



## **CBOs and Social Change: An Analysis of the Role and Impact of CBOs in slums**

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*Abstract: Efforts aimed at urban poverty reduction and service delivery improvement depend critically on slum dwellers' collective agency. This study investigates the role and impact of the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in the slums of East Delhi. In the development of slums, the role of CBOs are often overlooked and undermined due to their informal social identity, flexibility in operations. These CBOs are key agents in social change but often they are considered to be non productive and often questioned for accountability. Through case study approach, the study made strong efforts to highlight and discuss the role and impact of CBOs. This study was carried out in four slum areas in east Delhi has made an attempt to explain various roles and impact of these CBOs in improvising slum community. The study critically examines various roles of CBOs and factors enabling them to perform. The study finds that collective action taken by CBOs significantly helped slum residents to improve government provided facilities and accessing various entitlements. The CBOs displayed their abilities in solving community problems, both short term and long term. There is a close relation between CBOs performance and social development. Thus, the study argues that these CBOs are very essential in local development and are indispensable elements in bringing social change in the slums.*

**Keywords:** CBOs, Slum, Community, Social Change, Rights

### **1 Introduction**

The urban population of the world is increasing hugely. The estimates are that more than 60% of the increase in the world's urban population over the next three decades will be in Asia, mostly in China and India. It seems that one billion people or one third of the world's population is estimated to be living in slums (Ooi & Phua, p.2). Due to increased poverty as a result of urbanization the people are migrating from rural areas to urban areas in search of livelihood opportunities. Adding to a long history of community participation approaches, there is now a growing incidence of so-called 'partnerships' between the government and CBOs. In growing patterns of engaging CBOs as a means of social change, it is matter of fact that CBOs are real vehicles for social change (Wit & Berner (2009), p. 1). In the context of slums there is a strong interrelationship between CBOs and social change. It is imperative to understand the implications of CBOs and social change as empowerment means inclusiveness and equity at large.



## Conceptual Framework

**1.1 Community Based Organization** Efforts aimed at urban poverty reduction and service delivery improvement depend critically on slum dwellers' collective agency. There is long history of collective action for social development thus community engagement is required for social change. The Community Based Organizations are affinity group or issue based informal cum formal community group operating within slum community .Some observers like Pratten define CBO in a broader term as “mediators between the state and society, and between development agencies and the household” (Pratten 1997:139-140). While the definition of CBOs remains a difficult question to answer in full consensus, in this paper CBOs are conceptualized as “voluntary organizations that serves specific population in a narrow geographical area. In a nut shell, we adopt Wondwosen’s definition with little modification who defines CBOs as “membership organizations made up of groups of individuals who have joined together to further their own interests and/or the interests of others” (Wondwosen 2009:83).CBOs have a important role to play in promoting local development and in improving the living conditions of the people in slum.

### 1.2 Social Change

‘Social Change ’is action to change the social structure to promote social welfare. Often this means creating new, alternative. Change is realism. Every community experiences changes in different domains from time to time. However, all types of changes are not covered by the term of social change which has a definite meaning. Social change refers to change in social structure. Therefore change in per capita income, if not accompanied by changes in social relationships, is not a part of social change.

### 1.3 Slums

Slums form an integral part of the phenomena called urbanization Slums have been defined as mainly those residential areas where dwellings are in any respect unfit for human habitation by reasons of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements and designs of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation, light, sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors which are detrimental to safety, health and morals.( Source -Census of India 2011,Section 3- slum areas improvement and clearance act 1956)

## 2 Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate the role of the Community Based Organization in (CBOs) in social change in the slums. The specific research questions are:

1. What are the specific roles of (CBOs) in slum upgrading and social change?
2. What are impacts of CBOs in slums as the result of CBOs intervention?
3. What are the critical factors in role of CBOs in bringing social change in slums ?



### 3 Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature. The area for this study are four slums where informal & formal CBOs are operating with population of apprx.35000. There were total nine case studies selected out of four slum areas where these CBOs were proactively engaged. The researcher having long standing involvement with the community have observed and interacted with the residents, attended community meetings of CBOs. A good rapport was developed before collecting case studies and an informed consent was also taken from the CBOs. The analysis of role and impact of CBOs and social change is summarized in matrix. ". The following steps were applied;

1. Determining and refining the research question –

- a). What are the role of CBOs in slums intervention?
- b). How CBOs are engaged in bringing social change?
- c). What are the impact of CBOs in bringing social change?

