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Dr. Colin McFarlane

Department of Geography

Durham University

Science Laboratories

South Road

Durham

DH1 3LE

Tel: 0191-334-1959

Fax: 0191-334-1801

Email: colin.mcfarlane@durham.ac.uk

Abstract

This paper examines an ongoing intervention in sanitation in informal settlements in Mumbai, India. The Slum Sanitation Programme (SSP) is premised upon 'partnership', 'participation' and 'cost-recovery' in the delivery of large toilet blocks as a practical solution to the stark lack and inadequacy of sanitation, and offers an opportunity to interrogate a growing consensus on sanitation provision among mainstream development agencies. The paper argues for a more flexible approach to policy infrastructure, technical infrastructure, and cost recovery in urban sanitation interventions. The paper also considers whether the SSP, as the largest city project of its nature in Indian history, marks a shift in the relationship between the state and the 'slum' in Mumbai. It suggests that despite constituting a change from *ad hoc* sanitation provision to a more sustained and universal policy, informal settlements in the SSP remain populations outside the sphere of citizenship and notions of the clean, ordered modern city.

Introduction

This paper examines an ongoing intervention in sanitation in informal settlements in Mumbai, India. The Slum Sanitation Programme (SSP) – the most ambitious urban sanitation intervention in Indian history – is premised upon 'partnership', 'participation' and 'cost-recovery' in the delivery of large toilet blocks as a practical solution to the stark lack and inadequacy of sanitation in Mumbai's informal settlements. The SSP marks a significant change in the provision of sanitation

infrastructure in the city. The paper reflects on the progress of the SSP by considering three key features of the programme: first, its policy infrastructure; second, its technical infrastructure, and third, its use of user charges as a basis for 'cost-recovery'. The SSP provides an opportunity to explore a growing consensus on sanitation provision among mainstream development agencies to focus on partnership, participation and cost-recovery.

The paper argues for a more flexible approach to policy infrastructure, technical infrastructure, and cost recovery in sanitation interventions in informal settlements. In these three areas, the paper does not seek to settle a set of issues, but to contribute to debate around the SSP. In addition, the paper seeks to contribute to more general debates both on urban sanitation in informal settlements and on urban development. Much has been made of the notions of partnership and participation by mainstream development institutions in recent years. They are buzzwords in the planning and implementation of interventions globally, associated with what can be described as a 'post-Washington consensus' or a 'revised neoliberal position' (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). This position reflects a cautious approach to the earlier view that the market could deliver development, and emphasises the role of an efficient and transparent state as a facilitator of development, with civil society as an implementer (Pieterse, 2001; Jenkins, 2002; UN Habitat, 2003: 224-264).

Notwithstanding the relative neglect of sanitation by mainstream development agencies and governments over the years, recent years have witnessed a shift in the nature of formal efforts to provide sanitation to informal settlements, with a growing emphasis by development agencies on 'community-driven' sanitation initiatives (UN

Habitat, 2003). International development agencies increasingly argue that effective sanitation provision in informal settlements in low and middle-income countries must centre on "community mobilization" and seek to "create support and ownership" within settlements (UN Millennium Project, 2005: 1-2). Similarly, the 2003 World Development Report argues that 'community participation' is a prerequisite for success (World Bank, 2003). The World Bank has made this logic a prerequisite of funding for the SSP. In addition, as is increasingly the case in urban sanitation interventions (Davis, 2006), the SSP charges people for use in order to reduce subsidies and help engender what various agents on the programme view as a 'sense of community ownership'. In terms of technical infrastructure, the paper will reflect on the difficulties with the toilet blocks in the SSP, and in terms of user charges the paper will suggest that a more informed and cautious approach may be necessary. As with the case of policy infrastructure, the paper will argue that a more flexible approach based on the diverse social geographies of informal settlements could be fruitful.

Despite a large literature on urban sanitation in India (for instance, Bapat and Agarwal, 2003; Chaplin, 1999; Davis, 2004; Hobson, 2000; Kundu, 1993; Patel, forthcoming) and more generally (for instance, Melosi, 2000; Pellow, 2002), there has been little investigation of sanitation in Mumbai. Launched in 1997, the SSP is a 'demand-driven' programme that aims to treat slum dwellers "as initiators, collaborators and resources to build on" (BMC, no date: 9). The programme has the long-term aim of ensuring adequate sanitation is provided to all people living in informal settlements before 1995 by 2025. It aims to provide one toilet seat for every 50 people, and generally takes the form of large toilet blocks. The SSP is often portrayed as a shift from a model of state provision of sanitation in Mumbai to a model that is

"participatory and demand-driven in nature" (World Bank, 1995: 123; Sanyal and Mukhija, 2001). The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), using World Bank credit and matching funds from the state (Maharashtra) government, pays for water, sewer and electricity connections, and provides land. Contractors – nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and engineering firms – are responsible for building the blocks. After construction, the contractor maintains the block for one year on behalf of the 'community', and then local Community Based Organisations (CBOs) manage the blocks through a corpus fund that local people donate to, generally, on a monthly basis. Maintenance generally takes the form of a paid local caretaker, who often lives on the second floor of the block with his family and who is usually from a deprived caste (Black and Talbot, 2005; Pathak, 1991).

The paper will proceed by locating the SSP in the broader relationship between the state and 'slum' in Mumbai. It will then discuss the nature of sanitation in Mumbai's informal settlements, before considering the SSP's policy infrastructure, technical infrastructure and principle of cost recovery. In conclusion, it will consider the role of the SSP in the state-'slum' relation. The paper is based on fieldwork conducted in Mumbai between November 2005 and April 2006 comparing, among other things, sanitation conditions in different informal settlements, and is part of an ongoing research programme that explores the relationship between the everyday use of infrastructure in informal settlements and the state. In addition to fieldwork, the tentative reflections on sanitation and the SSP programme presented in the paper draw on the work of researchers based at Mumbai's Tata Institute for Social Sciences (Tata, 1998; Sharma and Bhide, 2005), as well as on joint research by a Mumbai NGO – Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) - and consultancy Montgomery

Watson (MW-YUVA, 2000; 2001).

The state and informal settlements in Mumbai

The World Bank recently flew in a group of experts to solve Bombay's sanitation crisis…The bank's solution was to propose building 100,000 public toilets. It was an absurd idea. I have seen public latrines in the slums. None of them work. People defecate all around the toilets, because the pits have been clogged for months or years. To build 100,000 public toilets is to multiply this problem a hundredfold. Indians do not have the same civic sense as, say, Scandinavians.

Suketu Mehta (2004: 118).

