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# SUVIDHA CENTRES

Impact assessment

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) is India's largest Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Company with a 90-year heritage in the country. The company manufactures over 65 billion units annually, that are made available to their consumers through nine million retail outlets and many digital commerce platforms.<sup>[1]</sup>

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) commitments, HUL has established 16 Suvidha Centres in partnership with BMC (Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation), HSBC India and JSW in Maharashtra state. These centres are designed to provide low-income urban informal settlements with access to clean toilets, purified drinking water, showers, and laundromat services, thereby meeting their hygiene and sanitation needs. Since its launch in 2016, the centres have provided safe sanitation to almost 12,00,000+ people, aligning with the Swachh Bharat Mission's goal of transforming urban sanitation under the Government of India's leadership.<sup>[2]</sup>

One of the major challenges facing our world today is growing urbanization that poses a challenge in adequately planning, financing, and delivering municipal services. There are estimates that 1 in 4 people in the world will live in an informal urban settlement by 2030. Communities living in informal settlements in urban areas often experience the most challenges with continually growing populations with limited access to necessities such as clean drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene. Community toilets across the world often face a vicious cycle which results in the under-utilisation due to the following reasons:

Many community members in informal settlements incur difficult hardships such as standing in long queues for public toilets resulting in an indifference and low sense of ownership towards community systems. Moreover, due to issues such as vandalism and improper usage, the costs of maintenance of public toilets go up. The inability to recover operating costs for cleaning (due to insufficient revenue streams) further reduces the financial sustainability of the toilets resulting in community toilets being abandoned altogether.



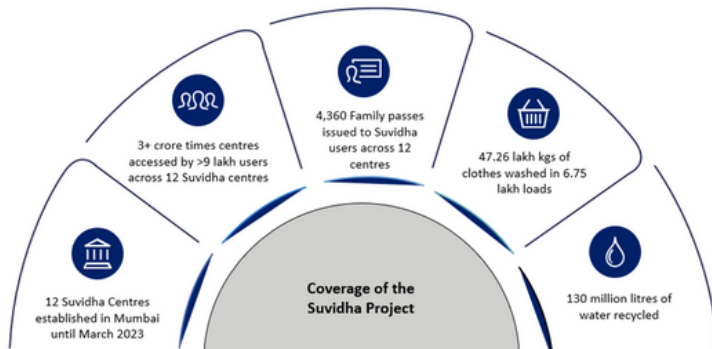
1. HUL company website via [online link](#)  
2. Suvidha Playbook as shared by HUL CSR programme staff

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Of total 16 Suvidha centres in Mumbai, 12 centres that were built until March 2023 were eligible for Impact Assessment

In compliance with the robust governance protocols that govern the decision-making and management of the CSR portfolio at HUL, Deloitte was tasked with conducting the impact assessment of the Suvidha project being implemented in Mumbai, Maharashtra funded from the FY'22-23 CSR grants.<sup>3]</sup>

There are 16 Suvidha Centres across Mumbai that provide safe and dignified access to clean toilets, drinking water, showers, and laundromat services to the urban informal settlements. Of the 16 centres functional to date, 12 centres were eligible for impact assessment for the FY 22-23 basis their year of establishment. The project coverage is presented below.



## RELEVANCE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

1. **An estimated 41.8% of Mumbai's population lives in urban slums** where health is dictated by a high degree of poverty, and low access to resources combined with poor living conditions. This leads to a greater degree of infections, disease, and other health conditions.<sup>4]</sup>
2. **Mumbai has over 8,000 community and public toilet blocks with nearly 80,000 toilet seats—with the ratio heavily skewed in favour of men**, according to ward-wise data released by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).<sup>5]</sup>
3. Going by Swachh Bharat Mission's specifications of one toilet seat for 35 males and 25 females in urban slums, **Mumbai currently faces a shortfall of over 33,000 toilet seats!**<sup>4]</sup>
4. Based on independent surveys, 78% of community toilets in Mumbai's slums suffer from water supply issues, 58% lack electricity, and a substantial number lack proper doors and disposal facilities for women's sanitary napkins.<sup>6]</sup>
5. Project Suvidha considers such community requirements to align with the health, well-being, and dignity of urban informal residents in Mumbai.



3. Based on MIS data for Project Suvidha

4. Maitreyee Patwardhan et al. (2023), "Types of health service utilization in Mumbai slums: a community-based survey", BMC Research Notes, 16:289, [Online link](#), accessed 23 February 2024

5. Dhaval Desai (2023), "Resolving Mumbai's slum sanitation will make India ODP", Observers Research Foundation, [Online link](#), accessed 23 February 2024

6. Smruti Koppikar (2017), "In Mumbai's poorest slums, water and sanitation carry a steep price tag – sometimes death", Scroll, [Online link](#), accessed 23 February 2024

## OBJECTIVES OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The high-level objectives of the impact assessment awarded to Deloitte are as follows:

1. To identify the target groups and the impact parameters of the project.
2. To design methodology, tools, and parameters of impact after a thorough study of the relevant documents.
3. To study the direct/indirect impact of the CSR initiative on the lives of the target communities and beneficiaries who benefitted from the project.
4. Analysis of the strategic strengths of the project, model of implementation, and performance of the project through interaction with the implementation agencies and other stakeholders.
5. Suggest ways to fine-tune and improve the execution for further implementation or scale-up

Assessment studied the impact of Suvidha on its users



## APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Deloitte used a mixed research design to conduct the impact assessment and answer the following research questions:

1. Are the CSR initiatives either relevant to the community's needs/aspirations or aligned with the developmental priorities of the region?
2. What were the intended or planned outcomes of the initiatives? Are the program's results in line with the anticipated outcomes?
3. How have the CSR initiatives impacted beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders? Explore changes in the physical, economic, and socio-cultural environments.
4. How do the beneficiaries and other stakeholders perceive the CSR initiatives undertaken?
5. Are the activities ensuring long-term solutions to the developmental issues of the region? What elements have been built into the project design that will ensure the sustainability of results?
6. Ascertain any other challenges in the implementation of the activities that are impeding optimal results.

