

RE-IMAGINING INDIAN CITIES

National Consultation on
Urban Poverty Reduction

Venue: Clarks Inn Suites, New Delhi
Date: 13th - 14th November, 2017

KEY DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

Indian cities have transformed tremendously post liberalization. Not just the physical transformation which they have undergone, but the fundamental imagination of what the city embodies and the aspirations of people regarding Indian cities have changed. Following the alerted vision of market led development; the state diluted its presence in many sectors and invited private capital participation in the economy thus opening up the Indian cities to global capital and markets.

It is in this context that we see a renewed interest in the Urban, with multiple schemes and policies from the central government led push for urbanization like the Smart Cities Initiative, Housing for All (urban), AMRUT and many others. These schemes though superficially laced with terms like inclusivity, sustainability and public participation are unfolding as fundamentally anti-poor, falling short of rights based; welfare led political perspective, excluding the participation of local communities and is blind to the nature of informal urban poor that support cities.

It is increasingly imperative that the Civil Societies engage further in this socio-political climate and start re-imagining our cities for a more equitable and inclusive musings of cities as against the imagination of smart cities in popular/ dominant discourse. It is in this light that IGSSS brought together 140 individuals and organizations committed to equitable urban transformation from across India to share and deliberate on local achievements, challenges and modes of working that have had positive consequences. The Consultation was a space for some loud thinking so that a new metaphor for the urban spaces could be created.

History of IGSSS's work in the Urban Space

IGSSS commenced its urban interventions with the City makers program, in 2008, which was focused particularly on the rights of homeless people, especially on the issues of identity and shelter. Over the years, the program has spanned out to include the diversified group of urban poor with focus on their residential, occupational and social rights.

Currently, Samaveshi Sheher (InclusiveCities) program is being implemented in the 25 cities of India directly and through 27 partners.

Few Facts

35% of Indian urban poor reside in slums. 22% city dwellers are from slum without security of tenure. On an average the slum population has increased from 11% to 30% in the last 10 years.

The continuing urbanization and overall growth of the world's population is projected to add 2.5 billion people to the urban population by 2050, with nearly 90 per cent of the increase concentrated in Asia and Africa. At the same time, the proportion of the world's population living in urban areas is expected to increase, reaching 66 per cent by 2050.

Cities in India have grown by nearly 2.6% in the decade; between 2001 – 2011 with 31.16% of India's total population living in urban areas according to the 2011 Census. Nearly 377.10 million people live in urban areas (7935 census towns) and it is projected that by 2031, 600 million people would live in urban areas and by 2039, 50 percent of India's population will reside in cities¹. For the state, urbanization has become a development indicator and cities are being projected as engines of India's economic growth

*World Urbanization Prospects T: Highlight, Revision 2014 by United Nations
India's Urban Demographic Transition, JNNURM Directorate, Ministry of Urban Development and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), December 2011
IHS and IUC study (2011): Urban India-Evidence 2011*

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Changing Nature of the Indian City and its Relationship with the Urban Poor

1. **Urban poor representation** in the city / state / or even within the national Governance system are entirely missing. Only 9.7% elected representatives in the Parliament are from the urban community. Only 2% of questions have been raised during Parliament sessions on urban poverty and poverty alleviation.
2. The Government that has to provide facilities to the urban poor is restricting their access by building 'fancy' infrastructure. **Right to habitat has become a highly neglected right** by the Government, leading to repeated cases of forced eviction.
3. There are **numerous obstacles to obtain the identity as a citizen** of the city. This identification crisis results in stigmatizing those who did not possess these ID cards. In addition to the lack of identity, urban poor in the popular discourse are being largely tagged homogenously as encroachers of city land, tax evaders, illegal, thieves and intruders.
4. **2% of the city population consumes 90% city resources.** Urban poor don't have any communication and relationship with the corporates and middle class, who are currently the significant and focused stakeholders in the urban planning.