Mumbai, formerly Bombay[1], is an island city located on India's west coast connected to the mainland through a series of bridges. With a population of 16 million people, it is the largest city in India and one of the largest in the world (Swaminathan, 2003: 81). The city's economy, particularly the southwest area of Nariman Point, has increasingly globalised since the economic liberalisation reforms in 1985 and 1991. The city is responsible for over half of India's foreign trade (Wagh, 2004: 41), has become a centre for India's global dealings in financial and producer services (Grant and Nijman, 2004: 331), and constitutes 40% of the country's annual direct central revenue (Rajeev, 2005: 27). It is the capital of the state of Maharashtra, the state with the highest-ranking per capita income in India (Kamdar, 2005: 28), and constitutes 20% of the state's GDP (Bombay First, 2003: 12).

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[1] Bombay was renamed Mumbai in 1995 by the state government controlled by the Hindu fundamentalist party Shiv Sena, which currently controls the municipal corporation. This renaming has been part of a volatile debate around the identity of the city, nationalism and ethnicity (Appadurai 2000; Hansen 2001).

If Mumbai is often spoken and written of as India's 'most modern city' (Rao, 2006), this discourse has taken a new turn with the emergence of a new managerial and technical elite associated with the growth of global financial services in particular parts of the city (Grant and Nijman, 2002). The geographies of these groups are increasingly segregated and exclusive, reflecting new spaces of global connection and local disconnection, and are often associated with particular images of what the modern Indian city should look like. There has been an important role in this regard for the "intensified circulation of images of global cities through cinema, television, and the internet", and through the increasing tendency of the elite and middle classes to travel globally (Chatterjee, 2004: 143). The state is increasingly seeking to attract investment and to develop infrastructure that will facilitate new globalising service and financial industries. Recent years have witnessed intense debates around the transformation of public space, provoked particularly by an increasing corpratisation of space that has followed India's economic liberalisation reforms. For example, a recent controversial ruling by the Supreme Court will see two-thirds of the vacant 'mill lands' in the centre of the city transformed not into social housing as many had hoped but into shopping malls and corporate entertainment (for a review of the decline of the mills, see D'Monte, 2002).

Despite the city's impressive economic statistics, one influential report argues that Mumbai is in "reverse gear" in terms of economic growth and quality of life, noting a drop of 7% to 2.4% in the city's GDP per annum between 1994 and 2002, and highlighting the increasing number of people living in informal settlements, alongside growing anxieties over congestion and pollution (Bombay First, 2003: 12). Others

have pointed out that the city's economic growth has been highly uneven, restricted to wealthy groups and areas of the city.

Over half of the city's population lives in informal settlements of varying infrastructure, income, economy, ethnicity and religion, squeezed into whatever space can be found from bridges and railways to pavements and shantytowns. The growth in informal settlements reflects both the spectacular rise in real estate prices during the 1990s driven by the city's economic growth (Appadurai, 2000), and the inadequacy of the state's social housing commitment (Verma, 2002). Most people in informal settlements lack security of tenure, live in poor quality housing vulnerable to monsoon rains, suffer from frequent bouts of state or private demolition, lack access to sufficient and clean water and sanitation facilities, and live in highly polluted environments vulnerable to illness and disease. As the informal population continues to grow (Swaminathan, 2003), the task of providing adequate infrastructure becomes more challenging. Given that there is often a weak relationship between income and access to basic services and infrastructures in Mumbai's informal settlements (Swaminathan, 2003), it is unlikely that economic growth itself could be a solution to these issues (Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2004).

In the quote that opens this section, Mehta, author of the popular *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found*, echoes comments made by Indian colonialists and nationalists alike in suggesting that there is something intrinsic to Indian culture that precludes the growth of civic consciousness (Chakrabarty, 2002). Mehta's denouncement of the SSP, particularly remarkable considering that the scheme is concerned with basic social welfare, is not just an expression of pointlessness, but a

complaint that the scheme will actually make sanitation conditions in the city *worse*. In this comment – and there have been many like it in the past – 'slum' is positioned as hopeless urban melancholia (Hansen, 2006). Moreover, in debates around public space in urban India, in which 'slum' inhabits a contentious space, people living in informal settlements are often depicted as 'problem' rather than 'citizen'.

Chatterjee (2004) has argued, amongst others (e.g. Verma, 2002), that people living in informal settlements are not treated on a par with 'proper citizens'. In part, there are legal reasons for this. A full recognition of legitimacy by the state to informal settlements in their illegal occupation of land would threaten the structure of legally held property. However, for urban authorities there are important social, economic and political reasons for extending services to the poor, ranging from ethnic ties and the availability of low-cost labour to the readiness of, in Mumbai's case, the city's largest voting population to support particular political candidates. As a result, a range of services and facilities are "extended on a case-to-case, *ad hoc*, or exceptional basis, without jeopardizing the overall structure of legality and property" (Chatterjee, 2004: 137).

These services are focussed on populations rather than citizens, in the terrain of what Chatterjee calls the 'heterogeneous social' rather than the homogeneous social of citizenship. The 'slum' emerges as a demographic targeted for welfare, set apart from the homogeneous space of citizenship where rights may be expected, and provided to on a haphazard and piecemeal fashion. In contrast to the domain of citizenship, populations do not bear any inherent moral claim on the state. The policies and interventions that take place in this context, in what Chatterjee refers to as political

society, should be understood as "an attempt to calibrate rewards and costs, incentives and punishments, in order to produce the desired outcomes. Thus, slums may be provided with sanitation in the exception that slum-dwellers would not dirty in the streets or parks" (Chatterjee, 2004: 137-8).

Prior to the SSP, toilet blocks were provided on an *ad hoc* basis through city MP, MLA (Members of the Legislative Assembly, Maharashtra state), or city corporator funds, often reflecting voting patterns or ethnic and religious ties. The SSP is an attempt to alter the agents and practices of sanitation delivery, constituting a change in the relationship between state and 'slum', and is in part a reaction to a sense that the *ad hoc* model is failing to reach large numbers. It is also driven by a sense that communities would be more effective in toilet block maintenance than the state because through participation in the SSP they would have a stake in the blocks.

The municipal corporation's budget for sanitation has grown exponentially in recent years, driven by state and donor concerns around public health within settlements. Public health concerns emerge more from the state and civil society campaigners than from middle class fears of disease and illness. Despite sporadic concerns in different parts of the city, the middle classes, as in many Indian cities, are generally able to insulate themselves from infection (Chaplin 1999). On the contrary, many middle-class neighbourhood organisations in Mumbai, such as many of the increasingly popular Advanced Locality Management groups, interpret the sanitising of urban space through a logic of demolition rather than one of improvement of informal settlements. They often campaign to "rid the city of encroachers and polluters and, as it were, to give the city back to its proper citizens" (Chatterjee, 2004: 140).