2. Select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques.

### 4. Discussions and findings

The main focus of the case studies is identifying the key role of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in bringing social change within the community. These nine (09) CBOs are particularly selected on the judgment of researcher utilizing Criteria - as CBOs members are residents of the community and operating within the community. These case studies collected are both from authorized and unauthorized colonies and are both from formal and informal CBO groups. The CBO group members both from formal and informal group have advocate motivate, facilitate and initiated in solving the various problems prevailing in the community. The profile of the CBOs in slums are given below:



**Table -1 Profile of CBOs working in slum areas of study**

CBOs No. & Name	Location	Year of formation		Total no.	Criteria for	Type (Formal or Informal)	Objective	Key Challenge			Key Strength			Major problem
		M	F					Financial	Documentation	Lobbying	Joint action	Leadership	Group unity	
CBO - 1 Asha ki Kiran (PWD-People with Disability group)	Ambedkar camp	2014			Family member of PWD	Informal	To empower PWDs	high	medium	medium	low	medium	medium	Pension, assistive devices, certificates(PWD)
CBO - 2 Sonia Vikas Samiti	Sonia Camp	2014			Belonging to the same community	Informal	To resolve community problem.	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	low	Water, Road, street light,
CBO - 3 Nav Jagriti vikas Slahakaar Samiti	Shri Ram colony , C & D block,	2008	15		Belonging to the same community	Formal	To advocate for citizen right.	low	low	low	high	high	medium	Education, Transportation, School building,
CBO - 4 Shri Ram Colony Vikas Samiti	Khajuri Basti, B block,	2010			People belonging to same faith	Formal	To facilitate community development.	medium	low	low	low	medium	low	Land status, Road, Water,
CBO - 5 Shaktiman	NSAC (C & D block)	2014	15		Belonging to the same community	Informal	To work together for community problems	medium	medium	low	medium	medium	medium	Ration, closure of Illegal wine shop, Access to health service
CBO - 6 Tulsi	Harijan Basti (D block)	2005		13	Membership limited to female	Formal	To initiate community development.	low	medium	medium	medium	medium	low	Electricity, Garbage disposal, mobile clinic,
CBO - 7 Jagriti	Ambedkar camp	2014		12	Membership limited to female	Informal	To utilize govt. services.	medium	medium	medium	medium	medium	low	Community centre, Street light, Access to health service
CBO - 8 Ehele Noorani Welfare Assosiation	Mulla colony	2005	12		Belonging to the same community	Formal	To work together for community problems	low	low	low	medium	medium	medium	Road & drainage, street light, basic entitlement,



CBO - 9	N	201	1	Member	Infor	To	me	medi	me	med	h	high	Public toilet,
Udaan	SAC- B & D block)	4	3	ship limited to female	mal	improve sanitation facilities.	diu m	um	diu m	ium	igh		sanitation(garba ge), water

(Source –Field work 2016)

Majority of these CBOs are issue based group and are engaged in solving short term and long term problems. Table-1 signifies the major issues undertaken by CBOs . some of the issues of the Community which CBOs were involved to solved. In Khajuri Basti through CBO intervention asBus stand was constructed thus slum resident were able access public transportation facilities additionally CBOs were vey proactive in utilizing Right to Information act (RTI 2005 and under RTI act they were able to demand for information on land status and brought government development in the community in Shriram colony. Similarly the CBOs of Harijan Basti advocated for the electricity, paved road and drainage in Harijan Basti,.

CBOs in Dilshad garden slums-(Sonia Camp) brought water pipeline in three clusters (Rajeev camp, Ambedkar Camp, and Sonia Camp), solved ration problem by vigorously using the mechanism of RTI (Right to Information Act 2005) & public toilet built in New Sanjay Amar Colony, PWD entitlements and community centre built in Ambedkar camp .“ In the process of CBOs functioning they face the challenge of diversity as the members are all migrants from different states or places. Limited resources like no permanent place of meeting and lack of finance, the members also gets limited time to engage themselves in community work, limited information on various govt. services and group functioning are the challenges.. Majority of the CBO members being illiterate have low self-esteem which also hinders them to work effectively. As the slum has diverse range of issues thus the problem solving process adopted by CBOs is varies from one CBO to other.

The table -2 signifies variety of roles in which CBOs were engaged to resolve issues. The various roles identified are classified as -facilitator, community mobilizes, problem solver and supporter under which they performed and completed specific intervention.



