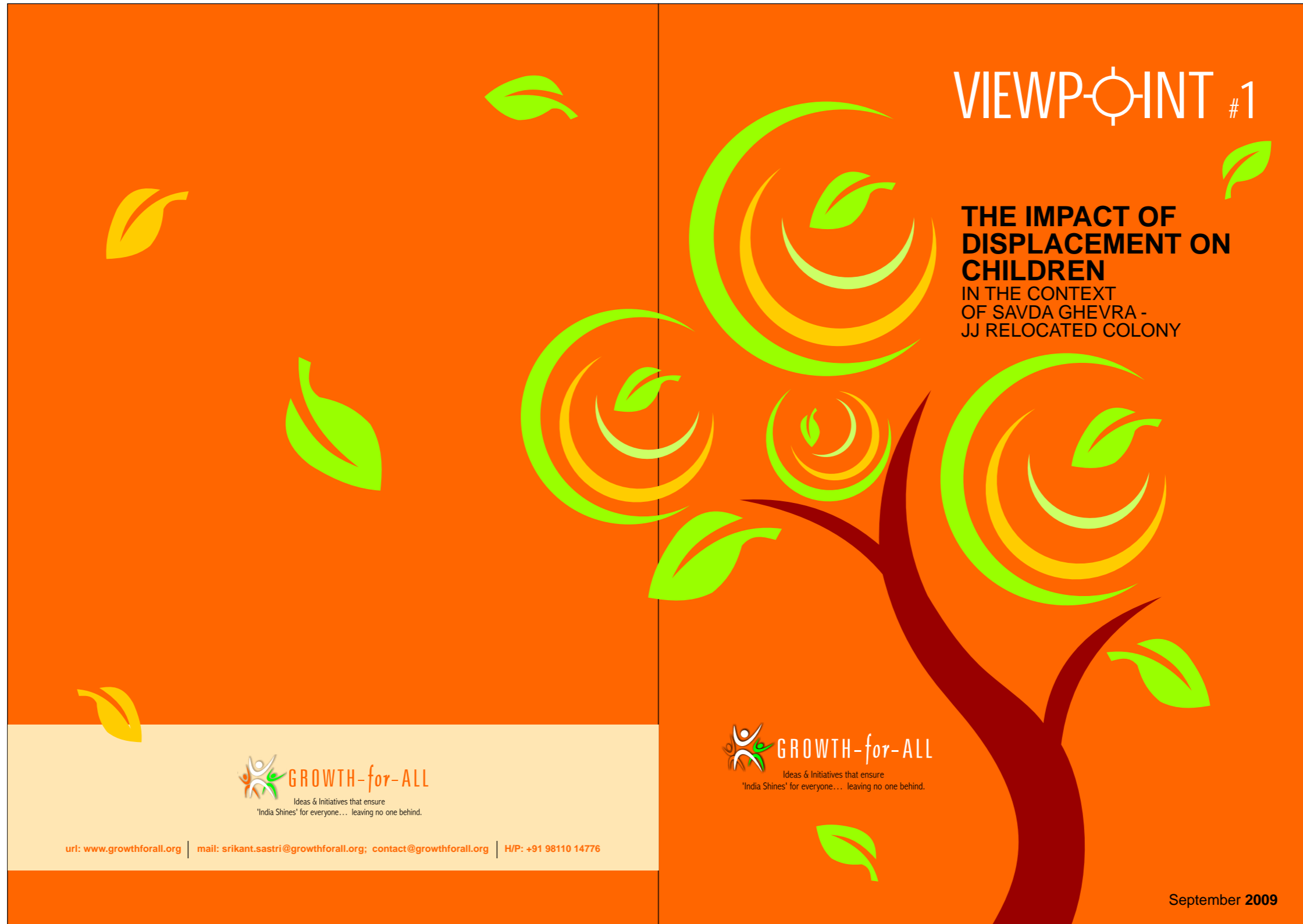


Back cover

Front cover



# VIEWPOINT #1

**THE IMPACT OF  
DISPLACEMENT ON  
CHILDREN**  
IN THE CONTEXT  
OF SAVDA GHEVRA -  
JJ RELOCATED COLONY

 **GROWTH-for-ALL**  
Ideas & Initiatives that ensure  
'India Shines' for everyone... leaving no one behind.

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September 2009





## About us

Growth-For-All's mission is to achieve inclusive growth and faster socio-economic development for the have-nots of Indian society by creating a scaleable model that starts by targeting a specific neighborhood, locality, or group of villages as the basic 'unit' of focus where multiple 'inputs' or interventions are dovetailed simultaneously: livelihood, health, education, women's empowerment, etc.