State of Urban Planning, Governance and Public Participation

5. **Participation has different connotations for different stakeholders.** For the government giving an advertisement in the newspaper could be participation whereas for the CSOs, it could be participation in decision making. What is important - Do the architects/urban planners even consider urban poor as a client and are they willing to call them at the negotiation table?
6. **Migrants do not get engaged with issues of governance** as they consider themselves to be a temporary resident and plan to go back to their native places.
7. **Do we as CSOs have a comprehensive vision about inclusive cities in the first place?** The present working environment demands that civil society redefine themselves.
8. CSOs should not depend on the given or offered spaces but should be creating or inventing new spaces for dialogue. There is a need to have **a critical engagement with the government.**
9. CSOs alone do not have the capacity and the competency to deal with the complexities of issues. **We need bridging organizations which not only work in-depth within any one sector but also try to bridge the different sectoral realities.**

Labour in the New Urban

10. **Home based workers, street vendors, construction workers, domestic workers are four large sections who are all informally employed,** earn low incomes but absorb costs and risks involved in these livelihoods. There is a need for their recognition and inclusion as productive agents. **The various issues need to be looked at in the wider context, collectively** rather than advocating or lobbying for a handful of changes.
11. Nationally, two crore street vendors earning Rs. 500/- per day implies an INR 365 lakh crore economy which attracts vested interest. Strong street vendor unions represents an organized force which is perceived as a threat by the commercial sector and attracts stiff opposition.

12. **The Street Vendors Act 2014 is very powerful as it gives town vending Committee representation, a feature not present in other Acts.**
13. **Domestic Workers (DW) are treated as unskilled labor and lack decent work conditions. Government hasn't ratified the ILO convention and hence there is no legislation in place.** Central government is not ready for a National legislation for DW and has instead drafted a National Policy which is currently in public domain for opinion from different stakeholder. **Private members Bills tabled in Parliament on an Act for domestic workers in 2016-17.**
14. **The implementation of minimum wages in the 9 states is not effective and domestic workers are not aware of it..**
15. Niti Aayog's 3-year draft action **plan to unify the existing large number of labour laws into four simplified codes will dilute the efforts for strong labor laws and will exclude voice of unions.**
16. **The 74th Constitutional Amendment has laid down 18 responsibilities of the local bodies. Of these 10 are being undertaken as Public Private Partnerships (PPP).** Health, education, road development, electricity, solid waste management being provided under the PPP model, which is essentially privatizing the responsibility of the urban local governance bodies.

Housing for All

17. **Prime Minister Awas Yojna (PMAY) plan to construct 2.5 crore houses by 2022.** However only 18.8 lakh houses have been approved and a mere 1 lakh 3 thousand houses have been constructed to date.

Swaccha Bharat Mission

18. Swaccha Bharat can be used as a strategy for the mainstreaming and capacity building of the waste pickers.

Labour Code Amalgamation

19. **The labour code is supposed to simplify, amalgamate & rationalize the Central Labour laws, replacing them with 4 labour codes,** viz. Code on wages, Code on Industrial relations, Code on Social security and welfare, Code on Occupational safety, health and working conditions. Out of these, code on wages and code on industrial relations are under Government consideration at present.
20. As per the social security code, 20% income of the unorganized workers/ labourers will be delivered as a social security benefit. In the same code housing for labourers has been proposed by Government with subsidy, sharing from employers and labour itself.

Slums/Informal settlements

21. **Eviction is rampant in major cities coming under the Smart city concept and this will only increase in coming years.** In the name of beautification of the city, the poor are being

displaced. Media is propagating the eviction as rehabilitation of the people, without understanding and sensitive to the situational reality.

22. While making any policy, livelihood and housing needs to be considered in one package and not separately.

Homeless

23. **The gaps identified in the shelter program for homeless are:**
 - a. Night meals are still not available at shelters.
 - b. Homeless survey is still not done by states.
 - c. Care givers/agencies persons are not trained/oriented about the programme.
 - d. Budgetary provision is poor.
 - e. Unfavorable attitude of politicians and local ward councillors/leaders towards homeless persons or shelter homes.

