“A case study of slum redevelopment in Jaipur, India: Is neglecting women an option?”

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the role of women in community development in slums in the developing nations. Fieldwork was conducted in the slums of Jaipur, India during the summer of 2009 and analyzes in particular the urban development program in the city, ‘The Rajasthan Urban Infrastructure Development Program’. The paper examines the different ways in which the women in slums could contribute to better planning and execution of slum redevelopment plans. It is proposed that a greater involvement of women is needed at the planning stage and to make women become active participants rather than passive recipients of aid.

In the past decade, slums in developing nations have gained greater attention throughout the world and have been recognized as a key challenge of urbanization (UN-HABITAT, 2006). Several countries have adopted different models for slum redevelopment, which in the long-run have had limited success. However, there is one factor that often goes neglected in most slum redevelopment plans, which is the involvement of women. It is women who largely bear the brunt of the sub-human living conditions in slums (Moser, 1987; Amis, 2001) as they are the ones fetching water from far distances, trying to maintain cleanliness to keep the family healthy, taking care of a family’s nutrition, running the house on a shoestring budget and so on.

This paper is based on the fieldwork completed in the slums in the city of Jaipur, India in 2009. The paper identifies the new area of concern regarding the involvement of women in the already existing domain of community development as well as the inherent weakness of the approach of “planning for women” rather than “planning with women.” The research methods include interviewing the women living in the slums, as well as the government officers and NGO workers working on plans for improving the living conditions of the city slums. The study also analyzes the ongoing urban development program in the city, the Rajasthan Urban Infrastructure Development Program.

The research has uncovered various reasons supporting the view that women’s participation is crucial to slum redevelopment. In addition, the paper examines the different ways in which the slum women, who are for most part illiterate, could contribute to better planning and execution of slum redevelopment plans, and how women’s empowerment plays a key role. However, the mere inclusion of women in the plans as beneficiaries is not enough. A greater involvement of women is needed at the planning stage, coupled with a thorough needs assessment survey with emphasis on specific women’s needs. Women must become active participants in the programs and not just recipients of aid. Finally, the paper concludes with an analysis of the approaches used and offers some suggestions based on the fieldwork regarding the approaches to address these complex and important problems.
THE STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

The study area for this research is located within the city of Jaipur, the capital of the North Western Indian State of Rajasthan. Jaipur is a rapidly developing city with a population of 2,322,575 persons and includes a significant population of slum dwellers. Recent estimates put the population living in the slums at 350,353. The population figures noted here come from the 2001 census; therefore, it is very likely that the population in general as well as in the slums has actually increased significantly at the present time. Jaipur has been a center of investment and economic activity for years, which is manifested, in the rapid sprouting up of malls, trade parks, as well as the widening of roads, and expansion of basic infrastructure services. Jaipur is located at a very convenient distance - 160 miles South West from Delhi, the national capital - making it a favorable site for real estate investment for the past few years and adding to the pressure on land and resources. Two slums in the city will be analyzed here - Jhalana Doongri and Manoharpura. The slums are located on the outskirts of the city near the foothills of the Aravali.

1 www.censusindia.gov.in

2 Owing to the large areal extent of the Jhalana Doongri slum, the study covers two neighborhoods- Indira Nagar and Baiji ki kothi.
Mountains and lie in proximity to light forest cover.

There are certain barriers to continued growth in Jaipur, particularly the lack of available water mainly owing to the arid climate conditions. The slums in the city are the worst affected by this problem and women and young girls are forced to walk for miles to fetch water, most of which is unfit for drinking. Secondly, the state of Rajasthan has one of the worst literacy rates (60.41 percent)\(^3\) and a sex ratio of just 922\(^4\) females per thousand males, which sets various sociological barriers to women’s economic development.

The data for this research was obtained by using a qualitative approach, which involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with women in the two slums. In addition, officers engaged with the RUIDP program were interviewed along with workers from two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have been working for women’s empowerment in the

\(^3\) Data Source: National Literacy Mission http://www.nlm.nic.in/literacy01.htm
\(^4\) Data Source: Census of India www.census.gov.in
city slums. The respondents for the study were selected using chain-sampling technique, which was used by Bose (1998), in a similar study. I tried to get maximum participation from the women who had been (or are at present) a part of some kind of development and empowerment efforts in the slum. The duration of the fieldwork was one month and the interviews were conducted in Hindi except for one, which was largely conducted in English. The interviews were first transcribed in Hindi and then selected excerpts were translated into English. The names of the women from the slums were not asked during the interviews and pseudonyms have been used in this paper wherever the women are quoted.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SLUMS

