



# City for All

*An Inclusive & Just City for All*

## EVENT REPORT

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BHUJ, KUTCH

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# Context

Cities are facing unprecedented challenges due to the current urban planning and development patterns, as well as human lifestyles. Urban populations in India are projected to exceed 50% by 2050 [United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2014)].

Cities like Bhuj are experiencing increased pressure on natural resources and infrastructure. Natural landscapes such as wetlands, grasslands, and water bodies are either destroyed or encroached upon to build and expand our cities.

Our cities, now, can be broadly distinguished into two distinct parts:

- a. Areas where the affluent and middle class live.
- b. Areas where people experiencing poverty live.

Despite Article 15 of the Indian Constitution, glaring inequality in access to primary services such as housing, water, sanitation, healthcare, and education are visible between these two halves of the same city. These coupled with extreme climatic changes like heatwaves and erratic rainfall

As a result, people living in poverty are compelled to live and work in undignified conditions, trapping them in a vicious cycle, as we stare at an ever-widening inequality gap in India.

This report is an outcome of “City For All”, a 2-day event organised by Homes In the City on 28th & 29th of September, 2024, to present and discuss its work before the citizens of Bhuj, government officials, and development experts to open a dialogue, get their feedback, insights and engage them in the process. Their contributions enriched the discussions, helping identify opportunities, gain insights, refine current initiatives, and chart a roadmap for the future.



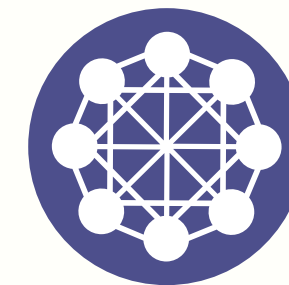
# Homes In the City (HIC)

In 2008, five organisations of Kutch— Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS), SETU Abhiyan, Hunnarshala Foundation, Sahjeevan, and Arid Communities and Technologies (ACT), — initiated an innovative program called “Homes in the City (HIC)” in Bhuj in 2008.

Homes In the City aims to make Bhuj an inclusive and just city for marginalized and underserved people of society. Its objective is to ensure meaningful participation of these communities in the development of the city and involve them as a positive force for the betterment of Bhuj. Another focus of the program is to conserve and enhance the natural heritage, such as water systems and biodiversity, through eco-sensitive technologies and practices.

Since its inception, several learnings, experiences, and exchanges among citizens have taken place. Demonstrations related to slum redevelopment, water recharge and conservation, wastewater recycling, biodiversity mapping, and conservation have been successfully conducted. Several community-based organizations (CBOs), such as Sakhi Sangini, Nirman Sathi Sangathan (NSS), and Ward Committees, have been formed and are actively working to achieve HIC’s objectives. Currently, the HIC program reaches over 12,000 families in the city through its various interventions.

## Working collectively towards...



**Democratic Decentralisation**



**Environmental &  
Ecological Sustainability**



**Equity & Empowerment**

## Partner Organisations



Supported by



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# Urban Environment Education (UEE)

## Panellists

- Sandeep Virmani, Foudrer & Mentor, HIC
- Dr. Avinash Mahade, CEE, Pune
- Samir Sheikh, Education Expert, Gujarat
- Sanjay Thakar, Ex. Principal at DIET-Bhuj
- Rutvid Dholakiya, Vice-Pricipal, Sishukunj School, Bhuj

The Urban Environmental Education (UEE) program started in 2023, aims to foster a sense of responsibility towards the local environment by educating school children with the knowledge and awareness necessary to engage with and respond to their immediate environmental issues.

UEE showcases development alternatives demonstrated by HIC through out the city in the past, to show live examples of environment friendly technologies and practices.

UEE has been running in 12 public schools of Bhuj over the past year, reaching almost 3500 students.



# Community Voices

## **Zaibunisha Raima**

TEACHER AT UMEDNAGAR SCHOOL, BHUJ

“One student took the initiative to ask a neighbour to repair a leaking tap, demonstrating how these lessons have extend beyond the classroom.”