Some of the major problems identified in this slum community are the status of land (regularization of the colony), domestic violence, infrastructure and minor problems like entitlements, basic amenities etc. As the most major problem required greater commitment and lobbying with other actors such as government and non government service provider thus these CBOs continued their struggle in solving the major problems but are were able to solve the minor problems at large pertaining to basic amenities. The CBOs though being

(Source –Field work 2016)

faced with various challenges being informal in there operation and always have issue of recognition despite they strive to catalyst social change in the society at various types, levels and forms.

CBOs No. & Name	Mobilize		Problem Solver			Facilitator			Advocator				Supporter		
	Infrastructure e devlp.	Community issues	Education	Electricity	Water & sanitation	Entitlements	Assistance from Govt.	Services from NGOs	Reduce bribery	Basic entitlements	Govt.	Families/com munity	Lobby	Poor /vulnerable	Emergency/c asualties
CBO - 1 Asha ki Kiran (PWD-People with Disability group)		√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
CBO - 2 Sonia Vikas Samiti	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	
CBO - 3 Nav Jagriti vikas Slahakaar Samiti	√	√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
CBO - 4 Shri Ram Colony Vikas Samiti	√	√			√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	
CBO - 5 Shaktiman	√	√		√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	
CBO - 6 Tulsi	√	√		√		√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√
CBO - 7 Jagriti	√	√				√	√	√		√	√		√	√	√
CBO - 8 Ehele Noorani Welfare Assosiation	√	√		√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	
CBO - 9 Udaan	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√



CBOs No. & Name	Improve quality of life						Community engagement		
	Access to infor matio n	Improved facilities (Road, Toilet, street lights etc.)	Slum upgradin g	acces s to basic amenitie s	Increa sed utilizatio n of govt. services	Access to safe drinking water & public toilet	Coll ective action	Red uction in bribery	main streamin g of PWDs
CBO - 1 Asha ki Kiran (PWD- People with Disability group)	√	√		√	√		√	√	√
CBO - 2 Sonia Vikas Samiti	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		
CBO - 3 Nav Jagriti vikas Slahakaar Samiti	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
CBO - 4 Shri Ram Colony Vikas Samiti	√		√	√	√		√		
CBO - 5 Shaktiman	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√
CBO - 6 Tulsi	√	√	√	√	√		√		
CBO - 7 Jagriti	√	√	√	√	√		√		
CBO - 8 Ehele Noorani Welfare Assosiation	√	√	√	√	√		√		
CBO - 9 Udaan	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

(Source –Field work 2016 )

## 5. Conclusion



The exponential growth of slums is not accidental as today more people are living in urban areas than rural areas and city populations are growing day by day. The rapidity and enormous volume of this rural-to-urban migration intensifies slum formation. City planning and management systems are unable to adequately cope with the massive population influx. NGOs depend on CBOs in bridging the gaps. The CBOs have increasingly important roles in urban slums. The analyzing case studies and source review was a profound inquiry into arenas of CBO interventions in the slums and I obtained an overview of factors which contribute to and challenge the function of CBOs in slums. The CBOs role in the slum could be summarized as:

- Being based in the community the CBOs are indispensable actors as they are at the forefront in their community and are best positioned to engage with any interventions related to slum upgrading. In the development approach, NGOs required CBOs to bridge the gap of inequities which means provision of basic amenities and exercising fundamental rights. There is a need of rights-based approach is that development organizations should work in ways which strengthen accountability of governments to people living in poverty, particularly ensuring that citizens can hold governments to account in regard to human rights obligations.
- The role CBOs can play includes advocacy for the issue pertaining to their communities. Legislation, policies and society will contribute to an environment in which excluded people have more control over their rights and that the rights of poor people are not sacrificed for aggregate gain.
- CBOs also have a critical role in accessing services and resources as the poor people's concerns need to be linked with service providers. Poor people's perspectives will be linked with the national and international policy process only if they are networked.
- CBOs are crucial for information sharing, partnership, and facilitation in community mobilizing and organizing together with NGOs. With a lack of information, slum dwellers are deprived from their rights. In India it is a common saying that "An informed citizen is an empowered citizen". This is only feasible if CBOs are empowered to inform slum dwellers and aware them about their rights. As the slum communities are heterogeneous in nature, CBOs have a vital role in mobilizing and organizing the slum communities to engage in decision-making processes which affect their lives.

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