

Can the experience of sewerage development from Orangi Pilot Project in Pakistan be transferred to squatter settlements in Kathmandu, Nepal?

Padmendra Shrestha

East West Center and University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Generally, basic urban services such as water supply and sanitation are provided by the government, but access to such services cannot be guaranteed for everyone in many large cities in developing countries. The Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in Pakistan is an example of an alternative way to provide these services through partnerships among non-governmental organizations (NGOs), communities, and government agencies. It is considered to be one of the most successful community based urban services programs. OPP was started in the 1980s by Akhtar Hameed Khan in the *katchi abadis* (unplanned or squatter settlements) of Karachi. Currently, OPP's works have extended far beyond the neighborhood level to many other parts of Pakistan. Projects in Orangi and in 248 other locations in Pakistan have demonstrated that communities can finance, manage and build internal sewerage development provided they are organized and supported with technical support and managerial guidance.

The squatter settlements in Kathmandu are illegal and are completely neglected by both the local and central governments. People living in these settlements are most vulnerable to preventable communicable and non-communicable diseases and suffer high rates of mortality mainly due to the lack of proper sanitation. This paper focuses on the success of the sewerage development component of OPP and analyzes whether such success can be transferred to the squatter settlements in Kathmandu. The information on the success of OPP is based on websites, journals and books written mostly by people involved in the project, whereas the information on the squatter settlements in Kathmandu is based on my own research concerning the improvement of conditions in 2005/06, and from various websites.

The analysis shows that, for the sewerage development component of OPP to be transferred, the squatter settlements in Kathmandu have good social capital; have community leaders to take responsibility of the project, and have several different mechanisms of financing and the technical support required from NGOs and universities. The paper argues that the experience of sewerage development in OPP can be transferred to squatter communities in Kathmandu given that there is a serious

commitment from both the local and national governments in terms of 1) support through the implementation of the project, 2) defining what the land tenure of the squatters would be, 3) providing safe drinking water to all households, 4) creating waste water treatment plants before river discharge and 5) properly planning squatter settlements.