The world’s urban population as well as the population living in the slums shows an increasing trend and by 2020 the world’s slum population is projected to be about 1.4 billion (UN-HABITAT, 2006). It has been argued that rapid slum formation is now unavoidable and will remain so in the future (Ooi & Phua, 2007; Davis, 2006; Majale, 2008). In effect, slums may be a “necessary” phase in the evolution of a city as they perform the function of housing for a section of the society that has not yet been “integrated in the city life” (Stokes, 1962). In recognition of this fact, a major policy shift took place in the 1970s and 1980s, when rehabilitation and community participation became an integral part of World Bank funded projects of slum improvement (O'Hare, Abbott, & Barke, 1998; Burra, 2005). It has been realised that effective planning for slum redevelopment has to be more participatory, involving cooperation from NGOs, private sector and the slum dwellers themselves, mostly represented by Community
Based Organizations (CBOs). The concepts of “empowerment” and self-help” are the most significant attributes of participatory planning (Nijman, 2008).

However, the community participation strategies and so called “neoliberal” policies have also failed to yield the required outcomes in the long-run for several reasons (Lizarralde & Massyn, 2008; Coit, 1998; Davis, 2006; O'Hare, Abbott, & Barke, 1998). This paper focuses on one fundamental flaw in the policy and planning surrounding slum redevelopment, which is the lack of gender-sensitive planning, resuting in women’s voices being left unheard. Simply put, when half of the population receives complete neglect at the hands of planners when making ‘patricipatory’ plans, there is definitely something wrong with the planning process.

IS NEGLECTING WOMEN AN OPTION?

“...in the world of policy and planning where fashions come and go, women and development concerns are peculiar anomaly. They resolutely refuse to disappear. However, unlike other recent contenders, such as environment, they have not succeeded in attaining planning legitimacy.” (Moser, 1993)

Research on slum redevelopment programs has revealed that most development policies for infrastructure or communities tend to lack a gender-sensitive approach towards planning (Moser, 1987; Moser, 1993; Bose, 1998; Mora, 2008). This neglect stems from the erroneous perception of not including a woman’s work in the category of productive work because it does not directly generate any income (Bose, 1998; Moser, 1993) which, in turn, makes them less “deserving” of any special attention. Many scholars have advocated the importance of a more gender-sensitive
planning approach, which is based on the fact that it is women who are most impacted by poor housing conditions and a lack of infrastructure and services (Mora, 2008; Moser, 1987; Moser, 1993). Mora (2008) argues that urban conditions such as overcrowding, sanitation, hygiene, and insecurity of tenure have a more adverse effect on women, who are often subject to “greater risk” especially in public toilets and showers. However, urban settings allow greater possibilities for “gender equality” and the opportunity to break out of the cycle of oppression by improving their access to education and employment.

There are numerous instances around the world where women’s organizations in the slums have succeeded in bringing about significant changes in the lives of slum dwellers by collectively allowing them to voice their concerns. Women’s economic empowerment and the creation of income generating activities is one of the most popular strategies for organizing women and facilitating their participation in development programs. The number of organizations currently focusing on promoting women’s enterprise has also seen a significant increase (Baruah, 2004). The Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) is success story of organizing women working in the informal sector in India. The efforts of SEWA have not only lead to improvements in working condition of the poor women and ensuring fair wages, but it has also given the women skills, confidence and the ability to voice their demands in front of their employers, policy makers and government officials (Hill, 2001). SEWA has its roots in the state of Gujarat, but has made its presence felt nationwide and has set an example for effective women’s organizations. It is evident that not only are women the most significantly impacted group of population in the slums, they are an untapped resource of community development that may be helpful in long-term success of slum redevelopment programs.
A CASE STUDY OF JAIPUR, INDIA

This case study of women’s roles in community development in the two slums of Jaipur presents an analysis of the ongoing efforts of slum improvement by three main institutions – the Government of Rajasthan, Humana People to People India (HPPI), and Center for Advocacy and Research (CFAR). These three institutions have three different approaches towards improving the slums. Although RUIDP appears to be a very promising program with innovative policies and strategies, it has failed to address the concerns of the women in the slums and to obtain women’s participation in the planning and execution of the program. The two NGOs, HPPI and CFAR, have the same broader goal of empowerment of women in the slums. However, while CFAR has been successful in creating a sense of community among the women of the Manoharpura slum, increasing their confidence levels by making them aware of their rights, HPPI has not been successful on either front. The women who participated in the activities initiated by HPPI in Jhalana Doongri slum are still waiting for more help from the NGO and are reluctant to find opportunities for economic development on their own. This section provides an analysis of the efforts by the three institutions and their impacts on the women living in the slums.