Street vendors

24. **Nationally, 2 crore street vendors earning Rs. 500/- per day implies an INR 365 lakh crore economy which attracts vested interest.** As per the National Policy on Street Vendors 2009, 2.5% spaces of cities are earmarked for Hawkers. The Street Vendors Act offers livelihood protection in prime locations which the vested interests are against.

Domestic Workers (DW)

25. The present status of the domestic workers is different in each city. **Very few DWs have knowledge and sensitivity on their occupational rights like minimum wage, weekly & emergency leave, security in workplace, social security, their dignity in workplace & society.** The DWs are collectivizing in the slums with help of the CSOs. They are being sensitized by the collective leaders & CSO members for raising their voice about their rights to the policy makers.
26. **Progressive movement reported from different cities.** In Lucknow, DW campaigning took place very successfully with the federation organizing and campaigning for their rights through demand letters, postcards etc. They raised their demands in the last election manifesto with the Opposition.
27. **In Kolkata, a Roundtable with employers & other stakeholders has been initiated.** Minimum Wages have been finalized in 9 states, of which only 2 states have passed the notification.

Construction Workers

28. **Since, welfare of labour is a state subject; there is no uniformity in terms of the process for registration of workers, fees for registration, and schemes for the welfare of workers for the construction workers across states. Schemes differ in every state, hence dialogue and documentation becomes difficult.** There is a possibility that most of the already registered workers, mainly MGNREGA workers will be missing out during renewal process due to lack of awareness among the workers about it. **Moreover, the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 has not been**

effective in terms providing substantial support to people working at the construction sites. Facilitation of government schemes has been a challenge due to lack of documents for people who have migrated.

Waste Pickers

29. **The challenge of the organizations working with them is how to organize waste pickers.** Approximately 40 lakh waste pickers exist in the country. In Indore 3000 waste pickers got ID cards out of which only 800 have got the livelihood. One ordinance can throw them out of a job at any time. **In different states ID cards have been issued to the waste pickers. There are no prescribed format of ID cards- The Alliance of Indian Wastepickers (AIWP) has worked on a standard framework in this direction.**
30. **However, there is need for a common identity as workers in this sector to provide them security in education, health and other facilities is still been a challenge.** All India Waste Pickers network along with partners is working on this. Scholarship scheme for the children of waste picker's family provides Rs. 1800 per annum till pre matriculation in Maharashtra and Karnataka.
31. **There are different understandings about Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan (SBA). A thorough effective study should be carried out to look at the gaps in implementation.** The E waste rule should be relooked to ensure adequate space for 95% informal sector waste pickers.

Re-Imagining Inclusive Cities and Forming Future Collaborations

32. **Civil society organizations need to go beyond complaining / criticizing and engage with Government by** providing constructive feedback and suggestions regarding gaps in the policy to the concerned departments.
33. CSOs should amplify the voices of the urban poor, by soliciting their feedback and suggestions..
34. **CSOs need to understand the intersectionalities with the groups we working with and** develop a common vision to work for all the sections under one roof, localizing the needs of people and representing them at the Central level.
35. **Use lens with different perspectives to re-imagine cities.** Different sections have different needs for example worker's hostels/social house for temporary migrants, women vending zone, dignified wages and working conditions for domestic workers, addressing leaves and sexual harassment in the laws for unorganized labours, inclusion of manual scavengers in the work being done with the waste pickers.
36. **The whole discourse on urbanization and Urban Poverty has multiple dimensions and dynamics.** This rich diversity is good, but with the different dynamics and challenges, one of the concerns is how do we look at inclusive spaces in urban reality, how do we respond to it, what is our narrative? Has the rural response being remodeled for the urban set up?
37. Despite talk about network and collaborations, there is an increasing tendency to revert back to individual projects and initiatives.
38. **Time for us to look collectively look and think of how to work together. Commitment of inclusiveness in urban spaces also means including those with different perspectives by agreeing to be on the same platform with them. Are we inclusive enough to receive all types of perspectives?**
39. The state is subservient to capitalism which is a dangerous trend and a reality in day to day life affecting the urban poor most as both state and capitalism are anti-poor. As capitalism's effect increases, the violence will also increase. The fight is between Capital and Labor. **This**

is the context against which, there are 2 types of collaboration: Ideological collaboration and Practical Collaboration. The need of the hour is to see the commonalities rather than the differences in the present context.