## **Rajesh Gor**

PRINCIPAL AT PATWADI SCHOOL, BHUJ

“The students’ awareness and sensitivity towards environmental issues had grown significantly, even influencing behavioural changes at home.”





# Experts' Views

## Dr Avinash Mahade

CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION, PUNE

“We should be using folklore and local culture to promote environmental awareness.....

There is a need for education that does not scare children about the state of the planet but helps them understand climate change from a scientific and historical lens.”

## Sandeep Virmani

FOUNDER, HIC

“The focus on students will require a longer time. There is a need for developing teacher-training modules to ensure broader reach across Bhuj, through the District Institute for Education and Training (DIET).”

# Key Takeaways

01. **Supporting the UEE Team :** UEE team should also be taken on exposure visits across the country to learn from other programs of education and environmental education in particular.
02. **Building and Sharing Knowledge :** Toolkits can be developed to share knowledge between similar organisations. At the same time a state-level workshop was proposed to share the knowledge
03. **Teacher Involvement is Key :** Preparing teachers through training ensures that the program can be scaled up and institutionalised within the DIET
04. **Monitoring & Evaluation :** Annual data collected before and after should be compiled to monitor the progress of the project.



# Climate Resilience

## Panellists

- Bhawna Meharia, Mahila Housing Trust, Ahmedabad
- Lokendra Balasaria, Treewalks, Ahmedabad

Homes in the City has been building resilience among underserved communities through small but effective methods to tide over the dangerous shifts in climate. Climate resilience is the ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate disruptions while reducing vulnerabilities. Over the years HIC has tried to demonstrate several innovative ideas to this end, the most recent being : kitchen gardens, smokeless stoves, and solar-reflective paints for thermal comfort. Currently 50 smokeless stoves, 11 solar-reflective painted roofs and 10 kitchen gardens have been installed.



# Community Voices

## Heeraben Parmar

GIDC AREA, BHUJ

“In the beginning, we used to use the other stove. There was too much heat and difficulty in breathing due to this. Switching to a smokeless stove is useful for big families; there is no smoke as well. Those who stay in a ‘jhopadi’-s find it to be helpful.”



## Amrutben Vaghela

SHIVRAMANDAP, BHUJ

“When the (solar-reflective white paint on asbestos roofs) paint was not there, the children used to get fever in summer; it was very hard for me too. Now, after the coating of paint, the children don’t fall sick, and they are able to stay in their house even without electricity. I conducted a meeting with other women of the locality regarding this, and they are also using it now.”



# Experts' Views

## Bhavna Maheriya

MAHILA HOUSING TRUST  
(MHT)

“We should collectivise and work together. We need to work with the people.”

She also encouraged the use of community-based vulnerability assessment tools, developed by MHT, to identify their basic needs and work collaboratively on solutions based on a comprehensive needs assessment.



## Key Takeaways

**Health Improvements:** The adoption of environmentally friendly practices, behavioral and lifestyle changes can lead to better health outcomes for families, community and particularly children.



# Biodiversity Conservation

HIC addresses depleting biodiversity by creating greenbelts and planting native species suited to Bhuj's ecosystem. Over five years, 10,000 trees have been planted through community engagement, significantly increasing the city's green cover.

A pilot project mapped 28,000 trees, with plans to expand to 40,000. Students and older residents collaborated to identify species, assess tree height, girth, and carbon sequestration potential, and analyze biodiversity. Using GIS a comprehensive database is being developed. These efforts have resulted in an interactive website : [treesofbhuj.in](http://treesofbhuj.in)

## Panellists

- Lokendra Balasaria, Treewalks, Ahmedabad
- Bhawna Meharia, Mahila Housing Trust, Ahmedabad



# Community Voices

## Navin Bapat

ENVIRONMENTALIST, BHUJ

“We don’t have to take everything upon ourselves. We need to inform the government about their responsibility.” It was agreed that the Social Forestry Department and municipality should be held accountable for their responsibilities in such matters.



