 units
Social Welfare Board	Provided additional grant of Rs. 6.00 lakhs at Rs. 5000 per family as a matching fund
University of Mysore	Provided land free of cost
CBOs -Men’s and Women’s Organizations	Helped in planning the project, contributed the labour share and implemented the project
RLHP	Empowered the Community members by through formation of CBOs and built leadership Established partnership Designed Project, mobilized resources, co-ordinated and monitored implementation of the project
Mysore Slum Dwellers Federation (MSDF)	Supported to solve the land tenure problems for CBO’s Housing Project
Mysore City Corporation	Incorporated under Karnataka Urban Development Programme to provide basic services such as water supply, UGD, roads sanitations etc under the Asian Development Bank assisted projects.
Dy. Commissioner’s Office	Helped CBOs to purchase asbestos sheet from Pondicherry and Wood from Kerala. Also provided Ration Cards to the Vokkoota.
Zilla Panchayat	Provided Primary School and Anganawadi facilities
Building Centre (Nirmithi Kendra)	Constructed School Building and provided Low-Cost housing Technology for making Soil Cement Blocks and constructions works
CART (Centre for Appropriate Rural Technology)	Helped in getting low-cost technology and production of low-cost materials

K. Special Features of Kudremala Innovative Housing

- a) The formation of strong CBOs and its empowerment in the Kudremala slum and development of partnership approach helped to promote the project;
- b) The securing of land from the University of Mysore for the purpose was first of its kind in the City of Mysore.
- c) The community co-operated to make the layouts in a systematic way leaving sufficient space for roads, drainage etc. It also facilitated the execution of the project by constructing temporary sheds on the adjacent area;
- d) The partnership of RLHP and CBOs helped in mobilizing resources in the form of grant from an International House Sponsoring NGO, SELAVIP as the community could not afford to repay the loan either from HUDCO or Slum Clearance Board;
- e) The international funding enabled the slum dwellers to go in for self-help housing technique with community group strategy for sustainable housing;

- f) The community succeeded in obtaining additional resources from the Social Welfare Board of the Government of Karnataka to meet the additional requirement of funds to complete the project.
- g) The community made use of appropriate low-cost technology in planning, designing, implementation and monitoring of the project to minimize the cost;
- h) The partnership enabled to get services of electricity, bore-wells and roads under SCP component of Mysore City Corporation and water supply and sanitation and other services through ADB assisted project under Karnataka Urban Development programmes.

VI. CONCLUSION

Generally, problems of housing for the urban poor are tackled by the Government agencies in the form of schemes and programmes with a direct intervention. Land problems coupled with inadequate resources have been increasing gap between demand and supply. The Government of India’s National Housing and Habitat Policy 1998 redefines and encourages partnership between NGOs and CBOs as an enabling strategy. The case of Kudremala Slum, in the City of Mysore proved that the partnerships of Neighbourhood Community, Men’s and Women’s Organisations (CBOs), and Rural Literacy Health Programme (RLHP) and CBOs partnership have played a significant positive role both in mobilizing resources from house financing institutions and international donors and also in planning, implementation and monitoring of the Kudremala shelter project in a cost-effective and innovative approach. The two organizations worked hand-in-hand to solve not only the land and housing problems but also could provide basic services in a sustainable manner with success.

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