



SABARMATI RIVERFRONT....

Socializing a River
& Inclusive Development

By, Sabarmati River Front
Development Corporation
Limited & AMC



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Socializing a River & Inclusive Development

River Sabarmati, the lifeline of Ahmedabad, gained global recognition when Mahatma Gandhi set up his ashram on its bank in 1917, lived there for more than a decade and, in 1930 led from its bank the famous Dandi March that roused the entire nation. Almost after a century, it is again in the news, all over the world. Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi's pet project 'Sabarmati Riverfront Project' has made waves at international level.

KPMG, one of the world's top advisory firms has included Ahmedabad's Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project in the list of '100 Most Innovative Projects' in the field of urban regeneration (2012) that make cities livable as well as sustainable. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) received HUDCO National Award 2012 for innovative infrastructure development for the Riverfront Project.

This project also bagged the Prime Minister award for the best concept and design of a public project. In 2006, the Sabarmati Riverfront Project had also won the National Safety Council of India, Safety Award.

Though the project has won several awards on different fronts, the most significant USP about this landmark project has not been highlighted enough. This project is unique because it truly socialized a river, a historic river, which through decades of neglect and decay, had become a pathetic caricature of a river. The project dealt with sensitive issues like slum rehabilitation, relocation of an age old natural market and a Dhobi Ghat with élan. This project by its inclusive nature has benefited the people from the lowest strata of society. This project has connected the river and people, again directly through its ghats.

The Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project was conceived and is being implemented as a pioneering multi-purpose project with significant urban transformation potential. A Special Purpose Vehicle called the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Corporation Ltd. (SRFDCL) was formed for implementation of the project. The SPV model was being used to avoid the delays associated with municipal decision making, introduce ease in raising resources, and gives implementation efforts a definitive thrust and focus.

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SRFDCL reached out to several NGOs and citizen groups during the process of planning and implementation. SRFDCL retained consultants and planners wherever necessary for project implementation. The implementation was done on a Build, Maintain, Operate and Transfer basis. Private sector contractors were selected on fixed time, fixed rate contracts through transparent and competitive biddings processes and supervised by independent Third Parties appointed by SRFDCL.

The financial cost of the initiative was estimated to be in the range of around INR 11520 million or USD 230 million. Around two thirds of this amount has already been invested. The proceeds from the sale of land created by the project is expected to cover the full cost of the project, including the cost of interest paid on construction, period loans and repayment of equity investments. The sale of portion of reclaimed land (not more than 14% of reclaimed land, though allowed to sell 20 per cent) is envisaged to assist the financial viability of the project so that the public funds are not stretched. This clear thinking and structuring contributed to the perfect implementation of the project.

In the subsequent pages, we deal with the human challenges that this gigantic project dealt with successfully.

Before



As a place for the poor to build their hutments

Rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers

There were nearly 12000 hutments on both banks of the river occupying nearly 20 per cent of the critical project area. A committee was formed under an ex-High Court Judge for finalization of beneficiaries and a Comprehensive Settlement was arrived at under the supervision of the hon'ble Gujarat High Court. More than 10000 families have already been allotted houses for resettlement. 9078 odd families have already been shifted and the remaining is under the process. Of the total allotments, 6 were Christian, 3874 were Muslims and 5198 were Hindus. Each house is of 26.77 sq m carpet area. They were provided with a playing area for kids along with recreation facility. Normally, such relocations of slums usually happen in far-off outskirts areas of the city, whereas in this case the resettlement areas were very much in the prime locations in the city. Current market value of these houses is in the range of INR 10 to 25 Lakhs.

Since a river is treated as the mother in India, it was decided to empower the women in this rehabilitation project by allocating the house in the name of the woman member or in joint name.

