

URBAN POVERTY AND LIVELIHOODS

About 28 percent of the one billion people in India live in urban areas, this proportion is expected to rise to 42 percent and the absolute number of the population in urban areas is expected to rise to about 650 million by 2050. This urbanization is lop-sided: cities and towns in 'boom states' in the North, West and South are growing very rapidly while small towns in most parts of the country and cities in the East are decaying. Urban and rural poverty are connected, given the stagnation in the rural economy, seasonal and permanent migration to urban areas is inevitable and the influx of migrants compounds the problem of crowding as well as living and working conditions in urban areas. There is large-scale migration from rural areas to the boom towns as agriculture stagnates and rural people search for better livelihoods, and this trend will continue and we need to recognize it not as a problem but as a possible area of work for a better economy and society.

The pattern of unplanned urbanization has thrown up three major issues. The first deals with harmonious city development in a manner that looks after the interests of all the city dwellers. The second deals with the creation of infrastructure needed for the smooth running of the cities. The third deals with ensuring good governance in these cities.

It is evident that even the Government has begun to give attention to the urban sector through the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal



Girl child on BT cotton seed farm where the unionized efforts of DRMU through Prayas, Rajasthan are being actioned



Working at the SEWA Centre, New Delhi

Mission (JNNURM) and has begun to look at urban health as an important factor to be addressed through the introduction of the National Urban Health Mission.

Within this context, the Trusts evolved a draft Strategy Paper on Urban Poverty and Livelihoods to which the Trustees gave a clearance during their meeting in September 2007 to evolve this portfolio in a phased manner over two to three years.

The major thrust areas of the portfolio are:

- Basic Services — health, education, water and sanitation, housing, etc
- Livelihoods for the Urban Poor
- Urban Governance

The approach of the Trusts in the last year has been exploratory in nature, specifically focusing on work in three cities — Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi — and the states of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh (MP). All efforts were directed towards looking for good examples of work in



Market at Mansi Complex Satellite, Ahmedabad, where vendors are organized and facilitated by Mahila Sewa Trust

these locations in the identified thrust areas and the possibility of supporting them. In 2007-2008, the Trusts have disbursed Rs 39.74 million through 26 projects.

Under the thematic area of Livelihoods for the Urban Poor, what is emerging through interactions with groups working in the urban sector is to reduce the vulnerability of the informal sector groups such as rag pickers, conservancy workers, home-based workers, vendors, domestic workers, construction workers and sex workers by organizing them so that they are able to better negotiate with the Government. Towards this effort, the Trusts have considered small grants and also institutional grants to organizations like Mahila Sewa Trust, Ahmedabad, Mahila Shram Sewa Nyas, Madhya Pradesh, Sewa Bharat, New Delhi.

The Trusts have initiated discussions with groups specifically working with conservancy workers; and this would be one of the focus groups for interventions in the coming year.

Most of these groups belonging to the informal sector are migrants and to maintain the income level, the population engages in one or more of the informal sector activities. The Trusts have been supporting Aajeevika Bureau and Prayas, both in Rajasthan to set up their regional resource centre and labour exchanges for rural migrants. To scale up this experience in other locations, an attempt has been made to fund studies/research to organizations like the Institute of Social

Studies Trust (ISST), New Delhi, Jeevika Livelihood Support Organisation, Jabalpur and Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad.

Under the urban governance theme, the Trusts have supported efforts of organizations such as the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), Mumbai to participate in the socio-economic survey of Dharavi as part of the Dharavi Redevelopment Plan formulated by the Government of Maharashtra; and Shelter Associates, Pune for the relocation of communities in Sangli along with the Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad Municipal Corporation. Besides that, the Trusts have also supported efforts of Samarthan in Madhya Pradesh covering two urban locations in Sehore and Bhopal. This intervention will be an innovative civil society initiative to empower the citizens to contribute meaningfully in improving the quality of urban governance.

The challenge for the Trusts has been to identify organizations working on the urban governance issue as part of the urban planning processes in large cities and even small towns.

There is certain skepticism on the degree to which Municipalities can be influenced to approach urban planning in a professional and participatory way. This stems from the fact that many of the Municipalities are known to be both corrupt as well as politicized. Therefore all efforts made to produce a cadre of professionals to address urban issues would not bear fruit



Socio-economic survey being conducted in Sangli, Maharashtra by Shelter Associates

unless the system is geared to give these professionals the space and autonomy to function adequately.