40. Urbanization and city development both have been mismanaged and post a serious failure; A track change is needed, with new directions, new strategies, new ways of seeing and doing things and speedily, failure of which will leave a huge negative legacy for the people, children, environment and country. This calls for a major course correction to look at urbanization afresh.
41. **Problem of slums is solvable.** By accepting people can create housing and believing in people processes, solution through city wise in-situ upgrading of city slums has happened in South Asia and Latin America.
42. Affordable Housing requires to be seen in context of financing, land, location, services, design; **Formal housing does not address the livability issues which are not being solved but in fact new problems are being created.**
43. Both rural and urban spaces exist with their issues and need to be resolved. Rural movement and urban mass struggle needs to meet (farmer is also a wage laborer).

Key Takeaways and Emerging Way Forward

The theme of the Reimagining Inclusive Cities had appealed to all the participants from varying backgrounds and contexts. The following points emerged as key takeaways, on which collective efforts from the civil society need to be ploughed in to ensure a progressive development toward inclusive urbanization in India.

Need for more Collaborative Spaces and Networks

This emerged as a foundational need of the gathering that demands that strong, well connected and capacitated networks exist in the urban that collaborate in this project of reimagining inclusivity in an increasing unequal and exclusive urban India. Such a mammoth effort can be led by a CSOs like IGSSS through a small effort and attempt in creating a **Living Directory of individuals and organizations working on Urban Poverty**, this it is expected will act as a repository and directory of individual, organizations and networks in different states of the country, that will be owned and maintained by networks themselves in the future. As a second step to strengthening and **capacitating the various networks, interventions and actions** in the urban theatre need to be collectivized with furthering participation and engagement of these networks. Such a process will be led with clear identification of CSO networks at city, state and national level, where organizations like IGSSS will strategically support and promote; especially on the issues of housing and livelihoods, that at present are under threat of eviction and erasure from Indian cityscapes. It was also decided that **CSOs need to shed their inhibitions** in reaching out to other forms and kinds of collectives of urban poor like slum dweller community federations, worker unions, social movements and other so on. There were also strong suggestions to interact with the media more, make use of alternative media spaces available in the present to reach out and strengthen the civil society networks.

Supporting and Initiating Relevant Policy Research and Advocacy

As a sustainer of increased awareness and policy advocacy, research and publications are imagined to be a key component in the struggle for urban inclusivity. It was expected and pronounced very clearly that there is an outmost need for **Initiating strong ground research work of the laws, policies in the urban related to housing, livelihoods, urban planning and urban governance**. The ones suggested in and during the consultation are: **PMAY, National Domestic Workers Policy, Labour Codes, Swatch Bharat Mission, Smart Cities, AMRUT, Status of Street Vendors, Waste pickers, Policy paper on dumping sites** amongst other ideas. It was also decided to not just stop at research but to kick-start designing model schemes, programs and interventions to present it to the government as alternative to the existing policies and models. There were also some very clear suggestions to further the exploration and steering urban poverty programs into exploratory/ action researches, like for example – **study on migration to ascertain the urban rural linkages, assessing the implementation of 74th amendment, study on city master plans to influence and engage with the city making processes**. Another aspiration by all the participants related to the need of simple, **easy to comprehend IEC on latest policies and schemes**, and a collation of policies and documents from different regions of the country that will abreast with the latest information and developments in urban policies.