Now



Gujari Bazaar - Sunday Market

Gurjari Bazaar is an age old Sunday Market, where women traders comprise close to 40 per cent and half of these describe themselves as Dalits. The bazaar provides livelihood for an estimated 200,000 lower-income residents, through a complex regional chain of artisan entrepreneurs, home workers, mechanics, technicians and small traders. It used to operate near Ellis Bridge on the Riverfront without any infrastructure and used to spill out on the adjoining approach road. It was unhygienic and subjected to risk of flooding during monsoons. Now, it has become the first well developed informal market in India. A MoU was signed between the Ahmedshah Gurjari Association and Sabarmati riverfront Development Corporation. Out of 1200 members of association, 726 members (60.5%) are Hindus and 474 members (39.5%) are Muslims.

Today it is spread over 70,000 sq.mt and 1600 vendors can do their business on 778 pucca platforms and 783 laris. Adequate parking space is provided for 280 two wheelers, 425 four wheelers (1700 two wheelers) and 8 no's of heavy vehicles. More than 200 street lights have been provided in this Market and 800 trees have been planted. Also other basic facilities like toilets, food-court, drinking water, and seating area have been provided. With this unique rehabilitation exercise, the litigation and the stay order from the High Court could also be vacated to pave way for the new initiative.

Before



Now



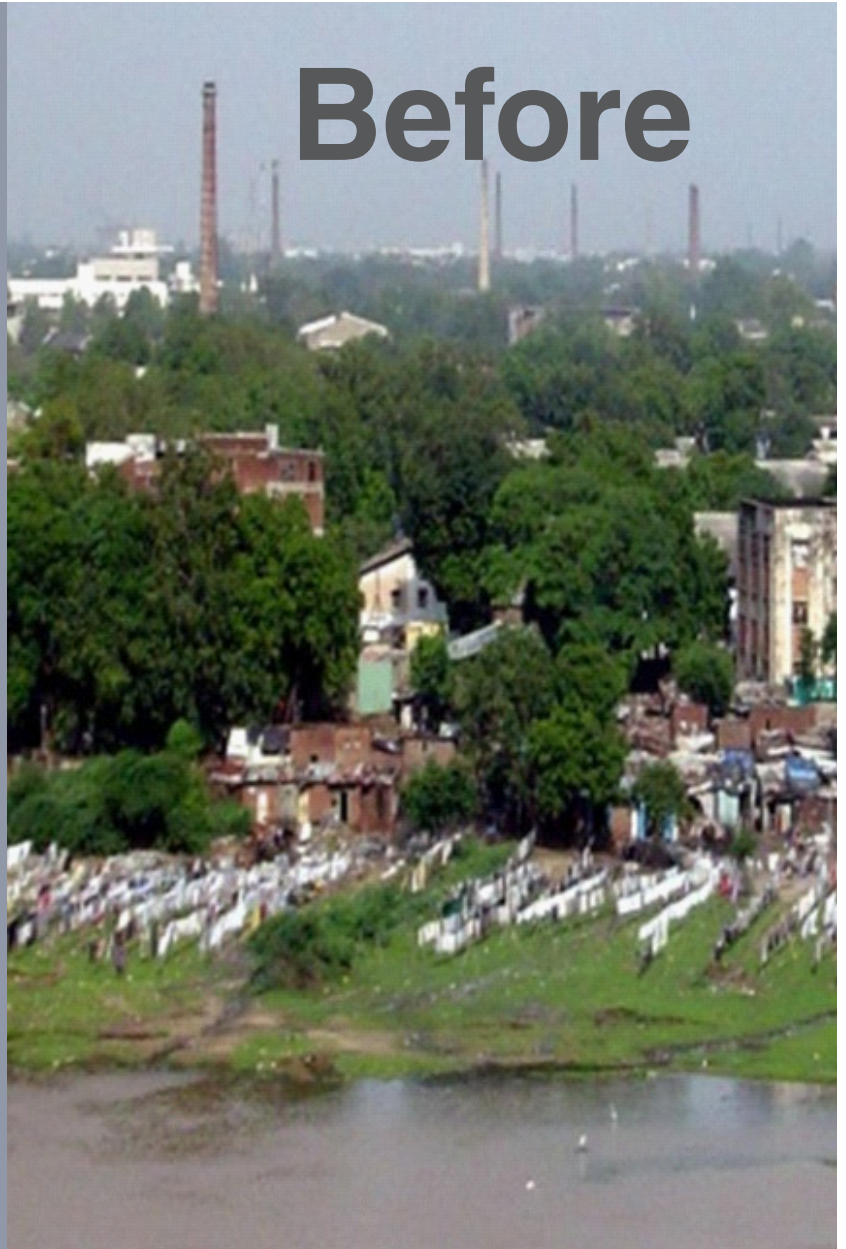
Dhobi Ghat

There were nearly 172 Dhobis using both the banks of the river for washing activities. They were relocated into the Dhobi ghat (laundry campus), which is constructed on the eastern bank of the River near Vasna Barrage.

There are 7 blocks in the Modern Dhobi Ghat and each block is having 24 units i.e. 168 units. Well developed water supply and drainage system has been provided with water meter for inlet watering. Washer men can dry washed cloths on the top floor of the area provided to him. Facility has been provided to use pulley to take the washed cloths to top floor.

This modern Dhobi Ghat spread over approx. 9400 sq.mt area has an utility area of about 6000 Sq.mt. Internal RCC road, adequate lighting and parking facility are provided along with compound wall and providing security to washmen's stuff.