While the SSP is a regulatory intervention, it is important to note that because the 'slum' inhabits a grey area between legality and illegality, and because of its contentious focus in debates about public space, state (and private) interventions are often just as likely to take the form of violence. If Mumbai is often described as 'India's most modern city', it is also often simultaneously described as a city at the limit, a maximum city (Mehta, 2004). The 'slum' haunts both these depictions. It is in part because of this relationship that we see both welfare-oriented interventions such as the SSP on the one hand, and violent acts of state demolition on the other. These strategies overlap; it is not uncommon for settlements to be part of, for instance, the SSP, and also be subject to demolition. These disparate strategies, of course, have different logics, histories and often involve different agents, but together they constitute the changing and often unpredictable field of relations between state and informal settlement.

In Mumbai, the demolition of informal settlements became increasingly coded by a politics of ethnicity during the 1990s, reflected in the rise of the Shiv Sena (Shivaji's Army), the regionalist Hindu fundamentalist ruling party in the BMC who took the state and city in the 1995 elections (Hansen, 2001; Punwani, 2003). The Shiv Sena has long argued that immigrants in informal settlements are the main reason for Maharashtrians being unemployed, and has consistently invoked the figure of the migrant and the Muslim as a source of crime and social disorder. In recent years, however, the mass programme of demolition of post-2000 informal settlements has been coded less by ethnicity than politico-corporate Mumbai's self-declared trajectory to become the 'next Shanghai' by 2013 (Bombay First, 2003).

An estimated 90,000 huts were torn down during the winter of 2004-2005, leaving some 350,000 people homeless and without alternative accommodation. The January 1st 2000 cut-off was set by the state-run Slum Rehabilitation Authority, and is an arbitrary date (recently moved following protests from 1995, which remains the cut-off for eligibility in the SSP) that allows the state government and municipal corporation to ignore or remove more recent settlements. It is in the cut-off date that we see formal acknowledgement by the state of its approach to 'slums' as simultaneously violent and regulatory, sovereign and disciplinary. Indeed, the cut-off date can be interpreted as an attempt to resolve this contradiction. Although outwith the scope of this paper, understanding the operation of violence is critical to understanding the changing nature of governance, rights and citizenship in contemporary Mumbai (Rao, 2006). Before going on to reflect on the SSP based on recent fieldwork and literature, I will give a brief overview of sanitation conditions in the city's informal settlements.

Sanitation in Mumbai's informal settlements

In Bhabrekar Nagar, in the northwest suburb of Malad, three small toilet blocks of 10 seats each provide for 4000 people. They were constructed before the SSP using the welfare fund of a local MP who contributed a sum of Rs. 1 lakh (£1,180)[2] for the three blocks. Now, local people are frustrated at the lack of maintenance. The toilets are not connected to the sewer, and the aqua-privy system blocks regularly. There is no

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[2] At the time of writing, £1 was equivalent to Rs. 84, while $1 was equivalent to Rs. 46. Rs. 1 lakh is equivalent to Rs. 100,000, and Rs. 1 crore is equivalent to Rs. 10 million.

water connection (water is collected from a bore well) or electricity connection, so the blocks are not used at night. The poor condition of the blocks, combined with frequently long queues, means that half the people in the area routinely use the nearby *jangal* (uncultivated land), among fields and trees. Many of the woman said that they preferred to be in an open space than to use an unclean toilet, even though this makes them more vulnerable to harassment. The toilets are maintained at Rs 10 per month per household, which funds one caretaker.

The blocks are a source of tension with an adjacent informal settlement that has appeared in the last few years. The settlement – Ambuj Dadi – is using the blocks, leading to increased waiting time and uncleanliness. The local committee that maintains the blocks tried putting locks on the doors, but they were broken. Figure 1 shows the toilet block on the dividing line between Bhabrekar Nagar and Ambuj Dadi. Ambuj Dadi is striking in its contrast to Bhabrekar Nagar. There are no toilets, no water supply, no garbage collection, no electricity, and less space. Housing is sackcloth. The area around Bhabrekar Nagar reveals the extent of variation in living conditions in Mumbai. In the space of one kilometer, housing and infrastructure vary from sackcloth, to tin, to brick, to multi-story apartments. People are located next to infrastructures that they cannot use, and the use of these infrastructures (especially toilets and water) has become a contentious issue. Informal settlements can be intensely territorial, divided along lines of ethnicity, religion, economic functioning and time of and place of migration (Benjamin, 2004; Verma, 2002). This can lead to a competition for resources that politicians often exploit for electoral gain.

Figure 1: Bhabrekar Nagar and Ambuj Dadi

These contrasting spaces at Malad point to both the inequalities in sanitation across Mumbai and its inadequacy in informal settlements. Globally, less than one-third of the population in most urban centres in Africa, Asia and Latin America are provided by what the UN has referred to as 'good quality sanitation', and as many as 100 million urban dwellers world-wide are forced to defecate in the open or into waste paper or plastic bags because public toilets are not available, too distant or too expensive (UN Habitat, 2003: xvii). In Mumbai, the pressures of sanitation are most starkly posed for the six million people living in informal settlements, constituting 54% of the population and crammed into 1959 slum settlements occupying 8% of the land (MW-YUVA, 2001). Most of these settlements lack systems for disposal of excreta, sewage, sullage (water from washing and bathing) and solid wastes, constituting significant health and environmental dangers. Specifically, the disposal of human waste is major problem (Swaminathan, 2003: 94). A 2001 survey of all 24 wards in the city provided a picture of sanitation in Mumbai's informal settlements that was to form a basis of the SSP.

The survey found that 63% of the city's informal population - 3.92 million people - was dependent exclusively on public toilets for their sanitation needs (MW-YUVA, 2001: 17). While the average ratio of persons per toilet seat in informal settlements was 81:1, the variation went from 273:1 in A ward to 56:1 in F/S and S wards, often resulting in queues lasting two hours or more (MW-YUVA, 2001: 4). It found that men often get preference in use of blocks in the morning; women are often forced to wait until late morning when they are finished household work. A disproportionate share of the labour and the burden of ill health related to sanitation inadequacies fall

on women (Bapat and Agarwal, 2003: 71). Not only is there the humiliation of going

to the toilet in full public view (which often results in women waiting until cover of

darkness, and even to eat and drink less to reduce the chances of going during the

day), there is also the threat from water-borne diseases, and the ecology of odours and

channels "where cooking water, washing water, and shit-bearing water are not

carefully segregated" (Appadurai, 2002: 39).

While the informal settlements on BMC owned land (just under half the informal

population) were the most provided for, most existing toilet blocks were found to be

largely lacking in facilities essential for their proper functioning. Running water,

electricity and wastebins, squatting pans for children, urinals and bathrooms, were

often either missing or in poor condition. One estimate has since suggested that one in

every three toilet blocks provided through city MP, MLA, or city corporator funds are

dysfunctional within six months due to overuse and inadequate water supply (Lewis,

2004). According to the 2001 survey, only 39% of the blocks had electricity, in most

cases provided at the initiative of local people, where the households using the toilet

block have illegally extended the electricity supply from a house and agree to share the

monthly bill (MW-YUVA, 2001: 35). Just 14% of the blocks had a water supply of

any kind – legal of illegal – due to the costs involved (*ibid*). An estimated 31% were

connected to the sewer system, with the rest operating through septic tanks or aqua-

privy systems that frequently block due to high pressures (*ibid*). This compares with a

figure of 45% for major cities in Asia more generally (UN Habitat, 2003: 9).