Strategic Reflection and Action

The consultation offered an opportunity to **reflect on the strategic successes and failures of CSOs and their interventions**. It was decided to have such reflection process as a more regular affair, and establish spaces for reflection in our program plans. Through the discussions to become clear that we as civil society need to go back to the fundamentals of societal transformation to impact the urbanization in India. There were clear demands of **keeping the urban poor in the centre of these discussions**, not just thematically, but by also promoting community collectives and leadership within the urban poor, who table their concerns and issues for themselves in the future. It was also deliberated of how we as civil society actors have restricted our interventions and their scope to urban poor, while the brunt of exclusionary and unsustainable urbanization extends beyond the marginalized urban poor, but also the **lower and middle classes in the Indian cities**. It was obvious that there has to be planned deliberations and action plans to work with the middle classes in Indian cities and look for commonalities for future actions in the urban. The added advantage such steps will offer are a wider population segment that is very vocal and gets a lot of media attention. The other aspect of urban poverty interventions that was heavily critiqued was the notion of working with population groups as if the context that we operate in is conceived in water tight compartments. It was decided that there is a need to work at **conceiving an inclusive cities approach**, and devising a framework that allows room and flexibility to engage multiple players and actors in the urban under an all-inclusive urban frame. Also, there was a felt need of an **immediate collaboration by partners and experts present at the Consultation on the recommendations** (please refer Annex A) that have emerged from the roundtables on 6 issues (Slums and Housing, Homeless, Street Vendors, Domestic Workers, Construction Workers, Waste pickers) to develop concrete action plans and to see that they are implemented across geographical areas and CSO organizations to have the maximum impact on policy discourse.

Annex A: Recommendations from six thematic roundtables - Slums and Housing, Homeless, Street Vendors, Domestic Workers, Construction Workers, Waste pickers.

1. **Shelters** should be constructed as per the guidelines (female, general male and children). Government should provide ID as Shelter resident to homeless persons. Medical facilities should be provided at each shelter.
2. A report on the **status of the street vendor** should be prepared for advocacy. CSOs should create awareness about the Town Vending Committee among the street vendors.
3. **Grievance Redressal Cell** should be formed at the city level. Civil judge salary and honorarium need to be included in the state budget for the Grievance Redressal Cell.
4. **Labour addas** (sheds) for the workers with all basic facilities where they can wait for customers and rest should be built. Provision of pre-paid receipt at labour addas for hiring workers (with name of the workers and hiring person's name and address). This receipt can be used as a proof to fulfill the eligibility requirement of working 90 days for getting registered as a worker. SMS alerts to workers for renewal of their registration as well as information on different schemes available for their welfare can be started by the Government. Crèche facility for the children should be provided at the labour addas.
5. **Pension** for workers should be provided for the labourers above the age of 50 years. Labour should get the benefit under the **health scheme** for the accidents happened at any place. Health cards should include the provision of treatment cost upto Rs. 50,000/- and also include minor illness where hospitalization is not required.
6. **Waster pickers** should be part of a formal solid waste management system. They should be provided training on e-waste management under NULM.
7. Organize a **joint meeting with the members of Building and Other Construction Workers** (BOCW) of 5-7 States to apprise them about the situation/challenges faced by the workers.
8. Introducing **domestic workers** information helpline (local/ state) to help domestic workers facing abuse. To create awareness and regularize minimum wages and other social securities for them. CSOs should work to form collectives, federations of the domestic workers. A very important point for advocacy to be highlighted is the local registration of DWs and Employers.