The Rajasthan Urban Infrastructure Development Program (RUIDP)

RUIDP is a state level urban infrastructure development program, which was started in the year 2000 with financial assistance of US $362 million from the Asian Development Bank. The program was targeted at six cities in Rajasthan including Jaipur; the main objective of the program was to improve sewerage and water supply in the cities using a participatory approach to make most of the investment. The component of RUIDP that is relevant for this study is the
Community Awareness and Participation Program (CAPP) that claims to provide an “encompassing participatory envelope for overall Project implementation.” In line with a true neoliberal approach, the state government “engaged” a state level NGO, Indian Institute of Rural Management (IIRM) as consultants for mobilizing CAPP activities. The RUIDP website claims that the government has succeeded in its efforts: “The impact of CAPP activities under RUIDP motivated the community for sustainable development of facilities created by RUIDP. Public was motivated for taking sewerage connections, proper disposal of solid waste, hygiene, conservation of drinking water, aware and follow the traffic rules, conservation of heritage structures. Several campaigns, seminars, orientations, trainings were organised at different levels on various facets health, hygiene, water and sanitation, solid waste management, sewerage, property connection, road safety and other RUIDP related sector.”

However, the research findings suggest a vast difference between the government’s claims about CAPP and the reality on the ground. Interviews with the women in both slums revealed that there were no community meetings nor were there any consultations with the slum dwellers conducted prior to construction. The portal also mentions the creation of women’s Self Help Groups (SHGs), the same claim that was also made by the Communication Expert of CAPP – Neeraj Saxena and the Team Leader for CAPP unit – Hemant Nischal during the interviews. However, both officers admit that they do not have detailed information about aspect of the program. The officer really in charge of the implementation, Seema Gupta, who according to Mr. Saxena and Mr. Nischal was the only person with detailed information on this subject, refused to be interviewed even after several attempts were made to contact her for this research. Moreover, from the interviews with 21 women in the slums, it is profoundly clear that not even one of them

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5 http://www.ruidp.gov.in/capp/capp.htm
have heard of any such program being conducted by the government in their area and all denied having met any government officers/representatives. The realities on the ground for the community involvement efforts by the government are clearly far from the claims and the situation is hardly better in terms of infrastructure development, mainly pertaining to sewer connections and water supply.

Contrary to the government’s claim, responses from the slum residents suggest that the sewer lines have been laid only on the outer limits of the slums while in the inner, more densely populated pockets of the slum, and even in the outer areas, many people have not started using the sewer connection because of the high cost of constructing a toilet in the house. This creates excessive difficulty for the women in the slums who have to walk to the nearby forest or ravines for this purpose. Rekha, from Manoharpura slum says, “There was no sewer line laid, so the women had to go to the forest nearby, where they were subject to teasing and verbal and physical molestation by other men.”

The hardship of women does not end with this problem. The water supply in both the slums is still extremely poor, with many households not able to afford a connection to a state provided water supply. During a discussion with the women in Baiji Ki Kothi, Jhalana Doongri revealed that there is no water supply for more than an hour each day and the pressure is so low that people living on the second floor of a building cannot get any water. Women have to go to other people’s houses or fetch water from some common taps in the slum. The residents are angry but are still not asking for much from the authorities, which is revealed in the conversation with Lakshmi from the same slum, “Water supply is only for one hour in a day. If supply is increased to an hour and a half it will be a great help.” The situation is no better in Manoharpura, where on one of my visits to the slum in the evening, just before sunset, I witnessed a huddle of young
girls not more than six or seven years of age, and many women with earthen pots, plastic
buckets, and plastic cans that once stored paint and oil being used as buckets for fetching water.
For a long time it was only those young, bare-footed women (until one man came on a scooter)
collecting water from an open water tank which, according to one resident Anju, “is infected by
bird droppings and lizards.”