This mission was formalized in 2007 after Growth-For-All's founder, Srikant Sastri, spent a year traveling around the country, meeting a large number of active NGOs. These interactions helped him better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the various stakeholders working in the social sector and the challenges faced by them. Based on this assessment, Growth-For-All's strategy and operational model have been developed.

### About Viewpoint

Viewpoint is a result of careful deliberation by Growth-for-All on issues concerning the urban poor and the pattern of development followed today. Since Growth-for-All started its activities in the relocated colony Savda Ghevra in 2007, it was important for the organization to share the crucial understanding gained from the implementation of its various socio-development projects to a large interested audience. Our working experience makes us witness to the evolution of the living conditions of the urban poor in Delhi. It also enables us to take an informed stand on the issues currently faced by them.

## Key elements of our intervention model



Growth-For-All's model is to simultaneously infuse multiple inputs (livelihood, education, health, women's empowerment, etc) into a target community, to make a substantial & all-round impact. Hence, it is an integrated model. (***"Integrated development"***)

By working with specialized, knowledgeable NGOs, and supporting them financially- where required- Growth-For-All (GFA) is creating a scalable implementation model without building its own infrastructure. GFA's own team is lean, and focused on overall project management, and cross-sector planning and coordination. (***"Scalable Implementation"***)

GFA engages the large, silent group of well-meaning individuals and coporates by creating & offering avenues for involvement which are both financial & non-financial in nature. Through 'marketing' and use of 'technology', GFA makes this feasible and mutually-rewarding. (***"Leveraging Individual & Corporate Social Responsibility"***)

All work that GFA does is measured and tracked against suitable criteria and benchmarks designed by economists and others. (***"Measurement & Accountability"***)

Growth-For-All works towards the creation of an active, vigilant and empowered community, key in achieving sustainable development. (***"Participatory approach"***).

GFA strongly acknowledges the strength of each stakeholder in terms of their respective reach, expertise, resources, etc, and aims to create a platform where all such partners can contribute and participate. (***"Collaborate, facilitate and coordinate"***)

## The impact of displacement on children in the context of Savda Ghevra - JJ relocated colony

### Savda Ghevra relocated colony

Savda Ghevra is located in the North West part of Delhi, near the Tikri border, between Kanjhavala and Nangloi. The 260-acre wide Savda Ghevra has been developed as a relocated colony for slum dwellers from various parts of Delhi, since the year 2005. It aims to resettle 20,000 families when fully developed. Currently it is occupied by 11,000 people from the slums of Lakshmi Nagar, Karkardooma, Shahdara, Airport, and Raja Garden inter alia. They are a mix of migrants from eastern UP, Bihar, West Bengal and parts of Assam and Gujarat.

### Introduction

*"Hamari Jhuggi tod di gayi, phir hamari padhai chhoot gayi"*, ("Our shanties were demolished and then I had to discontinue my studies") is what Shazaad, an 11 year old boy from Savda Ghevra, answers when asked why he stopped going to school. Technically this lament should have disturbed the policy makers for the statement echoes the abandoned hope of a young child who underwent the repetitive act of eviction in New Delhi, a city being transformed into a "world-class city". The impact of eviction and relocation on children has seldom drawn attention, in spite of the fact that newspapers were recently buzzing with news of the demolition of the shanties of the child stars of "Slumdog Millionaire" in Mumbai.

Slums in India are looked upon with distaste. For many they are the most visible form of poverty, harbingers of crime and exploitation; and for others a blot on the beautification prospects of the city, thus causing the adoption of extreme measures to get "rid" of the problem. Migration from extremely poor rural areas has to be understood as an inevitable phenomenon. Poor people come to urban areas to earn their livelihood and to survive - survive in any condition even if it means living in tents on open drainage, encroaching government land nonetheless. Recourse to the razing of shanties in lieu of plots in far-off areas is not the best option chosen. However, "Clearance and Relocation" remains the core of MCD strategy towards slum dwellers.

This series of Viewpoint is an attempt to understand the impact of relocation after eviction from a child's perspective. It draws inputs largely from the life experiences of the children of Savda Ghevra, a recently relocated colony on the outskirts of Delhi.