# Experts' Views

## Lokendra Balasaria

TREE WALKS, AHMEDABAD

“Let data not just be data; let data become information that can be easily understood.” He urged for the transformation of data into actionable information.



# Key Takeaways

- 01. Local Engagement :** The involvement of local communities in plantation efforts helps to identify and cater to their specific needs, as well as to build ownership and accountability.
- 02. Awareness and Campaigns:** Increasing awareness about such initiatives and their benefits, through social media, campaigns, posters and local networks can drive greater participation and momentum for advocacy.
- 03. Monitoring and Actionable Data:** Accurate data collection and its synthesis and simplification into actionable information can empower communities to understand climate change impacts and develop informed mitigation plans.
- 04. Collaboration with Government:** Informing and collaborating with government entities ensures sustainable resource management, accountability and financial sustenance.





# Dignity of Migrant Workers

## Panellists

- Vipul Pandya, Bandhkam Majdur Sangathan
- Priti Oza, Centre for Labour Research & Action
- Mahesh Gajera, Ajeevika Bureau, Ahmedabad
- Chintan Bhatt, Gujarat Labour Department
- Kishore Shekha, NULM

There are 6,000 migrants in Bhuj, who migrate from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and neighbouring states, in search of better livelihoods but often find themselves in precarious situations marked by low wages, unsafe working conditions, and social & economic discrimination. They are deprived of access to primary facilities, such as toilets, clean water, electricity, or a proper house, even though they contribute significantly to the city, through their labour in construction, agriculture, and domestic work.





In Bhuj, the NSS (Nirman Saathi Sanghatan) is a CBO of almost 400 migrant workers supported by HIC and Setu Abhiyan. The NSS works to address issues of the migrant (informal) workers and organise them around their constitutional rights, such as fair wages, right to shelter and basic services - water, sanitation, etc.

They connect them to government schemes, build capacity, including women-focused initiatives like the Mamta card, and oversee two Anganwadis for their children, ensuring school enrolment. The NSS provides legal counseling, job search assistance, and most importantly a platform for migrants to advocate for their rights. Legal aid helps workers recover unpaid wages, compensation in case of accidents, etc.

They recognise that to enhance the support system for migrant workers, it is crucial to collaborate with local donors, government entities, and the municipality.



# Experts' Views

## Vipul Pandya

BANDHKAM MAJDUR SANGATHAN

“If the migrants want rights, they need to have a collective voice of their own. Legally, it paves the way to fight. Currently, the only law that exists is the The Minimum Wages Act, 1948, and while there are welfare funds allocated for migrants, the money often ends up in government treasuries rather than benefiting the workers themselves. Moreover Right to Education should be mandated for migrant children.”



## Preeti Oza

CENTRE FOR LABOUR RESEARCH & ACTION

“The Scheme of Shelters for Urban Homeless under NULM is very important. It provides detailed data on migrant worker distribution in cities. A 2016 Supreme Court order mandates committees to monitor and report on shelter implementation, ensuring accountability and proper fund utilization. We need to leverage this data to hold these committees accountable.”

“There is a need to unionize migrant workers around their rights rather than relying solely on non-profits to provide services.”



# Key Takeaways

- 01. Challenges Faced by Women Migrants:** Women migrants face unique challenges, including wage disparity, unequal workload, and health concerns.
- 02. Advocacy for Pensions and compensations:** Seasonal challenges and climate risks, necessitate the advocacy for compensation during these periods of unemployment, and a database to track migrant workers' needs. It was suggested that the cess collected from builders for the welfare of construction workers (BoCW) should fund these pensions.
- 03.** Leverage the **Scheme of Shelters for Urban Homeless (SUH) under NULM**, supported by Supreme Court directives (2016), to improve living conditions of migrant workers.
- 04.** **Unionising Migrants :** Advocate for unionizing migrant workers to secure their rights rather than relying solely on service-based non-profit interventions.