Before



Before

Event Area

A mega city like Ahmedabad requires a proper event management ground equipped with modern facilities for hosting mega events. Hence an area of 60,000 sq mt, spread between Sardar Bridge and Ellis Bridge on the West Bank has been designated for hosting such events like the Kite festival, the Marathon, the Cyclothon, and Garib Kalyan Mela(for the urban poor) are organized.

Earlier the dry river bed was used to host events like circus and cricket etc. But, now the redeveloped riverfront provides unique opportunities to host mega events.



Now

Before

Urban Forestry

This unique afforestation project is spread over 1 lakh sq mt, is situated between Vasna Barrage and Ambedkar Bridge. Natural forestry is being developed with different plant species from Gujarat, including certain very rare species.

This garden comes with a mediation area as well and provides the citizens an escape into vast greenery in the midst of a sprawling metropolis.

Now



Sewage System

An interceptor sewer system was constructed on both the banks of the river to intercept the sewer running into the river and divert it to the treatment plants.

The sewage from 36 drainage points used to fall directly into the river earlier, making the water dirty, mosquito ridden and creating an unhealthy environment. All sewage now goes to pumping stations, leading to transformation in river quality, and drastic improvement in the environment around the river.



Connecting River to Community

Sabarmati river plays an important role in amongst all religious groups in Ahmedabad. But gradually a disconnect developed between the river and the citizens of Ahmedabad. The river front development initiative removed this disconnect and connected both by constructing 36 Ghats (Steps having access to the river).

For last 122 years, it has been a tradition that the Mahant of the Jagannath temple, along with the congregation carrying Kalash (Pot) on elephants approaches the Sabarmati river and after rituals performed by the pundits, the water of Sabarmati River is piously carried back to the temple to worship Lord Jagannath, before the Rathayatra starts.