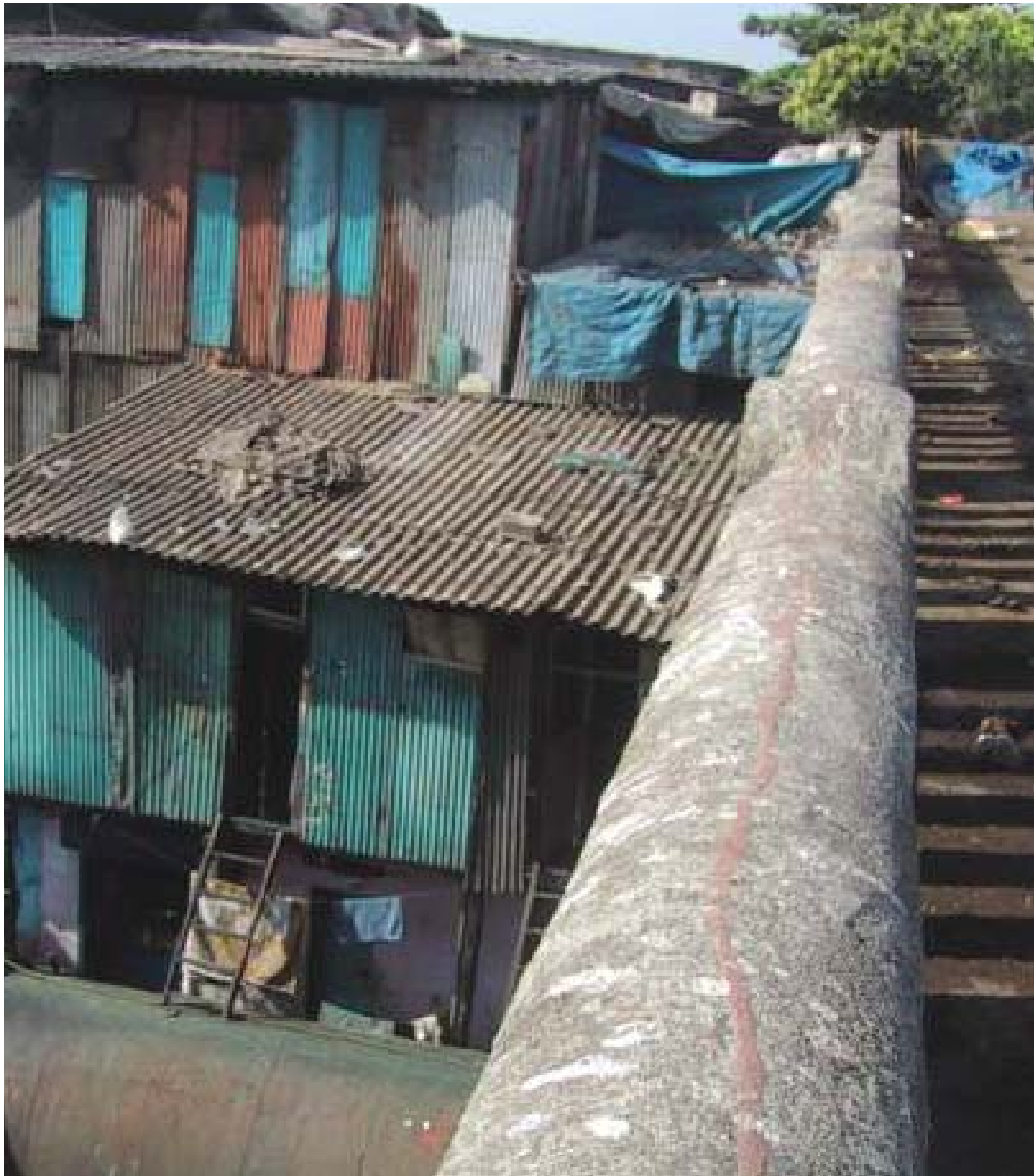
Apart from the problem with the Municipalities, which also would apply to State Government bodies, there is a powerful builders' lobby that has a strong vested interest in resisting change.

In addition, slum communities themselves are

not homogenous entities and many urban NGOs are divided on their approach and priorities.

In the following year, the effort of the Trusts would be to evolve the thematic area of 'Migration' and work with the informal sector groups; additionally efforts will also be made to evolve a better understanding of work on urban governance issues.

Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) alongwith MASHAL is working on the socio-economic survey in Dharavi, Mumbai



MIGRATION

For the past one year the Trusts have been collating information on the experiences of groups working on migration issues. There is sufficient data available to prove that the village economy is impacted by livelihoods through natural resources, non-farm/non-forest related activities or through seasonal, circular or permanent migration (rural to rural/rural-urban). Studies also reveal that it is extremely important to recognize that migration is an inevitable phenomenon and that it will continue.

Several studies have expressed doubts about the common assumption that the poorest are the ones who migrate. The landless labourers with fewer employment contacts than workers of other castes face greater problems finding a job. Village studies from India conducted in the last five years show a marked increase in temporary migration. On the other hand about 28 percent of the over one billion people of India live in urban areas. The urbanization being lop-sided throws up major challenges to accommodate the migrant population with the right kind of infrastructure for the smooth running of cities.

While official statistics provide us with a broad assessment of migration trends, smaller, more in-depth studies show that circular and seasonal migration is the most important form of labour mobility for the poor especially in drought-prone and forested areas. Rural-rural migration continues to be important but rural-urban migration appears to be growing at a faster rate.

However, hardly any systematic effort is being made to address this reality and to plan for it properly. Migration continues to be highly expensive and risky for the poor because the overall policy and institutional system is not travelling migrant-friendly — thus travelling, finding accommodation, negotiating work and pay rates, accessing government services (health, education and subsidized food) and remitting money home are all problematic for poor migrant workers.

With this background, the Trusts are making an attempt to understand the situation and evolve

interventions to address the emerging challenges. In the process, the Trusts have supported the following organizations/studies:

Aajeevika Bureau, Rajasthan (both at the source and destination end)

Aajeevika Bureau is a unique initiative in Udaipur that straddles the entire migration chain from the ‘source’ i.e. the village/s in Southern Rajasthan to the urban ‘destinations’ within the state or outside the state. It provides livelihood enhancement services and support to rural migrant workers who drift away every year from their villages to find employment in cities, farms and factories of Gujarat, Maharashtra and beyond.

Migration-based work and earnings are the major source of survival for the communities of this poverty-stricken and low-endowment region. Though migration is an irreversible reality for the majority of those who depend on it, and indeed for many it is the single major exit from rural poverty, it is an act fraught with immense hardship and insecurity. There are several reasons for this — skill levels are low, connections and networks are scarce, services are absent and above all, labour and remuneration practices in industries and markets that employ seasonal migrants tend to be harsh and exploitative. Legal protection for this category of workers is often missing.

One of the strategies used by Aajeevika Bureau is to operate both at the source level (six blocks in southern Rajasthan) and major destinations of migrant workers (viz. in two cities of Gujarat). At both ends, it provides a range of livelihood services such as registration, photo identity cards, training, job placement, legal aid, financial services and counselling to migrant workers.

Prayas, Rajasthan (both at the source and destination end)

The Dakshini Rajasthan Majdoor Union (DRMU), anchored by Prayas, is working on an alternative model of unionization (the grant

has been listed under Natural Resource Management and Rural Livelihoods due to its cross-cutting nature). This model seeks to organize seasonal migrants in the source areas. It identifies existing migration streams and undertakes extensive mobilization work in source areas. The idea is to organize wage workers at the source to force employers to the negotiating table. It departs from traditional union activity that is carried out at the work place.