# Participatory Governance

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, introduced decentralised governance in India through urban local bodies like municipalities, mandating ward committees in cities with populations over 3,00,000. However, it lacks guidelines for smaller cities like Bhuj with lesser populations.

Since 2010, Setu Abhiyan, a partner of HIC, has been mobilising citizens and forming ward committees in Bhuj to address this gap. Of the city's 11 wards, 10 now have functioning committees, with Ward 9's committee in progress. These committees enable residents to address local issues, hold representatives accountable, and create ward-level plans.

## Panellists

- Arun Vachchrajani, Ex. President of Bhuj Municipality
- Manubha Jadeja, Counsellor of Ward 8
- Bhoomi Trivedi, Ward Committee Member of Ward 8
- Mohammad Sharif Malek, Centre For Development, Ahmedabad



# Community Voices

## **Kasam Sama**

COUNCILLOR OF WARD 8

“There is a need for better administrative practices. We need to conduct information and aadhar-linkage related camps in the areas where people live, so they don’t have to leave work.” He also spoke about challenges such as misinformation about government schemes.

# Experts’ Views

## **Arun Vachhrajani**

EX. PRESIDENT OF BHUJ MUNICIPALITY

“Housing societies should have representation in municipal committees to ensure that residents’ needs are adequately addressed. This would strengthen governance at both the ward and city levels by promoting accountability and citizen participation.”

“While municipalities officially recognize only standing and sanitation committees, they have the authority to establish additional committees to enhance governance and community engagement.”



# Key Takeaways

- 01. Replication of Bhuj model: case studies of** Bhuj's participatory governance practices should be documented and used as case studies for wider dissemination and to hold administration accountable. Advocacy should be done at the state-level to encourage the replication of this model across Gujarat.
- 02. Legal Recognition and Advocacy:** There is a need for legal recognition of ward committees and their development plans, to ensure sustainability and advocated for forming ward committees in smaller cities for better governance.





# Water Conservation

## Panellists

- Rohit Prajapati, Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti, Vadodara
- Azhar Saiyad, Asia Resilient Cities, US AID, Rajkot
- Lokendra Balasaria, Tree Walks, Ahmedabad
- Parthasarathy Rengarajan, Steering Committee Member

HIC along with Arid Communities Technology (ACT, technical partner) has piloted several inspiring model of water conservation in Bhuj, emphasising local participation, mapping, advocacy and knowledge sharing. A movement and a people's collective, Jalstrot Sneh Samvardhan Samiti (JSSS) seeks to make Bhuj self-reliant in water management by focusing on the notification and restoration of lakes and traditional water systems in and around the city. The initiative has demonstrated practical solutions such as rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, and greywater recycling to address water conservation challenges. Along with that, efforts to notify and rejuvenate historic lakes are underway.



# Community Voices

## Kantilal Arya

ACTIVE CITIZEN OF BHUJ

"We have seen a smooth water management system in Bhuj through living means like ponds, wells and canals, but the current situation will make our Bhuj beg for water!"

"If the traditional water sources of Bhuj will be protected, not only will the groundwater level rise, but our future generations will also be protected."





# Experts' Views

## Azhar Saiyad

ASIA RESILIENT CITIES, US AID, RAJKOT

“Water source mapping is important to create actionable conservation plans. Identifying water resources and collaborating with stakeholders to protect them is crucial. There is also a need to tap into local knowledge and involve local bureaucrats in water governance.”



## Lokendra Balasaria

TREE WALKS, AHMEDABAD

“We need to celebrate the environment through songs and dance. It is important to integrate cultural practices into water conservation efforts. Water and life are directly related to each other.”