The cleaning of blocks by BMC conservancy staff was found to be sporadic, and there

were many cases where staff had to be bribed to do the work. A common alternative

is often in the form of a 'sweeper' who is privately appointed by local people for cleaning the toilets. The majority of people in informal settlements pay for their toilets. The range of payment varied from Rs. 5 per month to Rs. 100 per month, with the majority (91%) of households making a payment of less than Rs. 15 per month (MW-YUVA, 2001: 20). The total slum population forced to defecate in the open was estimated at 1.78 million (28%) (MW-YUVA, 2001: 18).

With the data from the survey, settlements were to be prioritised according to need in the SSP. However, while progress sped-up, and some settlements were privileged due to need, the 'demand-driven' nature of the programme has meant that settlements that have approached the BMC have been privileged. Inevitably, areas with very active CBOs are in a better position to approach the Mumbai Sewage Disposal Programme (MSDP) - the BMC department that runs the SSP - than areas without. For example, an informal settlement at Cheeta Camp in northeast Mumbai was prioritised because of an active CBO, even though the number and condition of available toilets was better than in other nearby areas (Tata, 1998). Areas that don't approach the MSDP simply don't get any provision through the scheme. In the next three sections I will reflect on three of the most important features of the scheme: first, the policy infrastructure; second, the technical infrastructure; and third, the principle of paying for use.

Partnership, participation and toilet blocks

The BMC, and the large NGO involved in the programme – the Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) - often describe the SSP as an example of

community empowerment and revival. BMC officials speak of a "sense of ownership" and "belonging – that toilet belongs to me". One BMC report claims that there is a "high level of satisfaction among the users" and that there is a "sense of community ownership among user community groups" (BMC, no date: 23). To be sure, many people talk with pride about a well-run toilet block, and involvement with the SSP can be a spur for other public health activities. There are cases where toilet blocks have become community centres, where upstairs meeting areas or caretakers rooms have become spaces to teach children who work as child labourers and don't attend school, to hold nursery schools or computer classes, or to have CBO meetings. However, it appears that in practice very few people within settlements are involved in design and maintenance. In this section, I will provisionally consider how discourses of partnership and participation operate in practice in the SSP by drawing on recent literature. This discussion will not be a review of the performance of CBO maintenance; this is a subject of future research. Given that most of the SSP blocks have been open for just one to three years, it is too early to say with certainty whether maintenance is more effective than with blocks in the past, and initial research has indicated mixed results.

The participatory approach in the SSP was a pre-condition of World Bank funding. As Sharma and Bhide (2005: 1785), who have conducted interview-based research on all of the agencies involved in the project, have written: "The inherent assumption here has been that the NGOs and CBOs to be involved in the SSP were accountable, non-corrupt and pro-people". The implementation of the SSP was phased out in four stages: publicity and selection of communities; demand assessment and preparation of plans for operation and maintenance; design and construction; and operation and

maintenance by the beneficiaries through CBOs. The first phase (publicity) involved four NGOs and revealed a lack of enthusiasm for the scheme: "Out of the 141 targeted communities, 105 (75 per cent) were not willing to join the SSP at all. Only nine communities reported 76 per cent of their members willing to join the SSP[3]. In all, 19 communities applied for the programme. Among these, only nine communities paid the upfront contribution" (Sharma and Bhide, 2005: 1785). Much of the reason for a lack of enthusiasm was due to the costs involved (the issue of costs will be explored later in the paper). In addition, many communities were enrolled in early negotiations around the controversial state Slum Rehabilitation Authority Scheme for housing relocation, which meant they would have little to gain from the intervention (see Mukhija, 2003). People were also reluctant to move from their homes in order to make way for a toilet block, stalling the identification of appropriate sites within settlements.

Despite delays, by December 2004 total contracts worth Rs 64 crore (£7.5 million) had been awarded for construction of 8,000 toilet seats in 400 toilet blocks spread over the 24 wards of Mumbai, an average of 20 seats per block (Sharma and Bihde, 2005: 1787). On average, that amounts to just under a substantial £940 per seat, although one BMC official claimed the figure was closer to £825 per seat. Although there were originally plans for several contractors, there are now just three contractors involved. Two of these are engineering firms - Babul Uttamchand (BU), and B. Narayan and Associates (BNA), who by October 2004 had been allocated 18% and 13% of the work orders issued by the BMC for toilet blocks. The remaining 69% of the work

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[3] Initially, the World Bank condition was that 75% of a community be in favour of the block – the Bank later reduced this to 50% following a lack of support.

orders were issued to the only NGO on the programme, SPARC, awarded both because SPARC's bid was the lowest and because of the high profile of the NGO in the city and among international donors. SPARC works as part of a tripartite partnership with two CBOs - the *National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF)*, and *Mahila Milan (MM, 'Women Together')* (Patel, 2001; Patel and Mitlin, 2001). SPARC's work explores new forms of governance so that, one, the poor can forge their own initiatives and, two, the state can be held accountable to the poor (Patel and Mitlin, 2001: 5). The NGO has developed a strong presence in urban politics in Mumbai and has expanded nationally and internationally. As Appadurai (2002: 25) has written: "Of the six or seven non-state organizations working directly with the urban poor in Mumbai, the Alliance [of SPARC, NSDF, and MM] has by far the largest constituency, the highest visibility in the eyes of the state and the most extensive networks in India and elsewhere in the world".

SSP funds are allocated through the BMC on a block by block basis. SPARC received a record 278 work orders covering 20 wards. This constitutes the largest allocation of developmental work by the state to an NGO in India. BU received work orders for three wards and BNA for one ward. Why was an NGO given such a significant role? Part of the answer is SPARC's international reputation. The SPARC leadership has contacts and approval at the World Bank and the BMC. Moreover, SPARC's bids were almost Rs. 10 million less than any other group's tender (Patel and Mitlin, 2004: 225); another popular but smaller NGO in the city, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), as well as the large NGO, Sulabh International, had their bids rejected because SPARC's was far lower. In addition, few other NGOs could claim the popular grassroots support that SPARC has in the city, and the SSP was to be

rooted in people's participation. There was an assumption made by the Bank and BMC that SPARC would be able to speed-up the programme and ensure a greater involvement of local people because it was an NGO known for community-based work. For these reasons, not only did SPARC become the only NGO on the project, it took on by far the largest share of the work.

