

Summary

Lado Sarai has been the subject of research on planned development of urban villages and unauthorized colonies. The first phase of the project concentrated on the immediate problems generated by the inter city transport arteries, and the consequent vehicular parking along the edges of the village. Another consequence of the master plan road network was the increase of new offices, studios, and galleries, because of affordable space available in the village.

The second phase of the project has focused on the environmental improvement of the old village. Discussions with the village residents done in the first phase highlighted the problem of management of public open spaces, including the main commercial life line of old MB road. A detailed environmental survey became the entry point for understanding the life patterns of the resident community and inviting their participation in planned development of their village.

The main issues of environmental dysfunction were evident in the public open spaces, and these were related to surface water flow and disorderly vehicular traffic. It was noted that an underground sewage network had been installed a few years ago by the Municipality, but this did not appear to be functional. As a consequence of the dysfunctional utilities, the public open spaces were not well used by the residents, and this led to further environmental decay. An organized set of community meetings with all stakeholders as well as local authority officials, and elected representatives, were held at the site and at the DUAC office. A consensus emerged that the primary issue to be addressed was drainage and sewage treatment, since the network already installed was not functioning.

Ten significant public open spaces were identified in the survey. Of these the most important was the central open space around the Shiv Mandir. It was agreed with the community that the adjoining area known as Shiv Mandir Chowk, would serve as the ideal example to demonstrate integrated environmental improvement action with active involvement of the local residents.

The demonstration project was part of a comprehensive plan drawn up for the whole village to address the problems diagnosed, being provision of civic amenities in the public open spaces, sewage treatment facilities in a decentralized manner, rain water harvesting with management of storm water, and a pedestrian-friendly mobility scheme. As part of this plan, old MB road and the area forming its drainage basin, with the Shiv Mandir Chowk at its centre, became the starting point of the urban renewal proposal.

An important part of the project works has been the documentation of the entire exercise to provide learning for extending the work to other informal settlements of Delhi.

The multiplicity of agencies for implementation of infrastructure works has been a major problem in provision of urban utilities and their maintenance. The DUAC, which has a regulatory function over local authorities, is ideally placed to play an over-arching role of coordinating the local agencies for implementation of these works. The Lado Sarai study shows the way of overcoming this governance lacuna and providing a basis for rejuvenation of informal settlements, which form seventy five percent of the urban fabric of the city of Delhi.