# Key Takeaways

- 01. Importance of harvesting rainwater :** Rainwater is the purest source of water available to us. It is very easy to harvest it at homes and can be immensely effective in addressing water shortages.
- 02. Integrate Supply-Side and Demand-Side Management:** Successful water conservation depends on balancing water supply with demand through collaborative efforts. Currently there is conversation around the government's policies. But what do citizens of Bhuj want? Do they want a centralised water system or a localised one?
- 03. Multidisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Approaches:** Bhuj's multidisciplinary approach to water issues must evolve into transdisciplinary collaboration, addressing interconnected challenges like land use, encroachment, waste dumping, and citizen roles. A linear approach is insufficient; broader involvement is essential.
- 04. Prepare Evidence for Advocacy:** Building strong evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of conservation initiatives is essential for gaining policy support and funding.





# Dignity of Waste Pickers

## Panellists

- Nikhil Dhamani - Bhuj Municipality, SBM
- Bindiya Thackkar, Counsellor of Ward 9
- Jehan Bhujwala, Active Citizen of Bhuj
- Bianca Fernandes, Hasiru Dala, Bangalore
- Indumathi, Hasiru Dala, Bangalore

“In this drive for change, waste pickers should have the first say.” This statement encapsulated the core message of the session—recognising the agency of waste pickers and ensuring their voices are central to shaping waste management solutions in the city.

HIC has been working to organise waste pickers in Bhuj. 30 waste pickers have been linked with Ayushman Bharat and E-Shram cards, for health and social security benefits from the state. A study has also been conducted to understand the value chain from waste pickers to recyclers, to identify economic opportunities.



# Community Voices

## Rambha Mohanlal Mochi

WASTE PICKER, MIGRATED FROM M.P.

“Pet ke liye sab kuch karte hai. Mein bina khaye raat ko so sakta hu lekin mere bachcha nahi”

For many, waste collection is not a choice but a necessity to survive. She expressed that basic needs like housing, water, and electricity are all they require, but due to the absence of state support, their children often must work alongside them, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.



# Experts' Views

## Bianca Fernandes

HASIRU DALA, BENGALURU

“Identity and formal recognition through identity cards should be the first step towards empowering waste pickers. This leads to improved livelihoods and dignity. It is important to collectivise waste workers through unions.”

Hasirudula equips waste pickers with practical skills like financial literacy and savings, while collaborating with designers to improve working conditions through ergonomic tools.”

## Indumathi

ASSOCIATION MEMBER, HASIRU DALA, BENGALURU

“We used to hesitate to ask for water, but now we sit at the table with officials and are called ‘madam.’”

# Key Takeaways

**01.** **Recognition of waste pickers** by citizens and the municipality is the first step for their inclusion in society.

**02.** **Public awareness initiatives:** Despite efforts in educational institutions and workplaces, compliance with waste segregation remains a challenge, with top-performing areas achieving only 82% segregation. Collaborations with health inspectors or officials enhance campaign effectiveness.

**03.** **Emerging threats from Centralisation:** Private sector involvement in waste management process could threaten the livelihoods of waste pickers, unless waste workers are actively included. Advocates recommend involving waste pickers in door-to-door collection through self-help groups (SHGs) to ensure sustainable livelihoods.

**04.** **Need for collectivisation:** Waste workers need to transition from being unorganised to organised through unions, which helps them secure better wages, benefits, and working conditions.

**05.** **Inclusion in formal systems:** Waste pickers must be formally integrated into Solid Waste Management (SWM) frameworks by involving them in door-to-door and dry waste collection as well as RRR (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) centres. Training programs at these centres enhance their skills in treating different waste types.





# Empowering Women in Urban Slums

## Panellists

- Ami Shroff, Trustee at Shrujan, Kutch
- Avni Dave, Women and Child Development Officer, Bhuj
- Priti Oza, Centre for Labour Research & Action
- Kishor Shekha, National Urban Livelihoods Mission

Women in urban slums face significant challenges, According to NFHS-5 data, 31% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence. Addressing these issues, Sakhi Sangini, a women-led SHG federation (initially nurtured by KMVS) established in 2007, has organised 153 SHGS comprising over 4,000 members from marginalized communities in Bhuj. It provides a platform for women and adolescent girls to voice their concerns, build capacity, and foster leadership in a safe environment.

