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VIEWPOINT #2

**EMPLOYMENT
OF YOUTH
IN SAVDA GHEVRA
RESETTLEMENT
COLONY -
A COMPLEX SITUATION.**

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

url: www.growthforall.org | mail: srikant.sastri@growthforall.org; contact@growthforall.org | H/P: +91 98110 14776

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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"***)

Employment of youth in savda ghevra- A complex situation

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

The ones who do not have adequate resources (economic or political) to raise their voices often stay out of the development paths. In this respect, the case of the urban poor is an appropriate example. The continuous geographic and social exclusion of the urban poor have forced them to stay on periphery of development in spite of their contribution to the growth of the economy. In addition, only a few (middle and upper class) has benefited from urbanization whereas it has negatively impacted the lives of many. The scarcity of land and basic amenities available in the city and the high demands for these has pushed the government and responsible officers to find short-term solutions. One option selected was to move slum dwellers living in the city to resettlement colony areas situated far on the outskirts of the gigantic capital city.

Since then, the people who have been resettled to Savda Ghevra have tried to rebuild their dismantled lives. Asra, a 60 year old resident of Savda evicted from Laxmi Nagar says "*Janvaro se bhi battar hai hamari zindagi*" (Our lives are worse than those of animals).

One would think that the evolution from living in an unauthorized slum to moving to an authorized resettlement colony

would technically lead to improved living conditions. However, this is far from being the norm. Several factors have to be taken into account while observing this evolution in the Delhi context; among other things, people do not have the right to choose their place of relocation, and the resettlement sites selected by the responsible officers are situated very far from the main city hubs.

The term livelihood is "something which comprises the abilities, assets (store, resources, claims and access) and activities required for means of living". A livelihood is said to be sustainable when it can recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities to the next generation.

This paper is based on the findings of a comprehensive report carried out by ASK-SARD for Growth-for-All, and on interactions the team had through focus groups and interviews with the inhabitants of Savda. It presents an overview of the current situation and shows the ambiguous attitude of the unemployed regarding livelihood opportunities. Lastly, this paper examines to which extent the people living in Savda lack the necessary abilities, assets and activities to be able to attain a decent standard of living.

Youth employment situation in Savda Ghevra

Approximately, 35% of population in Savda is between 18 to 35 years old. According to the information gathered from the community through focus groups, discussions and various other interactions with individuals and NGOs working there, 50% of these youth are unemployed. Out of those, for some, not working can be a deliberate decision (not wanting to work for low-paying jobs for example). However the majority of them are people who were working earlier but couldn't travel the long distances anymore after being shifted to Savda Ghevra.

The situation of working women perfectly illustrates this situation. The loss of livelihood was indeed particularly massive for women since many of them couldn't work as domestic helpers anymore after moving to Savda. In their previous locations, others were able to work from home, carrying out small tasks outsourced by nearby factories. "*Hum ghar par baith kar moti ka kaam kar lettay the, ab yahan woh nahi hai*" ("I could sit and home and do work of beads, but that's not the case here"), complains Sudama Devi.

Moving to Savda also made for many a radical change in their usual income-generating occupations. Earlier men could easily sell vegetables or any other goods in middle-class residential areas around their slum or could engage in self-employed activities such as tailoring, masonry, barbering and sweeping or even running a rickshaw service. But now as there are no such middle-class residential areas and markets near Savda, they have to depend on daily-wage activity.

The average household income in Savda is around Rs. 3000 per month according to the result of the baseline survey carried out by Growth-for-All in the community. Mamta often talks about her good days in Laxmi Nagar where her husband, Pradeep, had a small jewellery shop. Strong customer relations were established over the years and many people chose to patronise Pradeep's shop. The shop got destroyed. Pradeep now sits in a small room in Savda with all his jewellery materials spread around him, and struggles to sell his jewellery to the economically starved residents of Savda.

Most of the youth who are employed are still working in the places they used to before moving to Savda and travel long distances by bus everyday to reach Laxmi Nagar, ITO, Sarai Kale Khan and the airport. Similarly, many women are still working as housemaids in Laxmi Nagar and nearby areas and also in Noida. This situation puts a lot of stress on their family life. Yogita for example gets to see her father only once a week on Sundays. Her father leaves the house early morning and comes back at around midnight.

Major characteristics of the unemployed youth and their employability.

(I) Education situation among unemployed youth

As per the findings of the Growth for All study carried out by ASK - among a sample of 120 youths (64 men and 56 women), 24% of the youths are illiterate. Illiteracy was found far higher among the female (36%) than the male (14%). Reasons for this are more or less the same for both (loss of interest in

education, poverty) except that household responsibilities are an additional burden on the daughters of a family. Female youth also cited the lack of emphasis placed on their education as another reason for not attending school or dropping out.

Moreover, girls who studied up to class eight in their previous location could not continue their education further after being shifted to Savda Ghevra as there is no facility for higher studies (above 8th) in the colony and parents were not willing to send them outside the colony. Ruksar is 18 years old. She had to discontinue her studies after 7th Std due to poor financial conditions at home. Now after her father's death, she is burdened with household responsibilities. She does realize that her lack of education will certainly be a hindrance to earning a decent amount of money in the future.