### The effects of eviction on children

Children are the most vulnerable section of the society as they exclusively depend on adults to meet their basic needs. Moreover, the vulnerability of children is more profound for they draw little attention in terms of concrete actions for their development. They are often voiceless as they do not recourse to violence to ensure justice, are not argumentative enough to present their demands and definitely not a part of the electorate so as to be given adequate importance by political parties.

It is not difficult to visualize the effects of the demolition of one's home during one's tender age. Forced eviction or involuntary resettlement is indeed carried out under harsh conditions. Unfortunately, these situations arise quite often.

The residents of Savda Ghevra have come from various parts of Delhi like Lakshmi Nagar, Nangla Machi, Airport, Patparganj and so on. They had arrived at these areas from the states of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, and Assam. By the age of 10 most of children have experienced displacement from their rural habitations and from their jhuggis afterwards. In addition, uncertainties still remain in the colony as their parents hold the lease of the plot for only 7 years. Udit is a 12 year old boy who has migrated from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh recently. He likes to speak a lot about the "badey khet" (big fields), "kua" (wells), "maidan" (playgrounds) of his village. He still is coming to terms with the fact that his house in Savda is a mere 12.5 square meters in size and that there are no wide lanes and fields here.

Other children have been born and brought up in Delhi even though their parents had migrated from other states.

Kajal and Jyoti are sisters and are 13 and 15 year old respectively. When asked if they would prefer to shift back to their village in Bihar, they refuse saying "Hum Dilli kay hain aur yahin rehna chahte hain" ("We belong to Delhi and we want to stay here"). It is ironical that these young children, in spite of all the hardship they face, still associate themselves with being fully a part of the Delhi community in spite of all the marginalization, rejection and alienation they suffer.

### An unsound environment

The sites offered to slum dwellers in lieu of demolition show that they are considered very much outsiders by public authorities. Savda Ghevra is situated at the outskirts of Delhi, so far from the main city that living there has led to the loss of livelihood for many. Relocation to this place has led to a loss of shelter, of sense of community and neighborhood and has affected children in a harsh manner.

Children find themselves in a situation where they have to bear the brunt of the sudden changes in life as the elders in the house are busy fending for the basic needs of the household. Children from Savda Ghevra often complain about stressful times when they see their parents struggle to afford simple things for family. Rekha, a school drop-out is 14 years old and speaks about "tunggi mein jeena kitna mushkil hai" ("It's difficult to live in deprivation"). On an average, the monthly income of people in Savda is Rs 3000. Male members are usually the ones earning and there are on an average 5 people to support in a family.

The colony also witnesses the emergence of prejudices against one community, locality, caste or religion which are being reinforced by daily interactions. Even young children speak about "Mussalmaans are a nuisance" or "Bengalis fight a lot" and so on.

A grave concern of the women in Savda is that the men of the community while away their time gambling, an attitude which can have an influence on young children. Not every child is able to deal with the stressful environment and as a result often shows deviant behavior. As a mirror of the adults' behaviour, young children are involved in betting (involving money), often through games of marbles or gulli danda. A few even spend the entire day playing cards in the park. Similarly, young children are often unable to solve minor issues through dialogue and get engaged in violent fights or foul behavior. Young girls from the community feel insecure as they have often been eve-teased by the boys. This has been stretched to the extent that a few have discontinued their studies because of the persistence of lewd acts by young adults from the community. Their lack of confidence and self-esteem is the result of their daily struggle to balance their needs and wants with the resources and opportunities available.

### **Lack of space and recreational activities**

Space is an integral part of childhood. Children need spatial freedom to move, run and play. This basic need is definitely not available to slum children, whether in their house or within their immediate neighborhood. As mentioned earlier, the distribution of plots of land have been

made on the basis of the year of arrival of the migrant family. The families, who provided proof of establishing year of residence before 31st January, 1990 were allotted plots of 18 m. sq. Those who provided a proof of residence prior to at least 1st December 1998 were provided with plots of size 12.5 m. sq. The survey concerning the year of arrival was carried out once. Residents of Savda Ghevra talk about how many people missed this survey, therefore were not allotted a plot, even if they were eligible.