Operating in slum communities, it connects women to livelihood opportunities, legal support and social security schemes, focusing on financial, physical, and social safety.



# Community Voices

## Fatma ben Jat

COMMUNITY LEADER

“I had begun saving with just ₹50 in the beginning. I used to take a loan from a money lender and now I tell him that if he needs loan I can give him. My dream is of more women joining SHGs”



## Kanta ben & Nareshbhai Maheshwari

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS, SHIVRAMANDAP, BHUJ

“I had a sweet shop but I wondered how to create income for the people around me. I got a loan from Dreams Foundation to start my own business. Now I am also able to give employment to 5 more women from my business.”

They established a snacks business by receiving a loan of ₹1,50,000 facilitated by Sakhi Sangini.



# Experts' Views

## Ami Shroff

DIRECTOR OF SHRUJAN

“Trainings are important for young women and adolescents to take on leadership roles within their organisation. There is a need for expanding leadership among women. While Sakhi Sangini has successfully developed community leaders like Hansa, Gopi and Shabana, there is a pressing need to groom more women leaders, especially among younger generations.”

## Preeti Oza

CENTRE FOR LABOUR RESEARCH & ACTION

“There needs to be a focus on constitutional rights, ensuring that women demand and access their rights and entitlements rather than relying on pity or welfare, and advocate for self-sufficient communities. Many regions in India are successfully addressing alcohol addiction through women’s initiatives.”





# Key Takeaways

- 01. Leadership Development:** Initiatives should focus on developing more leaders beyond the current three, empowering a broader segment of the community especially young women. There is a pressing need to involve more adolescents and young people in initiatives to foster leadership and community engagement.
- 02. Adopting Rights-Based Approach:** Moving from a safety-focused to a rights-based approach is essential for ensuring that women understand and can advocate for their constitutional rights.
- 03. Awareness of Cyber Crime:** Training programs aimed at educating young people about online fraud and cybercrime are necessary to enhance their safety.
- 04. Addressing Addiction:** Tackling substance addiction is critical; community discussions and action plans should prioritise this issue.





# Housing & Land Rights

## Panellists

- Sandeep Virmani, Foudler & Mentor, HIC
- Anil Wasnik, Social Activist, Nagpur
- Shri Vinod Chavda, MP, Kutch Morbi
- Shri Keshubhai Patel, MLA, Kutch
- Anupradha Singh, Advocate, Supreme Court, Delhi
- Shailendra Wasnik, Social Activist, Nagpur
- Dharmishtha B. Prajapati, Bhuj Municipality, PMAY

*“Sheher ko banane wale jhuggi mei rehte hai.”*

This was the question which loomed large over the audience present – which were people from the community, representatives of various organisations, public officials and elected representatives including Shri Vinod Chavda, Member of Parliament (MP) and Shri Keshubhai Patel, Member of Legislative Assembly. (MLA). A theatrical presentation narrating the everyday vulnerabilities faced by the women who form the Zameen Awas Adhikar Manch and other members of the communities, was enacted, which



touched upon various issues that have over time become obstacles for people from communities of Bhuj to access rightful land and housing.

During the first housing program in Bhuj (2013–14) 314 houses were built in Ramdev Nagar, Bhimrao Nagar, and GIDC, through an owner-driven approach.

This approach allowed families to build homes tailored to their needs, ensuring better quality and saving 20–30% of construction costs by eliminating contractors.

Currently 1500 families have applied for land ownership under Gujarat Government Resolution of 2003 so that they can build their houses under PMAY.

Recently land has been allocated for 191 houses being relocated from 3 settlements, under PMAY

However, the greatest and most tragic hurdle faced by this movement at the moment is the outdated 2003 Revenue Department, Government Resolution (GR) of Government of Gujarat (GoG) No JMN-392003-454-A dated June 6,

2003 that gives authority to the District Collector to allocate land to an individual up to 200 sq metres, having an annual income of Rs. 48,000/-. As a result, 58 families applied for the land with all the necessary documents. However most of the applications submitted in 2022 and 2023 were rejected by the Collector Office **as their household income is above Rs 48,000/- per annum.**

Whereas most of the families have an annual income of Rs. 60,000-70,000/-. These applications were rejected in 2023-24 based on the income criteria set in 2003.