The dropout rate is high after primary education and a whole new generation of illiterate youth is cropping up with no clear directions towards future livelihood prospects.

In addition, those who want to improve their living conditions lack the adequate resources to be able to do so. Many youngsters are enrolling into open schooling or distance education but the quality of education remains an issue. Pushpa has been trying to clear her 12th boards from open school for the past couple of years. She fails every time because she lacks a proper understanding of the subjects. She is often involved in small part-time assignments which enable her to earn some income. In spite of all her sincerity and dedication it is very hard for Pushpa to be able to break the vicious circle of poverty which imprisons her.

(ii) Availability of skills among unemployed youth

According to the findings of the livelihood survey, the majority (80%) of the unemployed youth are unskilled. Only 20% of them have certain skills. In the case of the males they have learned these skills either from their own families, from friends, or from a local shop / workshop in an informal manner, and do not possess any certificate from any institute. In case of the females, embroidery skills or other handicraft skills are prevalent. Apart from those, some girls have been trained by the Gender Resource Center in four activities: tailoring, embroidery, jewellery making and beauty culture. However, very few of them are using these learned skills for income generation purpose.

The major reasons given to explain the non-utilization of the mentioned skills for income purpose are the following:

- They don't want to work in small shops as the salaries are low and the travel costs high. So they want to work only in reputed companies and factories.
- For mechanic activities, they have been asked to show their certificate to find a job in a company, but they don't have any.
- They don't have a complete and adequate knowledge about the work. For example earlier they learnt to repair scooters but now there is a demand for the bike mechanic for which they don't have the skills. Moreover, they don't have the money to improve their skills. The same issues are present for other categories as well like electricians and technicians.

(iii) Aspiration and motivation for looking for employment

One of the key findings of the study was about the attitude and perception of the unemployed regarding employment and self-employment opportunities. There is a deep sense of despair and hopelessness among the general community in the colony. The majority of the youth share the same sentiment. They are still yearning for a lifestyle they led in the previous places they used to live in which had several employment opportunities extremely close to their residence.

The unemployed male youths seem to be complacent with their current situation of unemployment and dependency on either on their parents or on spouses. It seems that they have responded to their new life in the resettlement colony by not taking the change head-on but by adopting a negative attitude of just complaining about all the things that are not there anymore especially regarding their source of livelihood. Thus a large number of the unemployed youth can be seen spending their days in the park playing cards or carrom.

Deepak has changed jobs four times in the last few months. His brother Sandeep is 19 years old and is a school dropout. For the past couple of years Sandeep has not done anything productive. His mother complains that he spends most of the time sleeping or hanging around with his other unemployed friends. Sandeep is definitely not an exception in Savda.

Moreover, for some of them being engaged in any kind of criminal activity means quick money and is the easy way out. Alcoholism problems, drug addiction and other substance abuse coupled with eve-teasing have started appearing in the community.

Young unemployed men are not motivated at all to seek employment outside Savda Ghevra. The reasons given by them are as follows:

- Distance is a major issue. Working in Delhi involves a lot of travel. They have to start as early as 5.30 am and would be able to reach back by 9.30 pm. According to them, even traveling to Bahadurgarh (4-5 km away), is very difficult, as there is no direct bus service from the colony to Bahadurgarh.
- Low payment by the factories is another major issue. According to them, a major portion of the payment is spent on transportation and refreshment/food, so there is no use travelling to Delhi, Noida and Gurgaon to spend a substantial amount on bus fare and also spend 16 hours a day out, when they are in any case unable to save any money at the end of the day. Moreover, long travel and working hours adversely affect their health and they get exhausted at the end of the day.
- For nearby areas like Udyog Nagar, Mongol Puri & Bahadurgarh, the youth say that the salaries amount to only Rs. 2000 to 2500 and they expressed their unwillingness to join the factories at such low salary. Again, according to them, they have to spend Rs. 1000 per month and will be able to save only Rs. 1000 to 1500 per month. Youths at different focus group discussions shared that there is only one company in Bahadurgarh that pays minimum wage, whereas all the other factories pay far lower than the minimum wage.

- Moreover, youth do not have much information regarding the vacancies and job opportunities in the above said nearby areas, as they did not make any effort to find out opportunities in the nearby industries.
- Verbal abuse is another deterrent factor for not joining the factories or dropping out from the factories after joining. According to them, the contractors, supervisors and managers in the factory do not behave well with the unskilled labourers and the unemployed youth are not ready to tolerate that against such low salary.
- Though DTC has provided bus services from their colony to different places like ITO, Sarai Kale Khan, the airport, Nangloi and Laxmi Nagar, the service is not reliable and on time. Many times they need to change buses, which involves increased time and cost. Moreover, the bus service is very poor, especially while returning back home.
- Low education levels and lack of skills are the reasons why they are compelled to join as “unskilled labourers” and not in the higher positions as “semi-skilled” or “skilled” categories. As mentioned above, the payment in the unskilled categories is very low and youth prefer sitting at home & playing cards rather than joining factories at low salaries.
- However, the male youth showed their willingness to go for “employment” on the following two conditions - 1. Payment should be more than Rs. 5,000 or/and 2.