However, Sharma and Bihde (2005: 1788) have written, "SPARC faced the uphill task of motivating such a large number of households, and also maintaining the target of completing the construction work within [the] next six months or so". Indeed, in order to reach beyond its base and speed up an increasingly delayed programme, SPARC sought the assistance of its political contacts. For example, it contacted Pratishtan, an NGO "patronised by a member of Parliament" and invited Antyoday Parishad, "another NGO with political patronage – to reach out to the people" (*ibid*). Rather than using its base to deliver a community-led planned and implemented sanitation initiative, the claim made by Sharma and Bihde is that SPARC have effectively deployed their political contacts in order to progress work, sometimes to the marginalisation of many people within the settlement:

As expected, it would not be easy to vacate people from a few houses, if the space occupied by them was required for locating the sanitation blocks. In such situations, the only way out has been to take local political groups into confidence first rather than waiting for the consent of the affected people, and relocate them elsewhere. If the formed CBOs coincide with the existing political groups/associations, the results are easily forthcoming. In fact, as understood from some officials of BMC, in several cases, people came to know about construction of toilets in their areas through political groups or formed CBOs. For them, SPARC is more engaged in 'fire fighting' than a community based approach to the SSP. In some cases, steps are being followed in forming a CBO, collecting upfront contribution and registering the CBOs. In other cases, if this is not materialising, the decisions are being taken to go

ahead with the selection of sites and construction of toilets, of course, with the consent of local politicians (Sharma and Bhide, 2005: 1788).

Through the course of the SSP, partnership among plural organisations has been translated into, in effect, one NGO, while participation has been translated into well-connected individuals or groups. In place of local involvement, plans move along quickly often without consultation of local people. Sharma and Bhide (2005) rightly argue that no single NGO has the capacity to take on the level of work that SPARC took on. There has been insufficient emphasis in the SSP on working with communities at the grassroots, rather than just local leaders. In addition, participation in CBO's is often low, and activities are often run through a small CBO that is not representative of the community and that may make important decisions without consulting others in the local area.

Some CBOs are religiously oriented, with perhaps only 40% of the community supporting them, and the processes of deciding who is to be included, commenting on design, collecting money, and maintaining the block, can be fraught with conflict (MG-YUVA, 2001: 11). Working with local or political leaders has the effect of marginalising those whom they do not represent, particularly given that informal settlements are often deeply divided around ethnic, religious, class and economic lines. Attention to the power relations within communities, and a more detailed understanding people's sanitation needs and desires, is important if sanitation delivery is to be participatory in practice. In some settlements, a politics of space effectively restricts access for particular ethnic groups or recent migrants. While SPARC are under considerable pressures to mobilise CBO's and begin construction quickly, Sharma and Bhide's (2005) research indicates a need for the project to be more

attentive to the social geographies of informal settlements if marginalised groups are to become involved.

The SSP raises a question about the dominance of large NGOs in urban development. SPARC is a highly connected NGO with excellence in communicating its work. However, such a significant presence on the political map of the city leaves little space for smaller organisations who may have demonstrated capacities for specific aspects of development, from publicity to construction to working with communities. On SPARC, Sharma and Bhide (2005: 1789) go further: "Moreover, there is no criticality of reflection in their own style of work. They determine the boundaries and the agendas of the discourse". SPARC's liberal entrepreneurial politics, which is more likely to accommodate the agendas of realpolitik than to contest them with radical politics, reduces the space for civil society groups to influence the direction of policy and public debate (McFarlane, 2004). Smaller NGOs in the city spoke in interviews about the difficulties of becoming involved in housing or infrastructure projects when SPARC are involved. SPARC have increasingly come to stand for 'civil society' in formal development projects, and the level of influence that they have should act as a caution to the role of 'super NGOs' in other development contexts. As Sharma and Bhide (2005: 1789) conclude: "In this context, when participation takes on a consumerist orientation while its other dimensions, e.g., education, empowerment get sidelined, change is translated into single-point agendas. Rather than becoming representatives of popular views and opinions, NGOs too seem to be co-opted by the system. There is a need therefore, to review the terms of the discourse and move towards plurality".

The SSP could usefully allow space for smaller, more specialised organisations – that are not simply divisively associated with particular ethnic, religious or political groups in the settlement - to use their expertise in particular settlements in order to broaden the level and nature of participation. This may lead to a longer process, but one that draws more fully on the views of people throughout settlements in the design and construction of sanitation. In the next section, I suggest that this plurality must be extended not just to the policy infrastructure in the SSP, but also to the technical infrastructure. In the final section, I explore the "consumerist orientation" of the SSP in more detail by considering the focus on user charges, and in doing so I reiterate the potential need for a more flexible, plural structure.

Technical infrastructure: design and construction

One BMC official on the SSP programme lamented the slow progress of the SSP: "[For eight years we have been] struggling to implement the slum sanitation programme. And how much have we done? Very insignificant – only 328 blocks". Initially, the first phase of the SSP – 325 blocks - was to be completed by 2000, but delays pushed this back into December 2005. By October 2004, according to BMC figures, 318 work orders had been given, 274 of which were complete (or 86%). The results have indicated marked improvements in sanitation provision, but beyond the delays there are significant technical shortcomings. 70 (25%) of the new blocks lacked a water connection and 81 (30%) lacked an electricity connection. This is surprising given that it is typically easier to obtain electricity connections than water connections due to its widespread domestic availability. While one of the strengths of the SSP has been its prioritising of water connections, 25% remain unconnected due to

the costs involved. SPARC has not performed as effectively as the two engineering firms have, while BU emerges as the strongest performer. As the previous section suggested, SPARC may have been over-stretched by taking on such a large tender. Several BMC officials complained that delays and construction difficulties were more common with SPARC-built blocks than others, and the stronger performance of the other contractors reflects their greater experience in construction and monitoring sub-contractors. In rare cases, SPARC-built blocks have not even been opened due to unsound construction. 91% of those blocks lacking a water connection were SPARC-built while 93% of those lacking an electricity connection were SPARC-built. Table 1, taken from unpublished BMC data, compares the performance of the three agents up to October 2004, and compares the figures for water and electricity connection with the situation in 2001[4].