These accounts reveal the false claims of RUIDP, not only regarding the CAPP, but also about
the “hardware” activities of infrastructure development. A 2007 report by Asian Development
Bank confirms the failure of the CAPP: “Under RUIDP, the community action participation
program (CAPP), which was to promote community awareness and the involvement of local
communities in the project, did not start when the project was first implemented. Therefore, the
communities did not participate in the planning, and felt excluded from the project benefits”

When asked about the reasons for the late initiation of CAPP, Hemant Nischal responded that the
government officers considered the IIRM officers to be their subordinates and maintained
hierarchical control, which lead to operational delays. In addition, there was far too much work
assigned to just one NGO. IIRM’s task was supposed to involve just designing the strategies for
CAPP, but they were pushed to be the implementers of the program also. The government’s
financing policy was extremely poor with respect to local NGOs, so no NGO other than IIRM
participated in the program.
Secondly, he said that CAPP was just a “symbolic thing” because it was a requirement set by the ADB. Thirdly, the approval for all activities of RUIDP, including CAPP activities had to come from the Superintendent Engineer In-charge, for whom community awareness activities are clearly beyond the scope of expertise, which eventually led to erroneous decisions. There are, however, NGOs working in the slums using financial support from local and international donor agencies.

**The Non – Governmental Organizations**

The two slums had initiatives of women’s empowerment led by two different NGOs that had starkly different approaches. HPPI provided training to the women in tailoring so that they could use the skill for income generation, and formed SHGs to help women with savings. These efforts did help the women to an extent but failed to make them independent. The CFAR, by contrast,
made women aware of their rights and helped them in dealing with core issues like domestic violence and alcoholism, and helped improve their ability to make demands to the government authorities for improved sanitation. The women who have been involved in the efforts of CFAR are more community oriented and willing to work toward improving their neighborhood, whereas this sense of community is completely missing in Jhalana Doongri where HPPI has been working.

**Humana People to People India (HPPI)**

The first organization I will discuss here is Humana People to People India (HPPI), an international NGO working in the slums of Jhalana Doongri, with a focus on creating women’s self-help groups (SHGs). These efforts included helping women in opening bank accounts and training the women in tailoring skills so that they can start their own business from home. The training is provided free of cost and the centers were opened in the slums, so that the women did not have to spend time and money on travelling.

Upon interviewing the women who participated in the training, I found that although the skills they gained helped them in reducing their expenditure on buying readymade clothes for themselves and their children, it was not a significant source of new income. Geeta, who took the tailoring classes in 2007, says, “*If I could only make Rs.100 (around US $2)*\(^6\) *per day, at least we will fill our stomachs.*” Many of the women hoped that another similar program would be conducted by some other agency so that they could learn new skills. Some of the women claim they did not learn as much as they expected during the three month program. Another point worth noting is that many women in the same locality learned the same skills and this led to the

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\(^6\) The exchange rate for Indian Rupee to U.S. Dollar used in this paper is Rs. 46.34 to US$ 1 and is based on the exchange rate provided by the Reserve Bank of India website as of 2/1/2010 [http://www.rbi.org.in/home.aspx](http://www.rbi.org.in/home.aspx)
decrease in demand for their services. Now many women want to learn a different skill or at least learn more advanced tailoring skills. Sunita, the social worker from HPPI agrees that her efforts of training the women did not entirely pay off. She says, “I am a little disappointed that the women, after learning tailoring did not get the opportunity to move to a higher level or to get a contract with some company. I do not have any contacts (with potential employers) with which I could help them in this matter.”

Sunita also introduced me to a few women from an SGH that she started in the slum, which is mostly made up of women who learned tailoring from her. When I then asked Sunita about the possibility of the SHGs getting a contract with an export company that could pay them on piece-work basis, her response was, “The export companies demand a security amount ranging from Rs. 25000-35,000 (approx. US$540 – US$755) which the poor women’s groups cannot provide and the NGO does not provide that kind of support either. The State Bank also is not ready to provide that kind of loan amount to the SHG because they have not seen the group’s work and is not sure about their level of experience. Moreover, in the industrial area, a woman first has to offer her body and then her money, that is when she gets any work”.