The data for the impact assessment was collected by using customized data collection tools through document/reports review, and key stakeholder and beneficiary interactions (on a sample basis). The primary data collection was conducted with 52 key stakeholders (that included 39 programme management/staff and 13 frontline workers) and 502 Suvidha users (402 through semi-structured sample surveys and 100 through focused group discussions) at four Suvidha centres in February 2024. The data collection was followed by a phase of analysis and documentation of observations and findings.



## SUMMARY OF IMPACT FINDINGS

The current report presents detailed documentation of Deloitte's observations and findings of the impact assessment of HUL funded Suidha project, executed across 12 centres for FY (Fiscal Year) 2022-23. A summary of the findings is presented in the table below, while elaborate documentation is available subsequently in the report.



### A. Improved access to clean and hygienic sanitation services

- **Usage:** **100%** of Suidha users prefer Suidha centres over community toilets due to their superior cleanliness, hygiene, resourcefulness, and maintenance standards.
- **Inclusivity:** **100% of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)** users confirm the **inclusivity** of Suidha Centres, citing features such as ramps and grab bars that enhance comfort and safety. **Integration of third-gender toilets** into its facilities ensures equitable access to essential amenities.

### B. Enhanced economic and health outcomes

- **Productivity Enhancement:** Suidha Centre users save an average of **25 minutes daily** compared to other toilet options, translating to 150 person-hours saved annually per individual. Time saving is a direct enabler to enhance the capacity for economic productivity of households in general and women in particular. Time poverty reduction is further associated with diminished healthcare expenses resulting from fewer instances of illness, thereby affording individuals more time to engage productively in the workforce. The estimation gives an approximate **return of INR 15.15 for every rupee<sup>7</sup> invested in Suidha centres.**
- **Reduction in disease rates and malnutrition prevalence:**
  1. About **50% reduction** in the incidences of **illnesses** such as gastrointestinal and urinary tract infections post-Suidha intervention.<sup>8</sup> For each ailment averted, there is an approximate reduction in the healthcare costs of around INR 500 incurred out-of-pocket, including treatment at private centres.
  2. About **27% reduction in water-borne and vector-borne diseases** is reported by Anganwadi/frontline health workers post-Suidha intervention.
  3. Over **90%** of users attribute disease reduction to **improved healthy practices**, resulting in enhanced post-defecation and food-handling hygiene.
  4. **100% of children now consume full evening meals** without concerns about limited access to -nighttime toilets.
- **Job Creation:** Suidha Centres have **employed over 150 individuals**, offering livelihood opportunities for youth and those seeking stable incomes.



7. Calculations are based on first-level estimates for Project Suidha, with a baseline initial estimation of INR 100 opportunity cost/hour (refer to annexure for working)

8. Deloitte interactions reveal that the frequency of diarrheal cases has reduced from an average of 3 episodes in a year (baseline) to 1-2 episodes in a year, indicating a 50% reduction. UTI cases among females have also shown a dip from 8% in a year (baseline) to 0-1%.

## C. Improved community well-being

- **User Satisfaction:** 95% of users **rate** Suidha Centres as "**Very Good**" in terms of **satisfaction** with clean toilets, water availability, liquid soap for handwashing, and other essential supplies.
- **Water Access:** Community around the centres **rely on Suidha for purified and clean drinking water** during shortages, with 13% considering it the only affordable option.

## D. Women Empowerment

- **Dignity and Welfare:** 100% of female users feel that Suidha has **safeguarded** their dignity and welfare.
- **Night Safety:** 98% of female users **express comfort and confidence** using Suidha toilets at night, citing abundant lighting, surveillance cameras, and an emergency panic button system.
- **Safety and Privacy:** 95% of users attribute their comfort to **enhanced safety and privacy** measures at Suidha Centres.

## E. Adoption of climate-resilient practices

### • **Water Management:**

1. **All Suidha Centres** in Mumbai are equipped with **greywater treatment plants**, with Ghatkopar 2.0 (Jagdusha Nagar) featuring both black water as well as greywater treatment systems.
  2. **100%** of Suidha users avail purified and clean drinking water service at Suidha centres during a water shortage in their respective areas, **thereby building resilience** in the community **to fight climate change impact**.
- **Solar Energy:** Solar panels installed on Suidha Centres' rooftops contribute to a **>50% reduction** in monthly **electricity bills**, showcasing a commitment to climate resilience.

In conclusion, the Suidha intervention has brought about multifaceted benefits, ranging from improved sanitation and economic conditions to enhanced health, women's empowerment, and climate resilience in urban informal settlements.