Table 1: SSP progress until October 2004

	Work orders complete (%)	Water connection at site of completed w.o. (%)	Electricity connection at site of completed w.o. (%)
BU	96	95	96
BNA	92	89	89
SPARC	82	65	59
TOTAL	**86**	**75**	**70**
2001 Total	**--**	**14**	**39**

Clearly, there is a significant improvement on the rate of blocks with water and electricity connections (now more than two-thirds). The completed blocks serve almost 300,000 people. One BMC official argued that the blocks are being widely used, but that use depends on three technical features: first, water for flushing, second, electricity, and, third, effective maintenance. He said: "I would not conclude 100%

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[4] The 2001 figures are from the MW-YUVA (2001: 35) report.

success, but improved [in comparison to blocks in the past]". However, these figures should be treated with some caution. The figures say nothing of whether water or electricity connections are working in practice, which, due to an inability or reluctance to pay bills, they often are not. In addition, the relationship between water supply and the geography of informal settlements effects who benefits from toilet blocks. For example, one difficulty lies in providing water uniformly throughout informal settlements – often the geography of water reflects the clustering of economic activities, which also often reflects ethnic territories in the settlement. For instance, in Shivaji Nagar, in Govandi in the northeast of the city, the water supply is sufficient in the peripheral areas but not in the middle plots of the settlement. This means that while blocks have been built on the relatively more prosperous periphery, people living in the centre of the settlement have less access to toilets. Water tankers, which are expensive, are often used to supplement the water supply for blocks. In addition, water 'mafias' often manipulate water connections and payment systems. In a different settlement in Govandi, water supply to the blocks is reduced because of groups who have opened launderettes in the area in order to take advantage of subsidised water supply to informal settlements.

Further, the majority of the new toilet blocks are not connected to the sewer system because of the amount of time this engineering effort would require, and instead use septic tanks that are prone to blocking or over-filling, and are often not cleared. One BMC official estimated that only 28% of SSP toilet blocks are connected to sewers, while the figures from 2001 stated coverage of 31% (MW-YUVA, 2001: 35). If correct, then the new SSP blocks are arguably more vulnerable to blockages than those in the past. Some have been arguing for more of an emphasis on sewer connections,

but many BMC engineers have replied that sewer connections are a later part of the more general World Bank-sponsored sanitation drive in the city, and will be put in place when the sewer network is extended. By this point, some blocks may have lain unused for years due to blockages, and may have developed functional problems. That sewer connections have been marginalised in the programme is particularly unfortunate given the overwhelming global evidence linking higher rates of mortality and intestinal parasites among people without access to sewer connections compared to those with (UN Habitat, 2003: 79). The principle of a circulatory network of water and sewage which benefits many of the middle and upper classes in the city, has not been extended to informal settlements.

Neither do the figures give a breakdown on use of the children's squatting platforms. According to one BMC official, "almost 60% [of the children's platforms] are not in use". While the children's platforms were a condition of World Bank loans, and while the SSP survey cited earlier indicated a public preference for children's areas, many are not used either because in practice mothers want to keep their children in sight or because children opt for adult toilets in preference. In some blocks, water supply to the children's area has, as a result, been cut-off. For example, in one block in Santa Cruz, a western suburb, the children's area is now used as a storage area for maintenance accessories. One local said that it was closed because the children don't use water to clean the toilet properly after use, and some individuals thought that the children's area should be removed to make way for additional facilities for women. However, because there is no formal attempt by the state to monitor usage, these views are not being taken into consideration.

Maintenance is emerging as a difficulty in several areas. Caretakers often cannot maintain and clean blocks where the ratio of use is as high as 250 people to one seat. Yet one senior engineer at the BMC's MSDP said that the MSDP is not monitoring the blocks, stating that intervention in areas where CBOs are struggling to maintain blocks is "complaint-oriented": "[Then] we go, and we tell them you should maintain it, you should clean it". He claimed that this was rarely necessary: "about 1% maybe complains". This seems unlikely given the amount of difficulties users of SSP toilet blocks across the city highlight.

The technical difficulties with the toilet blocks have led several commentators and participants in the SSP to criticise the universal 'one-size-fits-all' approach. There are several cases across the city where people have opted to use older blocks or nearby sheltered spaces. Many local people, as well as some BMC staff, believe that a more flexible approach through which sanitation is planned specifically for each settlement would be more effective. While the original SSP plans envisaged a variety of sanitation options that would vary according to the contingencies of local geographies – from two-floor toilet blocks and twin toilets, to individual toilets and shared toilets, where two or three families share toilets through a lock-and-key system and mutual maintainance – the programme has become rigidly based around large two- or even three-floor structures. This inflexibility is remarkable when we consider claims that the SSP is 'demand-driven'. One BMC official, commenting on individual toilets, said "we should not encourage it", and cited cases in Dharavi where people constructed individual toilets that came out of homes into storm drains. This, however, only highlights the need to link sanitation provision to sewer connections. Engineers often argue that in informal settlements, a lack of space within individual

houses means that a common toilet block is the only possibility, and it is often impossible to lay sewer pipes under a row of houses for individual toilets in a highly congested area. However, where possible individual, twin or shared toilets may reduce difficulties around maintenance because they are located within or beside homes, creating a distinct incentive for families to maintain them. The variation in the geography of informal settlements is vast, and, as several engineers pointed out during the research, there are many sites in the city where different options could be developed. Moreover, people continually put forward preferences for smaller or alternative structures. There are successful examples of this elsewhere in South Asia, such as in the work of Orangi Pilot Project, an NGO in Karachi, through which latrines and connecting pipes to sewers were installed in homes and lanes (Alimuddin *et al*, 2004).

In the case of individual toilets, it is not necessarily the case, as some have argued, that they would be more expensive over the long-term, particularly when it is considered that common toilet blocks – currently allocated an average of just under a substantial £940 per seat in the SSP - have a history of breaking-down very quickly due to poor construction and maintenance. For example, rudimentary small-scale latrines and collector pipes to sewers installed through the work of Anjuman Samaji Behbood in Faisalabad, Pakistan, amounted to under £30 per home (Alimuddin *et al*, 2004: 154). Contributions are higher for individual families, meaning that for many poorer people individual toilets are not an option if they were forced to pay. However, there are many people that would be able to afford higher costs and who expressed a preference for individual toilets in interviews. Controversially, one BMC official argued that the demand for individual, twin or shared toilet blocks is being deliberately suppressed,

arguing that the concept of individual toilets is not being marketed because it is not "part of the game". One claim here, made by others but which requires further investigation, is that bureaucrats, politicians, and contractors view large toilet blocks as a political investment in informal settlements. In particular, some more progressive BMC officials have argued that politicians are more concerned with associating themselves with the provision of common blocks than individual, twin or shared toilets because large blocks are highly visible and reach far more voters.

Even though the SSP is designed in part as a shift from services linked to politicians to services demanded by communities from bureaucrats, political parties and local BMC corporators often try to use toilet blocks as a means of manipulating votes, part of the long-established politics of patronage in informal settlements. As noted earlier, this can occur through contacts at SPARC. Some BMC politicos have actively taken up the cause of CBOs and associate themselves with the delivery of new blocks. In one case, a corporator who invested much energy in the scheme publicly associated himself with the construction of 13 blocks in informal settlements in his constituency through large public events marking the opening of new blocks.