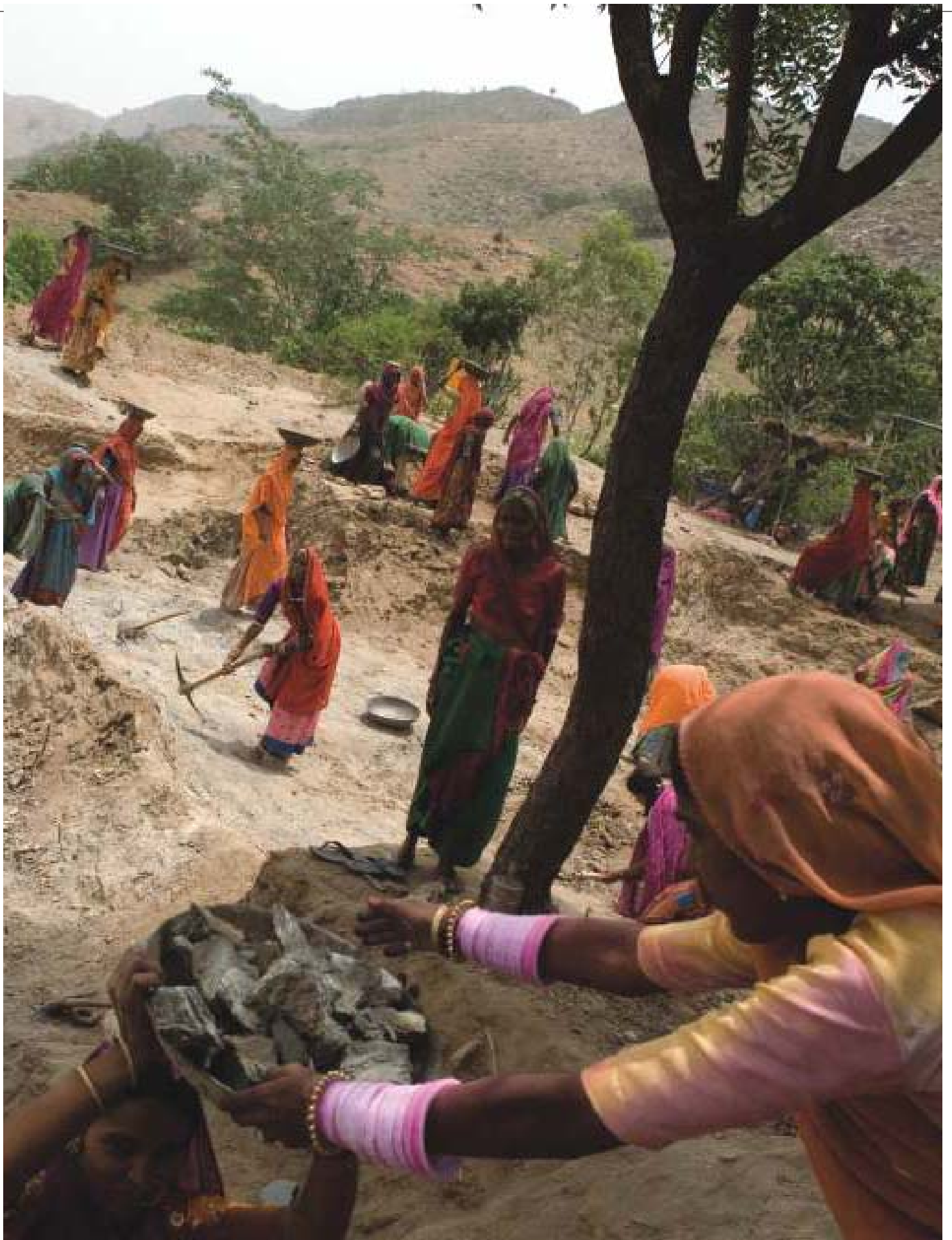
The Union has used the vast network of labour workers to organize labour supply. The initiative achieved dramatic success in the migration stream of BT cotton seed farms where it was possible to increase wages by 40-50 percent over a period of two years for a workforce of around two hundred thousand workers. Efforts are on to replicate this success in other migration streams. Ultimately the model seeks to develop a wage labour exchange that would mediate between demand and supply.

Labourers awaiting work at a 'naka' in Ahmedabad



Studies on Migration have been Commissioned:

- through the Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST) to analyse current and expected trajectories of urban poor livelihoods in the National Capital Region (NCR), and to identify interventions that would enhance the security and well being of this group, with special attention on women in the informal sector — specifically with domestic workers and workers in the ICT sector.
- through Jeevika Livelihood Support Organisation, Jabalpur to study in detail the status of labour in the district of Jabalpur, to carry out institutional mapping of all the institutions related to labour, to initiate an initial set of activities both at the source end and at the destination end, before arriving at rather detailed interventions.
- through the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) partnering with Overseas Development Institute, Hyderabad to study the pattern of migration from the rural parts of Maharashtra into towns and cities like Mumbai, Kolhapur, Nasik, Nagpur, Sangli and Satara.



