

KNORR BREMSE

- **Background**

Every year, around 200,000 people come to Delhi from the countryside looking for work. This is a city that already has a population of over eleven million. The situation is particularly drastic for people living in the slums, where there is frequently no clean drinking water, no sanitation and no medical care. Mothers and new-born babies are particularly at risk: nearly two million children under the age of five die in India each year – most of them in the first month of their lives from easily avoidable diseases like diarrhoea and chest infections. There are two main reasons for this high infant mortality rate: children and pregnant women do not have access to primary health care, basic knowledge of hygiene or health education.

Together with the international aid organization Save the Children, Knorr-Bremse Global Care is helping to improve the situation in the slums by providing access to sanitary facilities and basic medical care for children and their families and ensuring new-born babies are fed properly.

- **Location, Date**

New Delhi, 2014

- **Areas**

Urban and slum areas

- **Stage/Scale**

Pilot

- **Objective of the assignment**

To help improve the situation in the slums by providing access to sanitary facilities and basic medical care for children and their families and ensuring new-born babies are fed properly.

- **What was done**

- The gate of the now sprawling complex, where many women are seen busy managing it, was a feared entry point and a strict no-go area for women and even men till not very long ago. The compound, which was built way back in 1983 to serve as a community toilet complex (CTC) had fallen into disrepair and transformed as a rendezvous for anti-social elements. The CTC, built by the State Government, had been handed over to a private organisation for operation and management. Bad management and total absence of participation from local community members rendered that toilet complex largely unused, unusable and later insecure. The complex failed to meet the needs and attention of the community members and open defecation, open bathing continued and vulnerabilities associated with those continued plaguing the community members. That feared complex in Bawana slums of New Delhi has now become the preferred destination of slum dwellers for the most important daily chores – defecation, bathing and even washing.

- Knorr Bermse and Save the Children, after careful study of the situation, were convinced that settlements like Bawana need good community toilet complexes and, more importantly, such facilities have to be owned and managed by the end-users – the local community members. They had to spend a great deal of time and effort in convincing the State



Government that significant improvements can happen if management of such institutions are handed over to users. In 2014, they got nod of the State Government, after necessary policy changes to convert, as a pilot initiative, the Bawana toilet complex from a CTC to a community managed toilet (CMT). It was a herculean task as the infrastructure was in dilapidated condition. Only two of the 40 toilet seats in the complex were functional. The bathing facilities had almost no existence. So, it required both infrastructural as well as institutional intervention.

- Knorr Bermse and Save the Children focused on the vital aspect of awareness generation first. They held extensive interactive sessions with the community members of the Bawana settlement to generate their interest and ownership. Their primary focus was on women, who were bearing the brunt of the sanitation infrastructure deficiencies, but had the potential to make positive change happen fast. It soon formed a women's group in the settlement and built capacity of a group of selected women to manage the infrastructure. It then went on to repair and renovate the complex with their active participation. Toilet seats, bathing and washing facilities were created separately for men and women. Other facilities like bio-digester and water recycling were integrated.



- Community members provided their contribution. The interventions added more. It integrated further income generating aspects from the CMTs to improve sustainability. It added a water ATM to provide safe drinking water to users at a nominal cost. It set up a waste management unit and started selling manures processed from the waste. It also started a kiosk which provided knowledge and information on hygiene measures and also sold products, particularly for the women, which provided further income avenues. Along with the permission to convert the Bawana CTC to a CMC, Knorr Bermse and Save the Children also had permission to set up a model new CMC at Okhla slum in New Delhi. The new CMC followed the same route. It involved community members from the beginning, developed good infrastructures with toilet, bathing and washing facilities and added other facilities like bio-digester, waste management and income generating avenues through water and hygiene kiosks. Both these community-managed toilets are being run excellently by the women members. Open defecation has almost stopped.

Hygienic practices have vastly improved. Knorr Bermse and Save the Children have since renovated seven more CTCs. All have had spectacular impacts. The state government has now decided to adopt this model in the entire state of Delhi. These CMTs have successfully demonstrated models which can be easily replicated in complicated urban slum settlements.

- The project is also building sanitation facilities, sewage systems and wells for clean drinking water. In addition, mobile health stations are increasing the provision of medical care in the slums. As well as developing the infrastructure, the project is improving health awareness, and particularly hygiene education, among vulnerable slum-dwellers, promoting interaction with local organizations and politicians and raising awareness about public health services.
- Voluntary health workers have been trained in health, water, sanitation and hygiene so that they can pass on their knowledge to local people and document the number of pregnant women and new-born babies. Management and maintenance of public toilets is gradually being transferred to the local community so that they will in future take responsibility for their own sanitation facilities. These measures will ensure the long-term, sustainable success of the project.

- **Impact**

Knorr Bermse and Save the Children's effective strategy to ensure proactive involvement and ownership of the local community members, particularly the women, in management of the complex has brought out a stupendous change. Their activities had a wonderful impact. Not only the complex got renovated, a board of 14 women members of the community soon took lead in managing it. Open defecation has almost stopped.

- **Challenges and Issues**

There were systems already in place, but the problem was that those were malfunctioning or not functioning at all. Identifying such systems and overhauling them so that they can be operational again was a tough task to complete.

- **Innovation**

'It is not Must a toilet block for our use, it gives us the confidence that we can do many things ourselves,' says a beaming Bawal, one of the board member managing the CMT. "It is not only our toilet, it is our market place and a place for socialising too." While the women have obviously been drivers and prime beneficiary of this movement, men and children too have adopted this positive change and are extremely happy.

- **Lessons learnt**

Knorr Bremse collaborated with 'Save the Children' in order to tackle the issue at the hand. Instead of developing new projects, the team preferred going after already implemented projects that were not performing as per expectations. This resulted in huge cost savings and more number of people could be benefited.

- **Financials**

Not available

- **Economic sustainability/Revenue Model**

Knorr Bremse will continue working with organizations like 'Save the Children'. Though the project does not generate any active revenue, a fraction of the CSR funds of Knorr Bremse will be used for funding these activities.

- **Implementer Contact Persons**

Not available

- **Sources and References**

- <http://indiasanitationcoalition.org/admin/assets/uploads/isccompendiumsrepository/business-of-change.pdf>
- http://www.global-care.knorr-bremse.com/en/reliefprojects/focal_issues/wash/india__water_sanitation_and_hygiene_3/india__wash.jsp