Despite improvements on previous conditions in settlements, and considering the importance of sanitation in people's everyday lives, the disparity between the level of funding and the final results in the SSP points to the need for reflection on strategy. In order to ensure more effective structures over the long-term that reflects the needs and desires of local people, it may be that the SSP should be more flexible in order to accommodate alternative sanitation options that would vary throughout and between settlements, including individual, shared and twin structures. This may lead to longer

time delays, but could also lead to a more effective long-term sanitation provision. The experience of toilet blocks since long before the SSP points to the centrality of adequate water and electricity supplies for effective functioning of the blocks, and the high-pressure of use underlines the need to prioritise sewer connections if blocks are to last anywhere near the thirty-year life span that the SSP envisages. In the final section, I consider how user-charges are affecting the performance of the SSP.

Toilets as cash-points?

The solution to the sanitation crisis – at least as conceived by certain economics professors sitting in comfortable armchairs in Chicago and Boston – has been to make urban defecation a global business. Indeed, one of the great achievements of Washington-sponsored neoliberalism has been to turn public toilets into cash points for paying off foreign debts – pay toilets are a growth industry throughout Third World slums.

Mike Davis (2006: 141).

Davis describes public toilets in Ghana, introduced by the military government in 1981 and privatised in the late 1990s, as a "gold mine" of profitability (Davis, 2006: 141; Pellow, 2002). He goes on: "Likewise, in Kenyan slums such as Mathare it costs 6 cents (US) for every visit to a privatized toilet; this is too expensive for most poor people, who would prefer to defecate in the open and spend their money on water and food" (Davis, 2006: 141-142)[5]. While in the case of Mumbai the toilet blocks in the SSP have not been privatised but handed over to 'communities', the principle of paying for use remains. The focus on cost-recovery from the poor means that

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[5] For a discussion of different forms of sanitation construction, management and mantainance globally, see UN Habitat (2003: 158-189).

sanitation is often provided not according to those who need it most, but according to how many people can pay a contribution. Here, I use a brief discussion of two different settlements to reflect on the difficulties of a universal pay-for-use strategy. The first is a successful SSP block in the western suburb if Santa Cruz, and the second is a site in the northeast in Govandi where some of the first SSP blocks were completed.

In an informal settlement in Khotiwadi in Santa Cruz, two SSP blocks are run by a local CBO. The settlement is relatively well off. It is 45 years old and located on BMC land, and there have been state provided toilets in the area for most of that time. Today, there is up to 1000 people in the settlement. Most people work on daily wages, and most of the women who work do so by cleaning houses. The male-dominated structure of previous community organising has been maintained through a new CBO established for the SSP, and has resulted in extra provisions for men over women, including individual taps in male toilets and extra seats.

The CBO approached the MSDP in 2002 following initial contact from SPARC. Following a feasibility study by an engineer, a two-floor structure of 12 seats was recommended (later, an extra two seats were added to the gents, in addition to the 10 or so urinals already there), and one of the old blocks with six seats was refurbished. The ratio of seats to people is 1:55, eased slightly for men with the additional two seats they built. Local people said that queues are not as long as before (when it could be over an hour of waiting) and that during busy times of the day, the queues average just two or three per seat.

Everyday, a private tanker comes to supplement water supply to the blocks. There are three caretakers in total, and the toilets are cleaned twice per day. The CBO obtains Rs. 120 per family per year, varying between Rs. 10 and Rs. 20 per month per family, and up to Rs. 50 from larger families. Family passes were issued in the beginning as per SSP guidelines. Hundreds of outsiders use the toilet every day (the block is near a busy road), from 6am until midnight, and are charged Rs. 2 per person. The committee are volunteers and do not get paid, and they have applied for an income tax exemption because the CBO is a registered charity. In addition, there are activities attached to the large block. For example, 200 students from around the area attend basic computer classes on the second floor, including poor and middle-class groups. Individuals are charged Rs. 750 for the three-month class. Yet, the president insisted that the block runs at a loss. He pointed to the electricity bill - the bill was over two months (the first month hadn't been paid), from November to January 2006, and the total was Rs. 6540. The committee claimed it was too high, especially when added to water charges, sewer line charges and maintenance costs.

While I did not have access to the details of these accounts, it is unlikely that the income generated cannot meet these costs. During the course of research, various reliable sources, from independent commentators to state officials, claimed that there are cases of local CBOs – or more correctly those who run CBOs - making an undeclared profit from toilet blocks, particularly those blocks located near busy roads where outside passers-by often pay to use. A lack of accountability makes this difficult to corroborate. However, in interviews with people in Khotiwadi, it became clear that not only were people happy to pay towards toilet blocks, most did not care if undeclared profits were being made provided that the service is affordable and well

run. People would often begin by contrasting the new with the old blocks. One older couple said that the old blocks were unclean and often blocked, and that there were often queues of up to 30 people at busy times because of a lack of seats. They didn't pay for maintenance of those blocks, and while they now pay Rs. 10 every month each, the blocks are kept clean and are without blockages. They said that as far they know, the money was going to cleaning only, adding: "Why should we bother with their [the committee's] business?...We are getting it cheaply. They are doing good, so why should we bother with them?" Their view was that given that toilets were previously in a very poor condition, they wouldn't care if funds were going missing as long as the blocks are well maintained.

This view was shared by others. One family, where the father works for the Bombay Port Trust as a marine engineer driver earning a relatively high Rs 20,000 per month, pay a flat Rs 120 per year towards maintenance, and do not give the costs any more thought as long as maintenance is effective. Again, they emphasised the contrast with the past, where women might queue from 6am to 8am to use dirty toilets. Often, people would defecate in any sheltered ground around the settlement. Now, caretakers clean daily, and they are pleased with the results, adding that the area where the new block is located was previously a garbage area. They said they are not interested where the money is going, as long as the blocks are kept clean. They had never seen any accounts, but added that have had positive contact with the committee members, many of whom they know as neighbours. They have found the committee responsive to minor requests, ranging from complaints about graffiti to broken buckets.

The SSP initiative at Khotiwadi has become a flagship for the SSP, and it has

generated a great deal of interest. The visitor book is filled with praiseworthy comments from policy-makers and donor organisations from across the world. People are content to pay contributions for an improved service. If there are questions about the use of funds, locals are generally not interested in them. Khotiwadi is an established, authorised informal settlement made up of relatively well off families living in *pukka* (concrete) housing. How sustainable is cost-recovery in different parts of the city where families are less well off? What is the pattern of use in those areas? Any temptation to conclude that cost recovery is a workable solution for cash-scrapped municipal governments must take into account the nature of cost recovery as it operates in a variety of different urban contexts.