Only 12 %of families in Ghevra have pucca houses. The majority of the houses are mud structures with thatched roofs. The houses with one room meant for sleeping and cooking are cramped by 4-5 people and outer space in the form of playground or parks are non-existent. The few parks available are used to dump the garbage or for open-defecation. A statement made by Nisha, a 16 year old girl clearly explains the predicament of children: "Staying in these houses is like being tied to a cage".

The dire lack of recreational facilities is a concern expressed by almost every child in Savda. Ask them what would they want most and pat comes the reply "Playgrounds"! Sachin's situation can explain the depth of the problem. He is studying in class 7th in Sarvodaya School and states that he has absolutely nothing to do after school hours. Holidays are more difficult to bear because he has to pass the entire day without any recreation. He likes going for music class as it "distract him from his tense and stressful life".

This situation is a blatant violation of the provisions of international treaties such as the Convention of the Rights of the

Child (CRC) ratified by India which state that "The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities, shall endeavor to promote the enjoyment of this right".

Girls and boys are not equally affected by this situation. It is much easier for boys to play cricket on the roads of Savda than for girls to move around freely. They are often prohibited to move freely as "Savda ka maahaul kharaab hai" (Savda is not safe for girls). Girls readily agree to this prohibition and respect it fearing that any noncompliance will lead their parents to marry them off soon. Consequently, young girls complain about the lack of indoor leisure activities. There are too few activities proposed compared to the high demand. A small-scale library set up by a foundation is very famous among the children. Another activity which mixes leisure and self-development and where children are encouraged to express their feelings through writings are also very sought after. Large numbers of motivated children also come for music and dance classes through the Hasmukh Kala program held by a private trust.

### **Education, a denied fundamental right**

Education can be a crucial tool to end the vicious cycle of poverty, as it can lead to social and economic progress for poor families. However, quality education is still inaccessible to children from slums despite a national commitment to free and compulsory education to children up to 14 years of age.

Children belonging to age group 0-6 in Savda are not catered to through Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), nor are there any baalwadi, anganwadi or crèches in the colony. One can find children crawling in the narrow lanes and playing in unhygienic conditions. Parents are too busy with daily chores to look after young kids. Most of the time, it is the elder sibling, generally girls, who discontinue their education and sit back at home to look after their younger siblings. Radha, a 15 year old school drop-out wants to become a doctor one day. She had to discontinue her studies after her father's death as her mother had to venture out for a job. In the absence of anyone in the house she has to manage the household chores and look after her young brother.

Admission procedures are made too complicated and cumbersome for slum children. As a result they prefer not to undertake the burdensome task of seeking different kinds of documents and paper work (birth certificates, affidavits, transfer certificates). There were close to 200 children who did not take admission in schools after shifting to Savda because of an absence of certificates. There are also children who are working and are not catered to by any non-formal education mechanism. Moreover, drop-outs are of great concern in Savda as in any slum community. Children lose interest in schooling because of poor quality or a non-appealing way of education, corporal punishment, poor economic conditions, household pressures inter alia.

The drop-out phenomenon is massive for secondary education and very few pupils are able to complete their 10th exam board. In addition, those who are willing to

pursue higher education cannot access regular classes because of the huge distances they have to travel everyday. Jyoti has recently cleared her 10th Boards. She traveled 80 kms everyday from five am in the morning to late evening for the past 5 years to go to a private school near AIIMS, because she thought that schooling would be better there.

Quality has always been an issue affecting the national education system. A higher number of children attend the municipal school in Savda because its admission procedure is easier to fulfill compared to better quality government schools such as Sarvodaya Schools. In addition, children often fail to pass the entrance test conducted by Sarvodaya Schools. The reason for this is too often blamed on individual children rather than the schooling system they were a part of.

As a result, the children again fall into the trap of improper learning when they enter the MCD School as the quality of education in Municipal schools has always been questionable. One cannot differ on this account if one considers the fact that there are over a 1000 children in each session catered by 12-13 teachers. Many times two classes are combined (as per record of January 2009). Children still sit on floors without electricity. Parents have often complained that children are beaten in the school. A 7 year old child in Savda was once asked what he wanted most in his life and retorted "The suspension of my school teacher".

The drawbacks of the kind of teaching-learning methods used are felt more acutely in slums because most of the children there are first generation

learners whose parents cannot monitor or supervise their studies. As a result, tuitions are widespread in the area and are used as a last recourse for better education. Kamna is illiterate and sends her two children to a nearby Sarvodaya School. She is not satisfied with the education there and therefore spends Rs 150 per month on each child for tuitions. She says she does not want her children to become like her and therefore leads no stone unturned for their better education.