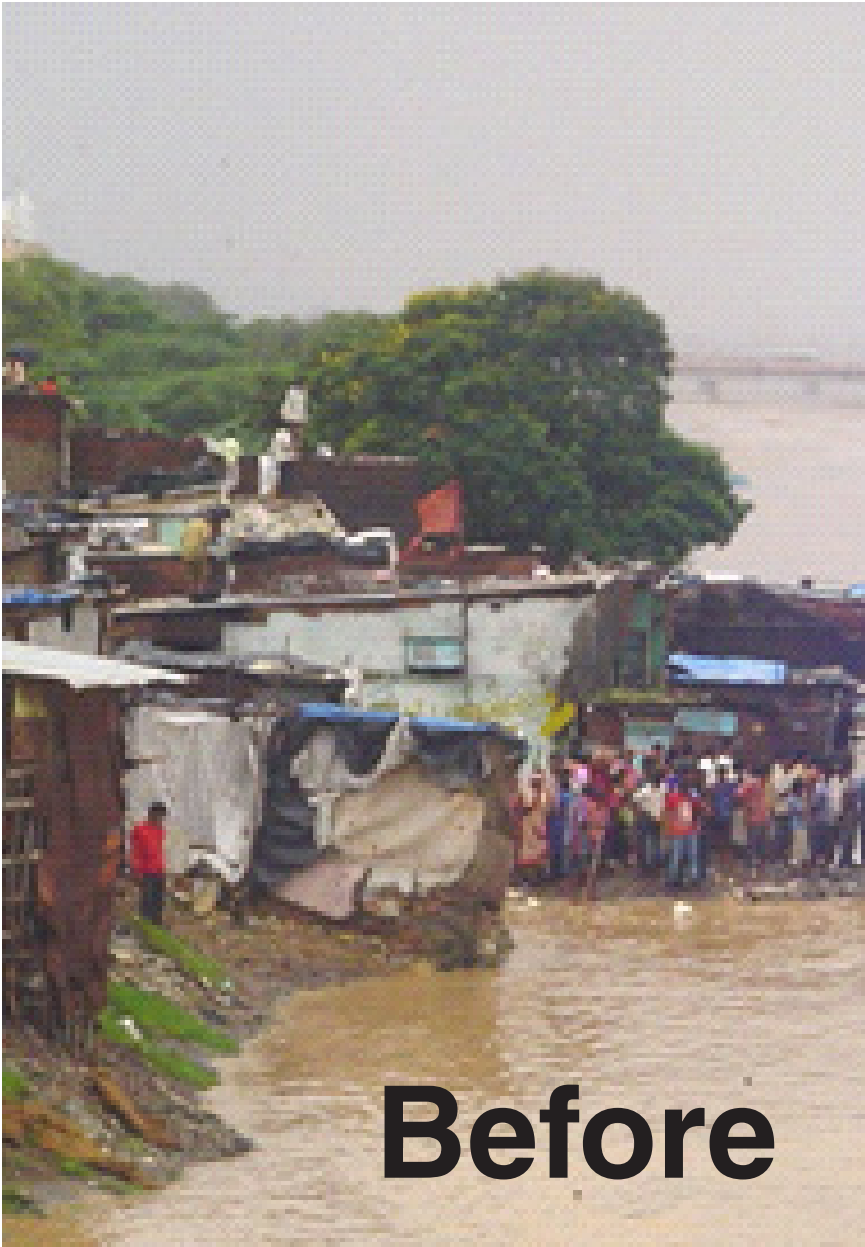
The Riverfront has witnessed huge religious gathering of Jains, wherein large number of Jains perform group Parna (Releasing fast though a ritual). Religious procession of Tajiya processions of the Muslims during Muharram and the structure is submerged in the river through its stairs and ghats (Steps).



Before

Now





Before

Promenade

The diaphragm walls in the bed of the river and the retaining walls along both banks have created a channel for the river, have stopped erosion of the river banks, protect the city from flooding, and allow some land to be reclaimed for the city.

A key feature of this project is a two-level, continuous promenade on both sides of the river. It is built just above the water level to serve only pedestrians and cyclists and to provide access to the water.

What it means is that there will be no more private ownership of any part of the river bank. The whole stretch of river banks is open to every citizen. This is the true socializing effect of the riverfront project, which does not allow private ownership to the river at all.