Annex B: Agenda

Day 1 – 13 th November 2017 (Monday)			
<p>Inauguration Ceremony (Main Hall – Morning 9.30 – 9.45) Welcome Address – John Peter Nelson, Executive Director, IGSSS Context – Aravind Unni, IGSSS</p> <p>New Initiatives on Decentralization and Urban Governance in Delhi Inaugural Address (Main Hall – Morning 9.45 – 10.15) Smt. Atishi Marlana, Advisor to Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi</p> <p>Urbanization and Urban Poverty Keynote Address (Main Hall – Morning 10.15 - 11) Prof. Amitabh Kundu - Jawaharlal Nehru University</p>			
Tea			
<p>Locating the Urban Poor in Indian Cities Discussions (Morning 11.15 – 1.15)</p>			
Session 1(Main Hall)	Session 2(Coral Hall)	Session 3(Pearl Hall)	
Changing nature of Indian City and its relationship with the Urban Poor	The state of Urban Planning, Governance and Public Participation	Labour in the New Urban	
Shivani Chaudhry – Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN), Delhi; (Moderator)	Darshini Mahadevia – CEPT University, Ahmedabad; (Moderator)	Shalini Sinha – Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), Delhi; (Moderator)	
Marina Joseph – Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), Mumbai	Amita Bhide – Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai	MacKenzy Dabre – National Hawker Federation (NHF), Kolkata	
Vinay Baidur – Activist, Bangalore	Sitaram Shelar – Center for Promoting Democracy (CPD)& Hamara Shehar Mumbai Abhiyaan (HSMA), Mumbai	Sr. Christin Mary – National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM), Mumbai	
Douglas Wyatt – Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), Delhi	Avinash Madhale – Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Pune	Sandeep Khare – Vigyaan Foundation, Lucknow	
Vanessa Peter - Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities (IRCDUC), Chennai			
<p>Identifying policy gaps and their impact on the Urban Poor Presentations (Main Hall – Afternoon 2 – 4) chaired by Sanjay Vijayvargiya – Activist, Delhi</p>			
Housing for All	Swachh Bharat	Smart Cities Initiative	Labour Code Amalgamation
Induprakash Singh – Housing Rights Activist	Nalini Shekhar – Hasirudala, Bangalore and	Sharad Mahajan - Mashaal, Pune & Persis Taraporevala –	Chandan Kumar – Working People’s Charter

	Alliance for Indian Waste pickers	Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Delhi	
Tea			
Working with critical constituencies Thematic Roundtables (Main Hall, Coral & Pearl – Afternoon 4.15 – 6.30)			
Slums and Housing	Homeless	Street Vendors	Domestic Workers
Construction Workers	Waste pickers		
Anand Lakhan – Indore Navnirmaan Manch, Indore	Brijesh Arya – Pehchaan, Mumbai	Anita Das – NHF, Ranchi	Prosenjit Das – FDWM, Guwahati
Geetha Ramakrishana – Thozilalar Koodam	Kabir Khan – AIWP, Bangalore		
Arul Selva – Slumjaggattu, Bangalore	Pragada Vasu – AUTD, Vizag	Pratap Sahu – Bhubaneswar	Subrata Kar – Srishty, Kolkata
Thaneshwar – Sajha Manch, Delhi	Krishna Arjun – Janvikas, Indore		
Bilal Khan – GBGB, Mumbai	Ashok Pandey – SAM:BKS, Delhi		Nazim Ansari – Abdul Kalam Azad Jan Seva Sansatha, Allahabad
Smart City Blues Documentary screening (Main Hall – Evening 7.00 – 7.45) Discussant – Anand Lakhan – Indore Navnirmaan Manch and Krishnarjun Burvey – Jan Vikas, Indore			
Dinner			
A few hours with the Homeless in Delhi City Walks (Evening 8 – onwards)			
Organized by Ashok Pandey and Mansoor Khan – Sehari Adhikar Manch: Begharon Ke Saath (SAM:BKS)			

Day 2 – 14th November 2017 (Tuesday)
Re-Imagining Inclusive cities <i>with presentations from Discussion sessions and Thematic Roundtables of Day 1</i> Discussion (Main Hall – Morning 9 – 10.30) Chaired by Sandeep Chachra – Action Aid, India & Amita Bhide – TISS, Mumbai
Tea
Forming future collaborations Discussion (Main Hall – Morning 11 - 12) Chair - Induprakash Singh – Housing Rights Activist , Delhi Discussants – John Peter Nelson , IGSSS; Sandeep Chachra – Action Aid, Delhi; Milind Bokil – Activist, Pune; Shalini Sinha – WIEGO, Delhi; Kirtee Shah – INHAF Habitat Forum, Ahmedabad
Vote of Thanks Shikha Srivastava , IGSSS (Main Hall – Afternoon 12)