Factories should be very close to Savda Ghevra.

- Youth showed their willingness and inclination for self employment within Savda Ghevra (through opening shops) provided they are given the capital for that. However, with the present population, they shared that there is very low scope for opening shops as there are already enough numbers of shops within the community. But with the increasing population, there would be further requirement for opening various kinds of shops in the new blocks.

Women had a different point of view about the “unwillingness” of the men to look for jobs. According to the women, if they can travel till Laxmi Nagar and Noida for working as housemaids, the men can travel as well, but are reluctant and have a problem of attitude. Women shared that it is not the problem of distance or payment, but the problem of “negative attitude”. Men will prefer playing cards and depend on the earnings of their wives or parents, rather than taking the trouble to work in factories. They shared that many of the women who are presently working as “housemaids” are “compelled to work” to run their families, as their husbands are not willing to work.

As far as the unemployed young women are concerned, they are totally in favor of “working at home” and not in favor of “joining employment”. The major reasons, as shared by them, are as follows:

- Collection of water is a big concern. Women have to be in their house to collect water as the Delhi Water Board Tanker may come at any time and they have to collect water for the

consumption of the family for the whole day. So, they are compelled to stay at home. Also, they need to manage other household chores like cooking, washing, cleaning and looking after the children.

- Women are illiterate and mostly unskilled, except for the women who have been shifted from the Lakshmi Nagar area and are now residing in A & B blocks. Being uneducated and unskilled, they cannot get “good jobs” anywhere and the only option left is to work as “unskilled labourers” with “very low salaries”. They, therefore, prefer to stay at home. Those who are employed are mainly working as housemaids and unskilled labourers in agriculture sector, construction work and in factories.
- Distance is another major deterrent factor, like the unemployed young men. Some of the women also shared that their husbands would not allow them to travel long distances for “job”.
- It was found that the women in general are not happy with the current situation of going out for manual labour work while the men waste their time playing cards or doing nothing at all. These women would prefer that their daughters learn knitting and sewing than doing manual labour which is against their ‘culture’.

In conclusion, the unemployed young women don’t want any kind of work. The most preferable option for them would be to work in factories opened within their resettlement colony or at walkable distance or any kind of home-based income generating activities. Both these options will enable them to manage family responsibilities as well as earn some extra money.

Lack of necessary assets

Other resettlement colony experience shows that the saving mechanism among residents of slum dwellers and resettlement colonies is negligible. This phenomenon is largely due to a lack of regular income and to the inability to open bank accounts. As per the findings of the survey carried out by CURE in Savda Ghevra, 78.85% of the families living in the colony do not have a bank account (and close to 20% of the families have taken loans mainly for construction purposes). Large sections of the inhabitants thus do not have access to a formal system of financing. Banks or Micro-Finance Institutions (MFI) are not very eager to enter resettlement areas because of non-secure income or assets and lack of documentation on the loan seekers.

Issues regarding self-employment options in Savda Ghevra

One of the major problems faced by the community when it was established in 2006 was that there were no commercial units allowed in the residential plots in Savda Ghevra. Plots for commercial centres have already been demarcated in the overall plan for the area but not yet allotted. The nearest shops were at a minimum distance of 1.5 kms at Ghevra More. Gradually shops & services were opened in the colony to cater to the local needs of the community even though they are still not legal or authorized and always

face the risk of being shut down. The mapping of the local shops done by the study team shows that there are 186 shops in Savda Ghevra providing self employment opportunities to nearly 240 persons.

Conclusion

As per the findings of the GFA study carried out by ASK, the situation regarding youth unemployment in Savda Ghevra represents a real challenge in terms of both employability of the youth (adequate skills, necessary training...) and their mindset (unwillingness to travel, reluctance to work for minimum wage salaries, refusal to carry out manual work...). Their aspirations, though legitimate, seem totally disproportionate compared to their actual situation.

Tackling the livelihood deadlock cannot be done by applying a ready-to-implement formula. Various aspects must be taken into account; strengthening the employability of the youth through training modules relevant to the professional opportunities existing around the colony (industrial areas, small factories), and through constant counseling, identifying realistic carrier opportunities for them.

However, finding a job is not the only option available to the unemployed. The colony is home to nearly 15000 people who are also potential customers and need to purchase services and goods. Consequently, even if it is a low-income level community, opportunities for self-employment and micro & small enterprises do exist. A third aspect is the setting up and support (through micro-finance) of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) which work as a structure helping people (mostly women) to start their own home-based income-generating activities. Along with the previously mentioned activities, this initiative would complete this comprehensive livelihood intervention.

In order to achieve the objectives of this multi-faceted intervention, a broad collaborative model should be drawn between NGOs, specialized organizations, corporates, banks and individual experts as each of them have a specific and crucial role to play in ensuring the success of this endeavour.