For example, Rafi Nagar in Govandi, is one of the poorest unauthorised informal settlements in the city. The settlement is located on BMC land and is subject to frequent bouts of demolition, never with any offer of resettlement and rarely with warning. The housing in the area is constituted through tin, corrugated iron and plastic, and employment is mostly informal. Many people 'ragpick' on the dumping ground next to which the settlement is based, earning between Rs. 30 and Rs. 50 per day. This includes children, who sometimes don't get paid at all, none of whom attend school. Many of the women previously worked in dance bars before the bars were banned by the state government, since which some of have entered prostitution. The people in this settlement suffer major health problems – the settlement is severely unhygienic, and the dumping ground is literally on their doorstep. TB, HIV/AIDS, malaria, anemia, malnutrition, asthma and bronchitis in part due to fumes from the dumping ground, and intestinal illnesses, are all very common. There are two SSP blocks in the area. Each has 12 male and 12 female seats. People who pay

maintenance have a 'family pass' and pay Rs. 10 per adult per month, otherwise it's Rs. 1 per use. These are the only blocks in an area of 20,000 people, and there are no plans for new blocks.

Most of the relatively wealthier individuals in the area use the blocks, and they are well maintained by local caretakers despite the pressure of use. Water and sanitation constitutes the biggest monthly outlays for many people, not to mention the costs spent on health problems caused by the inadequacy of these basic requirements. In practice, while the blocks are in good maintenance, the combination of cost and long queues means that most people do not use them and instead use the nearby dumping ground. In Rafi Nagar, attempts to 'clean' the settlement veer between violence (demolition) and regulation (SSP blocks), between the legal and illegal. Public health is very poor and toilet facilities are either insufficient or makeshift and dangerous dumping grounds. In this context, we are forced to ask whether people who can barely afford sanitation but yet desperately seek it, to not just 'demand' it, as the SSP guidelines insist, but to demand to pay for it, constitutes a logical development strategy.

People in this context are often more concerned about how their contributions are being used than those living in Khotiwadi, and many complained about having to pay from very low budgets. In this context, the SSP is a very partial sanitation solution, and in practice cost recovery can remove the option. In addition, in the many areas throughout the city where the blocks are poorly maintained despite high-levels of contributions from locals and outsiders, local tensions can result or become exacerbated. It is perhaps only in settlements like Khotiwadi, relatively well off with low pressure on well-maintained toilet blocks, that people are content with paying and

have the luxury of being unconcerned about the use of funds. In addition, there are questions around who should and who should not be made to pay for use. For example, SSP rules mean that labourers who work in settlements but do not live there cannot be issued with family passes, and instead must pay per use.

According to research carried out by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) as the SSP was launched, most people living in informal settlements expect sanitation delivery to be, as it has often been, free (Tata, 1998). The shift from paying for toilets through votes to paying through cash is a shift that can lead to the marginalisation of poorer people. I am not arguing here that a system of cost-recovery should necessarily be abandoned in Mumbai, but that the realities of specific settlements need to be taken into account. In order to reach higher numbers, many settlements or parts of settlements could require full subsidies. Just as difficulties with the policy and technical infrastructures in the SSP suggest that greater flexibility is required in order to reflect the plurality of the informal settlements in the city, the case of Rafi Nagar suggests that flexibility in the administration of costs and subsidies may be necessary.

Conclusion

Most people care little about who is maintaining blocks as long as they are being maintained, whether it is a political party, BMC staff, or a local CBO. As long as blocks are, first, well maintained, second, of adequate number, and, third, affordable, then on the whole people use them with few complaints. In one settlement in the western suburb of Bandra, for example, people said that they were not concerned that the (non-SSP) blocks were maintained by the Congress Party, as long as they were

kept in the condition they were in. One advantage to the SSP, however, is that it offers the potential to deliver a service outside of the patronage politics between politician or party and informal settlement, although in practice parties often play a role. However, while there has been significant improvement in sanitation delivery, getting all three of these factors to work together is a huge challenge. Without being prescriptive, the issues raised here tentatively suggest that a greater flexibility in the SSP may be required in order to reflect the varied geographies of informal settlements, the ordinary spaces of urban development. It is hoped that these reflections contribute to debate on the programme.

First, the discussion of partnership and participation indicates that flexibility could allow a more plural policy infrastructure. The SSP could usefully make its tendering process more flexible to enable smaller NGOs to bid for smaller contracts, rather than simply favouring large contracts and NGOs. This could make space for smaller organisations with a greater familiarity with particular settlements, and that are not divisively associated with particular groups, to use their local expertise to extend participation and maximise the sanitation needs of these settlements. The presence of large 'super NGOs' on the political map of the city leaves little space for smaller organisations that may have demonstrated capacities for specific aspects of development, from publicity to construction to working with communities.   In addition, in the case of SPARC, an organisation that has increasingly come to stand for 'civil society' in urban development projects in Mumbai, its liberal entrepreneurial politics are more likely to accommodate the agendas of realpolitik than to contest them with radical politics (McFarlane, 20004). This reduces the space for other civil society groups to influence the direction of policy and public debate. Second, the discussion

of technical infrastructure production indicates that the programme could usefully be more driven around the needs, constitution and geography of specific settlements. This could result in more effective results over the long term, including individual, twin and shared toilets rather than simply large common blocks.

Third, the discussion of cost recovery suggests caution. In particular, there may be a requirement for full subsidies in areas that clearly cannot afford to spare money (as in the case of Rafi Nagar) if sanitation delivery is to reach poorer groups. In addition, it is worth considering more effective monitoring of how contributions are being used locally, as well as more general monitoring of user and non-user views on sanitation. Large 'super NGOs' do not necessarily bring accountability anymore than they necessarily contribute a fuller understanding of community needs. While the SSP, in contrast to Mehta's bleak prediction, has significantly improved sanitation in informal settlements, the issues raised here suggest that the programme could be more effective if it was based on a greater engagement with local people.

The SSP distinguishes itself from the previous *ad hoc* model of sanitation provision that Chatterjee (2004) describes in that it is a citywide, long-term project to improve informal settlements. Its emphasis on community responsibility marks a shift from his notion of intervention in 'slums' as a calibration of rewards and costs towards a construct of citizenship rights and responsibilities. The SSP is in part an attempt to foster a particular kind of civic consciousness of community responsibility deemed lacking among those living in informal settlements. To this extent it is an attempt to instil a particular sense of urban modernity which echoes nationalist discourses in the early years of Independence (Chakrabarty, 2002). However, in this construction, the

'nonbourgeoise subaltern' is, in Chakrabarty's (2002: 69) phrasing, "always already condemned". The subaltern is condemned as lacking the sense of civic consciousness viewed as integral to the making of a modern city: the view peddled in the media and among many neighbourhood improvement groups is often that it is *their* fault that sanitation is the way it is, and if things don't improve then it is *they* who are to blame. For example, some BMC officials complained that one of the reasons for health problems among the poor is a lack of "discipline", or the wrong "mentality". These perceptions often act as an explanation for emerging shortcomings in 'community' maintenance. In this act of condemnation, the 'slum' remains fixed to the terrain of 'population', without any inherent moral claim on the state. 'Slums' remain populations outside of the sphere of citizenship, outside of discourses of rights, and remain in the view of these officials and many others in the city a necessary scourge on visions of the modern, clean and ordered city.

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