Despite all the horrific problems, the women in this SHG had a very different outlook towards work compared to all the other women I had interviewed in both slums. The women belonged to the “Rajput” caste, which falls in the category of upper caste in the hierarchy of castes among Hindus in India. Their views on the subject of women’s work, education, and empowerment highlight the significant need for a caste-sensitive approach to planning for women’s empowerment in India. The women had their faces hidden behind a veil and only a half were confident enough to have a conversation. Of six, only three really spoke up (the others just said “yes” and “no” for a few questions addressed to the group in general.) The women face strict
social restrictions, which limits their chances of getting education and any chance of interaction outside the home and with immediate next-door neighbors. Due to these restrictions, these women are unable to directly contact any private firms for orders of tailoring, necessitating intermediaries. Although sanitation is a big inconvenience, these women are reluctant to bring it up to any government officials or appeal for improvement in their condition as a group because they lack self-confidence because of their rural background and a language barrier. The women speak “Marwari” a regional dialect, and are not confident about talking to officers who speak Hindi. They feel that approaching a factory owner for any income generation opportunity means giving up their dignity and honor, and some voiced fears that the men might sexually abuse them. The women want someone to represent them. Moreover, while all the other women said that they had complete support from their husbands in their endeavors to earn a living, the Rajput women said that their husbands would not be supportive of the idea of them going outside their neighborhood for work.

The analysis of the efforts of HPPI and its impact on the women reveals that despite the noble intentions of Sunita, the women are still dependent on her for finance and contracts with the export companies. Sunita on the other hand, feels that she is trying her best, but due to the lack of funding for her work she cannot do anything more for the SHGs and the other women who she trained. Therefore, the broader goal of empowerment and economic independence of the women has not been realized.

Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR)

CFAR is a non-profit organization that has its operations in Manoharpura slum and several other slums in the city as well. Manju Soni, a social worker with the NGO explains that in CFAR,
emphasis is laid on informing and connecting the slum women to the government schemes. The state and central government have announced several schemes to benefit women but the women are not aware of them, so CFAR provides them the direction and support. CFAR organized the women in a group called “Jagruti Mahila Manch” (A Platform for Women’s Awareness), which has grown from three to 95 active members.

Upon interviewing the women from Jagruti Mahila Manch (JMM), I could easily notice the difference in the level of confidence of these women compared to that of the women in Jhalana Doongri. Kamla, a daily wage construction laborer, on being asked about what changes she feels after being a part of JMM says, “Earlier when someone came and talked to us (NGO/Government officers), we would be afraid because we wouldn’t understand what they were talking about. Now the women here are much more aware. Earlier we used to believe just anyone. Now we do thorough background check and then take any action. Now everyone respects us, we are not scared of anyone.” Almost all the women I interviewed in that group are currently engaged in some kind of income generating activity and have borrowed micro-credit from one or more private micro-finance institutions (MFI). Oddly, most of the women are illiterate, but they display more confidence in expressing their views compared to the literate women of Jhalana Doongri. As mentioned earlier, CFAR’s strategy is to make women more aware about the schemes of government and how to handle the bureaucratic procedures on their own. Suman, who is perhaps the only literate woman in the group, was most active with the group in its early stages and worked as an employee for JMM and was paid by CFAR. She describes the impact of JMM on the lives of the women in the slum: “Now we know the right procedure to follow to make our voices heard. Earlier we assumed that we just need to pay some

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7 Translation by the author, not by the organization.
Rs.100-50 to the local politician and he will do everything. Now we know how to write applications and which office it should be sent to.” The women of JMM are actively involved in efforts of slum improvement at a small but significant scale. Sanitation in the slum is still a major problem and JMM made a collective effort to improve the conditions on their own. Suman explains, “... I went and fought for the cause and met the Collector. He then agreed to send the mobile toilet van here. The van stayed here for a month, but later some people from the slum raised some objection which is why it had to be sent back.”

Ms. Soni and Hemlata Pareekh (another worker for CFAR), gave several examples of the success of women in dealing with the cases of domestic violence and helping their husbands and other women’s husbands recover from alcoholism. They also mentioned the ongoing efforts by the group’s women for maintaining cleanliness where a vacant piece of land on a cross section in the slum had become a dumping ground for garbage. The group collected money and got it cleaned and paved. Now the group constantly monitors the site so that no one throws any garbage there. If someone does, the women get together, pick up the garbage, and take it back to that person’s house. They have also started charging a penalty for non-compliance.

CFAR has been able to inculcate a sense of community among the women in Manoharpura, which has helped them in breaking out of their inhibitions and encouraged them to think not just about the well being of their own family but also about their neighborhood. The women still, however, face many challenges, especially from the local police. Reshma, who is actively involved in bringing MFIs to the slum, talks about her concerns: “All the women who have taken the micro-credit have been wrongly blamed to be indulging in some “wrong” activities. People

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8 A Collector or District Collector is an administrative officer appointed by the Central Government of India whose duty is to ensure smooth governance in a district. A district may have several villages and a few towns/cities in its jurisdiction.
are making their lives difficult.” She also mentioned several incidents of being harassed by the policemen who allegedly enter her house without a warrant at late hours in the night, and try to disrupt the women’s meetings on the other occasions. But she stills feels confident in dealing with these issues and plans to learn how to read and write so she can take strong action against the oppression.