Women construction workers at a rural site outside of Udaipur



Identity card provided by Aajeevika Bureau



Trained by Aajeevika Bureau, a plumber at work in Udaipur



Confident rural youth now working in an Udaipur hotel, placed by Aajeevika Bureau

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Name of Grantee	Sanction Amount	Disbursed 2007-08
	Rupees in Million	
Sir Dorabji Tata Trust		
1 Aajeevika Bureau, Rajasthan - Towards setting up of a regional resource centre and labour exchange for rural migrants/labourers of South Rajasthan.	9.70	3.40
2 Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi - Towards conducting two studies on (i) domestic workers and (ii) workers in the ICT sector in the National Capital Region.	2.70	1.90
3 Jai Jui Vichar Manch, Maharashtra - Towards providing social security through SHG-based livelihoods in Patri village of Solapur district.	1.30	0.50
4 Kislay, New Delhi - Towards developing leadership with the urban work and to facilitate informed participation in urban governance, especially in procuring urban basic services.	5.00	1.83
5 National Foundation for India, New Delhi - Towards the Delwara small-town development program.	13.50	7.40
6 Nidan, Bihar - Towards working on the livelihood rights of the people in the informal sector by organizing advocacy for changing the environment of workers and social protection.	5.60	2.90
7 Saathi, Maharashtra - Towards implementing the street youth project which entails support to the vocational training day centre, running costs, group home expenses and networking and core organizational expenses.	3.20	0.55
8 Samarthan - Centre for Development Support, Madhya Pradesh - Towards strengthening urban local governance in Madhya Pradesh for the project titled, Citizen Monitoring of the Health, Education and Municipal Services, especially focusing on Sehore and Bhopal.	6.60	2.20
Small Grants		
1 Disha Foundation, Maharashtra - Towards a four-day program on capacity building of NGOs working on seasonal migrants and urban poverty issues in Maharashtra.	0.08	0.08
2 Disha Foundation, Maharashtra - Towards a workshop on Participatory Video (Documentary) Film Making in two parts - Part I.	0.10	0.10
3 Disha Foundation, Maharashtra - Towards a workshop on Participatory Video (Documentary) Film Making - Part II.	0.10	0.10
4 Disha Foundation, Maharashtra - Towards a workshop on skill building for teachers of Integrated Child Development Scheme, Nasik.	0.08	0.08
5 Jeevika Livelihood Support Organisation, Madhya Pradesh - Towards conducting a labour and migration survey in Jabalpur.	0.45	0.45
6 Kamadar Swasthya Suraksha Mandal, Gujarat - Towards supporting their sewage workers' program in Ahmedabad.	0.30	0.30
7 Labour Education and Research Network, Maharashtra - Towards their work focusing on domestic workers and home-based workers in Mumbai (Dharavi), Nasik and Solapur.	0.49	0.49
8 Lokvikas Sama jik Sanstha, Maharashtra - Towards a four-day workshop on professional training to SHG women to develop a source of income generation through the training of goat-farming.	0.08	0.08
9 Lokvikas Sama jik Sanstha, Maharashtra - Towards a four-day program entitled - Workshop on Personality Development of the Urban Poor Youth.	0.08	0.08
10 Nirmana, New Delhi - Towards supporting their activities with domestic workers in East Delhi and the social security bill.	0.49	0.49
11 Pratham Mumbai Education Initiative, Maharashtra - Towards a training program for the staff members of Pratham Council for Vulnerable Children regarding laws concerning child labour, recent developments and to facilitate experience sharing among the members.	0.10	0.10

Name of Grantee	Sanction Amount	Disbursed 2007-08
	Rupees in Million	
12 Society for Citizens Vigilance Initiative, Maharashtra - Towards broad basing citizen's vigilance activities in Delhi and Mumbai.	0.49	0.49
13 Yuva Mitra, Maharashtra - Towards developing leadership with the urban work and to facilitate informed participation in urban governance, especially in procuring urban basic services.	0.08	0.08
	50.52	23.60
Jamsetji Tata Trust		
1 Mahila Sewa Trust, Gujarat - Towards their program working with street vendors in Ahmedabad.	10.79	3.46
2 Mahila Shram Sewa Nyas, Madhya Pradesh - Towards their program working with construction workers in six districts of Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal, Sagar, Ujjain, Khandwa, Dewas and Damoh).	7.10	2.20
3 Sewa Bharat, New Delhi - Towards a program working with street vendors, construction workers and home-based workers in New Delhi.	7.06	2.08
	24.95	7.74
RD Tata Trust		
1 Shelter Associates, Maharashtra - Towards supporting the relocation of 757 families in the Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad Municipal Corporation and undertaking a poverty mapping exercise in Solapur.	8.65	3.70
	8.65	3.70
Tata Education Trust		
1 Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), Maharashtra - Towards the socio-economic survey commissioned by the Government of Maharashtra along with MASHAL, an NGO based in Pune.	7.50	4.70
	7.50	4.70
Grand Total	91.62	39.74