Moreover, central government schemes such as PMAY, National Food Security Act (NFSA), Aayushman Bharat, consider the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) up to Rs. 3 lakh of annual income. Advocacy is on going at the state-level for updating the 2003 GR to make it relevant in the present context.

The MP Shri Vinod Chawda and MLA Shri Keshubhai Patel have assured their active support and cooperation in this matter.

# Experts' Views

## Sandeep Virmani

FOUNDER, HIC

“Almost all of the land in Bhuj is controlled by the collector. Nagarpalika doesn't have land. If people are given 8% of this land controlled by collector, then everyone can have 60sq. ft. of land. If a ground plus one or 2 house is to be constructed then only 5 % is enough. The government is willing to allocate funds but land transfer is the main hurdle at the moment.”



## Anupradha Singh

ADVOCATE, SUPREME COURT, NEW DELHI

“Roti, kapda makaan, mool bhoot adhikar hai” (*Food, clothing and shelter are fundamental rights of every citizen.*)

“There several orders of Supreme Court which mandates rehabilitation instead of forceful eviction. However it is noticed that many people don't posses essential documents like adhaar, ration cards etc to claim their legitimate rights.”





## Anil Wasnik

SOCIAL ACTIVIST, NAGPUR

“Land Rights must be made a political agenda.”

“There existed the 2002 GR in Maharashtra under which advocacy campaign was carried out by people. Following the advocacy, land rights

was made a political agenda by the community as well as the electioneers, the latter ensured that after their win the residents were settled legally on the land they were living.”

He advised to push for advocacy and alongside work to amend the PMAY for the families to be allocated and settled on the land they presently live on.



# Key Takeaways

- 01.** Aware, encourage poor informal dwellers on government land to get the land for rehabilitation under the 2003 GR
- 02.** Develop strategies to involve the government in addressing housing as a human rights issue.  
  
The urban planning department of the city must be equipped to anticipate present and future needs and demands, developing plans for a better and dignified life for all. At least 8% of the land in Bhuj must be allocated for housing the citizens who are informal dwellers.
- 03.**
- 04.** Conditional laws cater to the needs and demands of citizens, but their implementation depends on the intent of the administration.



# City Planning Game for Youth

The City Planning Game, designed by Abhat, engaged participants in an interactive simulation where teams represented ward committees and took on roles inspired by real-life characters. Each character's backstory shaped decisions as participants tackled issues like budget allocation and resource management.

The game unfolded in four stages, with committees addressing local challenges and earning community support for effective solutions. It aimed to empower participants, fostering collaboration on issues beyond individual neighborhoods and encouraging reflection on city-wide challenges.



Participants often struggled to empathize with unfamiliar roles, such as men assigned female characters or a woman portraying an environmental activist. Resource allocation decisions frequently reflected personal identities, with some prioritizing community needs over ward-wide concerns. In critical situations, leaders remained resolute, balancing individual and collective interests.

Notable moments included a participant advocating for healthcare over infrastructure, stating, “if there is no life, there is nothing,” and two committees collaborating to address migrant worker evictions despite other pressing concerns.

During reflections, participants emphasized the importance of collaboration, swift action, and addressing systemic issues like housing, land rights, and waste management to build stronger, more inclusive communities.





# General Reflections & Way Forward

01.

Bhuj's coordination and collaboration efforts should serve as a model for other cities.

02.

Strengthen documentation efforts to build evidence and ensure knowledge dissemination.

03.

Focus on capacity building for both government and HIC teams to improve communication and advocacy.

04.

Foster multidisciplinary approaches to address urban challenges holistically.

05.

Engage for policy advocacy at different levels through citizens' collectives

06.

Involve schools and youth in urban initiatives to cultivate long-term community engagement.