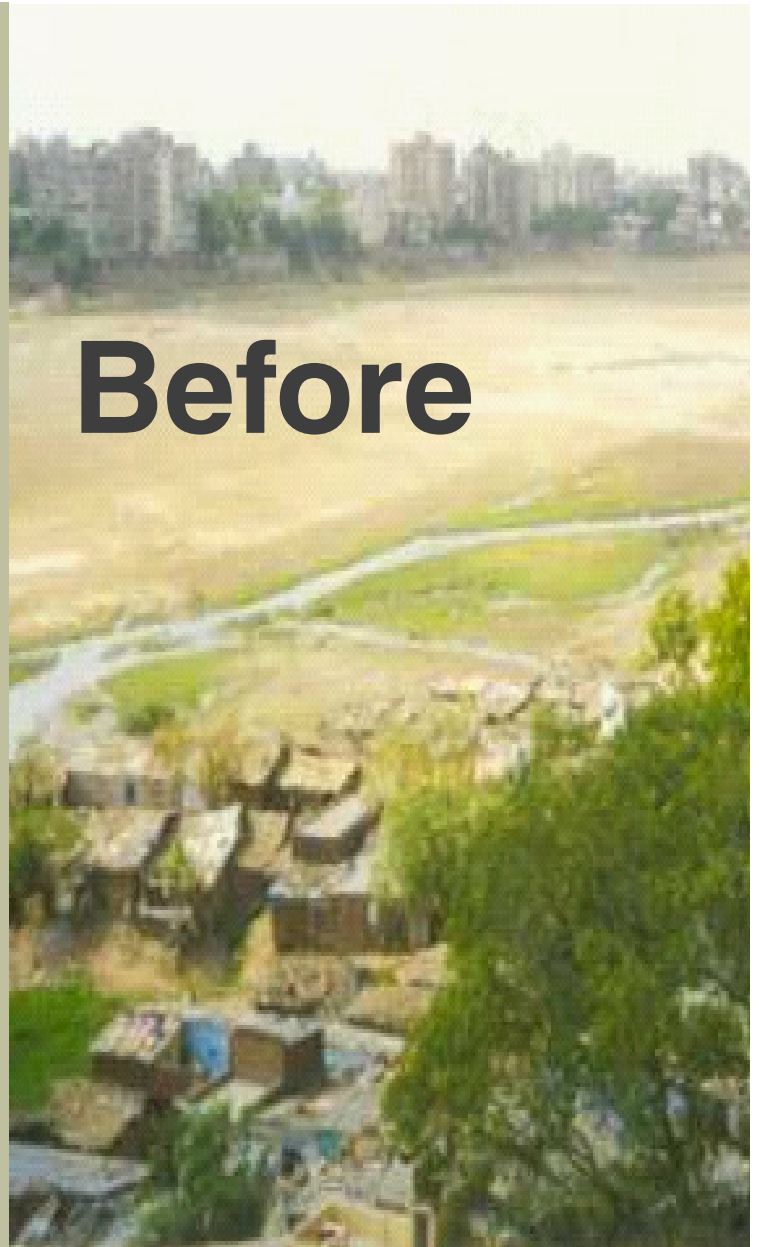


Now

Public Gardens/ Flower Garden

27 per cent of project land is being developed for parks and garden space for cultural facilities. There are 3 gardens. One garden of 60000 Sq mt, between Subhash Bridge and Dadhichi Bridge on east bank and another Garden of 25000 sq mt at Usmanpura between Gandhi Bridge and Nehru Bridge on west bank have already been open to public.

There will be a flower garden near the event area spread over 40,000 sq mt. It will be on west bank of the river.





Water Recreation

The project provides for various water sports facilities all along the river course on both banks. Boating facility is available at various locations on both banks of the river. Zip Line, Amphibian Bus and Sabarmati Darshan, through ferry and adventure water sports activities are planned for near future.

A giant ferry wheel project, like the famous London Eye project is also under active consideration in the riverfront area.