In spite of all these obstacles children from Savda are buzzing with energy and are eager to learn new things like computers, languages, dancing, reading, writing, playing musical instruments, cricket and football. Children who are not going to school really want to while children in school want to participate in competitions, study further, and learn new activities. They still have high aspirations and want to become doctors, sports persons or air-hostesses in spite of the fact that local resources are scarce and opportunities limited. Mamta is studying in 8th standard and wants to become a doctor one day. She explains her goal by saying that she has always seen poor people cornered. People are too often very rude to them and they cannot afford medical services due to lack of money. She wants to be a doctor to reach out to such people.

### **Poor health situation of children**

Access to quality health services is another aspect which is lacking in slums. Various research studies have proved that the nutritional status of slum dwellers is at an adverse stage. Being the most

vulnerable population, children living in slums face a greater risk of malnutrition because of the poor purchasing power of their parents, a deficient dietary intake and high in-roads of infections. One doctor working in the community says "Parents are unable to look after their children. The food habits are inappropriate and hygiene levels dismal. Ignorance is another concern".

The preventive aspect is hampered by the fact that sanitation and hygiene issues are sidelined. Houses are too small to accommodate toilets facilities, but community toilets are options available locally. However, because they are located far from houses, unkempt and not properly maintained, open defecation is what people resort to. Moreover, as the drainage system is still under construction and virtually non-existent dirty water is thrown in front of the house. As a result, stagnant water added to the garbage near the house is the sources of many diseases. Children from Savda have recurrent bouts of fever, cough-cold, skin allergies, breathing problems and so on.

What is worsening the matter is the lack of water facilities. Water still comes from tankers which have erratic timings. Children are often asked to stand in queues for water collection which is a moment of huge struggle. Sachin regularly fills water from the Jal board tankers. He states "I get pushed around by the elders in the queue. Most of the time abuses are hurled at me. I know it would be difficult without water and therefore have no choice but to bear it. Filling water is like winning a war"

As already mentioned previously children between 0-6 years old are not covered under ICDS scheme in Savda (as per records on July 2009). Immunization of young children is done regularly by the government dispensary and independent NGOs. Institutional deliveries are still not a firmly anchored practice in Savda and households generally prefer home based deliveries, no matter how complicated they are. There is also a general lack of awareness and sensitivity in dealing with special children or disabled children.

Mental health is another aspect which is unfortunately sidelined. That children will suffer from various psycho-socio problems is not surprising given the fact that they are facing so much insecurity. The pressure to meet the basic needs of households often takes a toll on the entire family. In addition, many of the families are dysfunctional in one way or the other and children lack support to deal with so many emerging material, physical and emotional needs. For instance, many children have to deal with alcoholism or domestic violence in their families, the effect of which is hardly ever measured.

### **Conclusion**

As presented in this series of Viewpoint, the condition of children in urban slum-like areas such as Savda Ghevra is dismal. The situation in other slums of the country is certainly similar. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) set up to protect, promote and defend child rights in the country could play a positive role in that matter by better targeting the promotion of child rights, especially in the case of children who suffer displacement and resettlement.

We can witness, among the youth of Savda, a lack of trust and motivation, a rampant lethargy, and indecisiveness. All this is the result of the disadvantaged environment in which they grew up and live in.

We believe in the all round development of children to their best abilities. The quality of education provided in Municipal and Government schools has to be at a level to help children transcend the boundary of poverty - the kind of education which not only is economically productive for them, but helps them rationalize things around them, build their capability to deal with adverse situations and develop positive attitudes towards life, their peers and their surroundings. It has to move away from textbooks and information based teaching and evolve

into a practice where teaching-learning happens in a healthy atmosphere from a child's perspective. Meanwhile children in higher classes need to get familiar with significant other aspects of learning like technologies, languages, sports, music, theatre, dramatics so that learning becomes fun and newer avenues of job opportunities are available to them for the future. Children in 0-6 years of age group have to be catered to either through private or public intervention. Children out of school have to be catered to either through non-formal measures or mainstream education. While all these interventions shall help in making available better services in the community, the larger goal has to be to make childhood in the relocated colony of Savda Ghevra joyous, safe and secure.