CFAR has further plans of teaching women in making simple handicrafts and then selling those in the market so that the women can earn a living without having to deal with intermediaries. In addition, Ms. Manju mentions that the organization has a good rapport with the government officers and they often ask for the organization’s help, which provides an added advantage to the members of JMM since they get to work with the government and not against them or in isolation.

THE LESSONS OF THE JAIPUR EXPERIENCES

Based on this study it can be said that the three major reasons for the limited success of the CAPP component of RUIDP are: (1) the disinterest of the authorities towards community participation initiatives, (2) the official hierarchy that puts the NGOs as subordinates to the government officers and, (3) the indifference towards women’s needs and their participation in planning. On the basis of the analysis I have the following suggestions and recommendations for the government:

Recommendations for the government

The government officers should be made aware about the significance of community involvement prior to the inception of any development project, so that they do not perceive it as a requirement from the donor agency that merely needs to be fulfilled on paper.
• NGOs should not be placed below the government departments in the organizational hierarchy, so that their suggestions are taken more seriously and they have decision-making power in their area of expertise.

• The government should provide better financial incentive and a better working atmosphere for the NGOs in order to achieve greater participation from them and have a better outreach at the grass-root level. There is no way the government officers can achieve such outreach on their own.

• Community awareness activities should begin before any kind of building and construction work.

• Since women are the ones most affected by the lack of infrastructure and poor living conditions, they should be targeted in the need assessment surveys to begin with and should be consulted before making plans and policies for the slums.

• Instead of hiring new NGOs, the authorities should try to get participation from those that have been working in the slums for some time and have better rapport with the people.

**Recommendations for the NGOs**

The analysis shows that women in slums have the potential for bringing significant change in their community if they are provided the right guidance and support from the NGOs. However, the NGOs must aim at making women independent; if the women depend on the NGO for help with every small issue even after the NGOs’ projects are over it means no real progress has been made. Based on these observations, I present the following recommendations for the NGOs:

• India has great cultural diversity, which was clear in the case of the remarkable difference in views and attitudes between the upper caste and lower caste women in the Jhalana
Doongri slum. The NGOs cannot have a successful strategy unless these differences are acknowledged.

- The empowerment strategies should not only focus on getting financial help to the women but also towards making them more aware and confident so that they can look for opportunities on their own and make decisions without anyone’s help.
- Having many, small isolated SHGs cannot foster a sense of community among the women; larger groups tend to create a greater sense of confidence among the women.
- Significant benefits to the slums will not come unless the NGOs try to work with the government and find a way around the bureaucratic system. As a result of the way CFAR uses government schemes for the benefit of the women in Manoharpura, they have not only been able to help the women, but have also gained appreciation from the authorities, which makes the execution of their plans more smooth and easy.
- The projects should be long-term since it might take several months or even a few years for the NGO workers to gain the confidence of the slum women. Furthermore, frequent changes in staff may also hurt the relationship between the slum dwellers and the NGO.

CONCLUSION

Women have great communication networks within their neighborhoods and have the ability to influence each other’s minds. If the government and the NGO are able to get support from even a handful of women, the numbers will multiply as other women see the benefits of organizing and community development. A man is less likely to be impacted by the unavailability of adequate sanitation facilities than a woman, so keeping the outreach limited to men or having less participation from women will neither help in the assessment of the real needs of the slum, nor will the community take any interest in working towards
achieving these goals. The gender perspective in planning is extremely significant especially in Third World countries where there is vast gender disparity. However, the contrast between the results of women’s empowerment efforts by HPPI and CFAR suggest that a real and permanent change can occur only when the women become independent of their supporting NGOs. The slums of Jaipur have substantial illiterate female populations and are faced with numerous social constraints and a subordinate status compared to the males. The society’s attitude towards women, their education and literacy, and the amount of freedom and mobility enjoyed by women in Southern India is much better compared to the North Indian states (Boserup, 1970). However, the NGOs continue to apply the same models of microfinance and other strategies in Rajasthan that may be successful in Southern India but will not be so in North Indian states. Nevertheless, if any plan is made without gender consideration, it translates into a complete exclusion of women from the plan. Slums are not a problem; they are a solution to the housing problem. All they need is a little change, and the catalysts for that change are women.

Works Cited