Before



Now

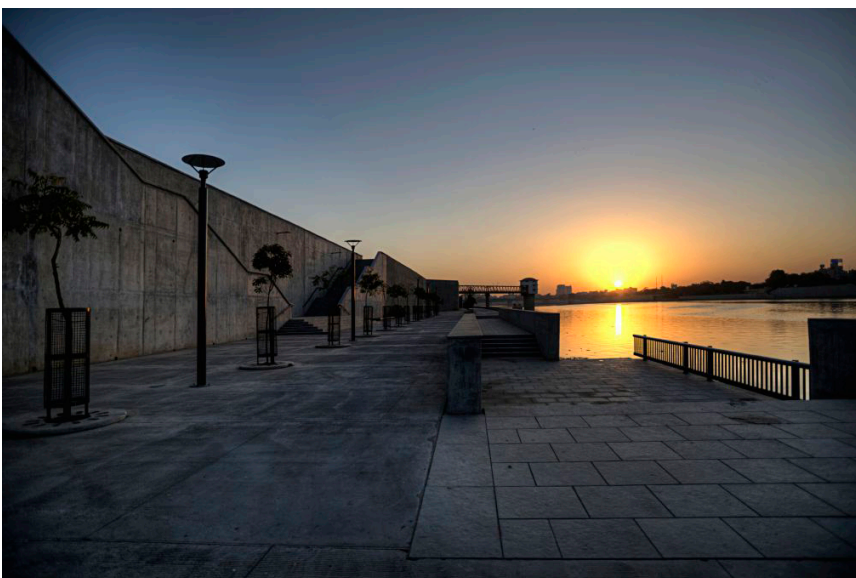
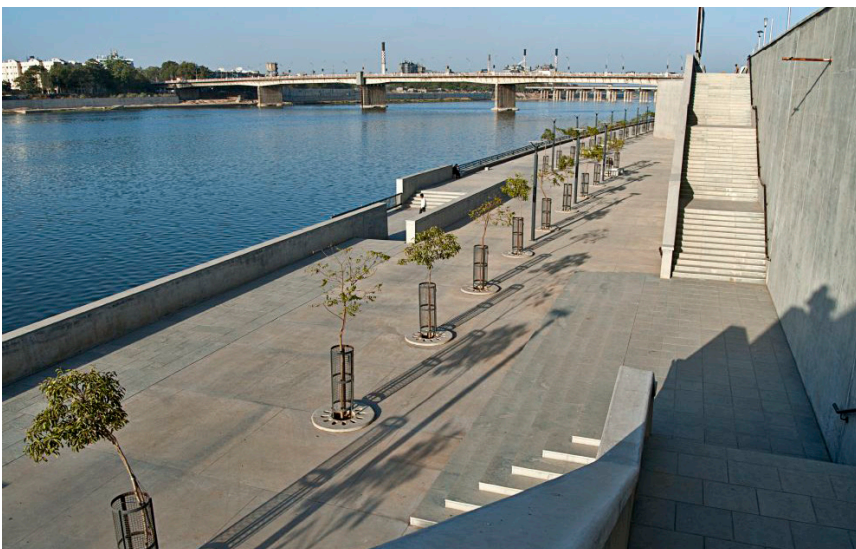


GLIMPSE



Sabarmati Riverfront Development







The examples clearly illustrate how the river has added vibrancy to the urban landscape of Ahmadabad with its open spaces, walkways, well-designed gardens along with activities which contribute to economic growth. Several other benefits of this project like recharging of ground water owing to the continuous presence of water in the river and decongestion of the major north – south road (Ashram road) by providing additional linkages road to the parallel roads running along the river front are available to the citizens.

The Sabarmati riverfront project is truly multi-dimensional. But the inclusive development model that the project attempted to achieve has been truly unique. Never before has an urban infrastructure mega project, by a unique inclusive development model, covered all sections of the city and created world class facilities for the entire city to enjoy.





Let's have a walk at Riverfront.....



Sabarmati River Front
Development Corporation Limited
www.sabarmatiriverfront.com



Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation
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