

A RAY of Hope for Slum Dwellers in Jalandhar City: a case of Good Practices

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Abstract: This research paper highlights the growth of slums and the problems it causes to its dwellers in Jalandhar city. One of the objectives of this work is to explore the salient features of Rajiv Awas Yojna (RAY) pilot project in Jalandhar. The quality of people's life in slums is affected adversely because of absence of needed infrastructure in totality or in insufficient quantity. Lack of potable water supply, sewerage network, paved access roads, street lights coupled with absence of social infrastructure leaves the economically weaker sections of the society vulnerable to multidimensional insecurities. Provision of physical and social infrastructure in slums of Jalandhar is insufficient which forces almost quarter of the total citizens of the city to live in poor living conditions resplendent with poverty, dirt and squalor. Moreover, this paper discusses the prominent features i.e. reform driven good practices of Municipal Corporation Jalandhar (MCJ) while implementing pilot project under Rajiv Awas Yojna (RAY) which is executed in 9 slums located in different wards of Jalandhar benefitting 442 families with housing and allied physical and social infrastructure resulting in better life supporting facilities.

Key Words: Rajiv Awas Yojna (RAY), Slum Up-gradation, slum networking, Residents Welfare Association, Authorized and Un-authorized Slums

1. Introduction

A slum is a compact area of at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities (Census of India, 2001). That portion of city where the quality of life is very poor because of dilapidated buildings, overcrowding, faulty design, lack of ventilation, light or sanitary facilities or a combination of any of these factors is a slum (S.K. Kulshrestha). United Nations –Habitat defines a slum household as a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area who lack one or more of the following: durable housing of a permanent nature that protects against extreme climate conditions, sufficient living space which means not more than three people sharing the same room, easy access to safe water in sufficient amounts at an affordable price, access to adequate sanitation in the form of a private or public toilet shared by a reasonable number of people, security of tenure that prevents forced evictions.

2. Slums in Jalandhar

Jalandhar is expected to have a million plus population in the near future. Jalandhar ranks high in rate of urbanisation and has the density of population i.e. 598 persons per square km, as per the 1991 census. The reason for this is rapid industrialization. However, Jalandhar, which is acting as magnet for industrialization is also a center of growth for slums and pollution. The Jalandhar Master Plan 2031 states the following

reasons for mushrooming up of slums: Presence of significant number and diverse industries operating in the city, which invite for influx of migrants from the surrounding towns/ villages to work in these industries, migration of poor people from other BIMARU states i.e. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, in search of employment, high land value of serviced land which throws the poor out of the formal housing market and pushes them on the margins of informal housing market, lack or absence of planned social housing, co-operative housing, lack of developed rental housing market which freezes vacant housing in the city, and pathetic inability of Municipal Corporation Jalandhar (MCJ) to shoulder the constitutional responsibility of carrying out the task of planning for the weaker sections of the society to ensure social-economic justice.

Jalandhar city has population of 7, 14,077 persons comprising of 1, 37,390 households. The slum population is 1, 77,557 persons comprising of 34,820 households, which is 24.86% of the total population of the city (Master Plan Jalandhar 2009-2031). Average size of the household in slum is 5.19 as compared to 5 in non-slum areas. There is dominance of male population in the slum areas. The sex ratio of population of slums is 703 females per 1000 males as most of the migrant male labourers live in slums.

Most of the slums are located on private lands which makes the task of the Municipal Corporation Jalandhar a bit easy as most of the slum dwellers own their plots and MCJ needs to upgrade the existing infrastructure. Slums in jalandhar are mainly located in unplanned areas. People living in unauthorized slums face relatively severe hardships as they face most of the deprivations. Many studies conclude that people living in slums especially unauthorised ones pay more to have access to physical infrastructure such as electricity and water supply as compared to slum dwellers living in authorised slums. **Table I** exhibits that there are total 97 slums in Jalandhar out of which 73 are authorized and 24 slums are un-authorized.

Table I: Survey of Slums of Jalandhar city (Year 2007)

Sr. No.	Description	Number
1.	Total No. of Slums	97
2.	Authorized	73
3.	Un-authorized	24
4.	Total Population	1,77,557
5.	Approx. Households	34,820

Source: Master Plan Jalandhar, 2013

If we have a look at the city scale coverage status of water supply and sewerage system, it appears to be relatively good as 80% of the city area is covered under the intermittent water supply system leaving behind just 20% area as un-served area. About 82% of the population of city is served with sewerage facilities through 682 km of sewer line. At city level only about 5% of city area is covered under storm water network

i.e. about 95% of the city area is devoid of this facility due to which rain causes havoc in the city especially during monsoon period.

When we compare city level status of water supply, sewerage system and the same infrastructure in slums of Jalandhar, the difference is quite loud as **Table II** highlights that 48% of the slums in Jalandhar do not have access to water supply. 55% of the slums do not have the provision of sewerage system and there is absence of storm water drains in totality. Only 66% slums have provision of paved roads and 60% slums have street lights. This paucity of basic human needs ends up in forcing people to live in unhygienic poor conditions. So, slums of Jalandhar lack full coverage of physical infrastructure quantitatively which speaks volumes of the financial, administrative and planning capabilities of the MC Jalandhar. Further **Table II** highlights that the status of social infrastructure is also lacking in the slums of Jalandhar as merely 9% of the slums have community centers whereas only 38% of the slums primary schools leading to lower levels of literacy amongst slum dwellers. Only 30% of the slums have a dispensary within its boundaries making the slum dwellers vulnerable to health hazards as they have to travel farther to access health services. Though it is not feasible to ensure a primary school or a dispensary in each slum yet provision of sanitation infrastructure in each slum cannot be denied.

Approximately 25% of the slums are listed as ‘unauthorized’. (Rajiv Awas Yojna: Pilot Detailed Project of Jalandhar City). However, the total land area of Jalandhar city at the initiation of RAY project i.e. 2012-13 was 167 Sq. Km, the total area under slums was 28.11Sq. Km. This project covered an area of 4.35 Sq. Km. The total slum population was 2, 08000 Lakhs. This project covers 17,000 citizens of the city.

Table II: Existing Civic facilities in Slums

Sr. No.	Facilities	% of slums
1.	Water supply	52% of slums
2.	Sewerage	45% of slums
3.	Paved roads	60% of slums
4.	Street lights	66% of slums
5.	Storm water drains	Nil
6.	Community centers	9% of slums
7.	Primary schools	38% of slums
8.	Dispensary	30% of slums

Source: Master Plan Jalandhar (2031)

1. Initiatives of Jalandhar City to Improve Slums under Rajiv Awas Yojna (RAY)

President of India announced Rajiv Awas Yojna on 4 June 2009. “Rajiv Awas Yojana envisages a- Slum Free India with inclusive and equitable cities in which every citizen has access to basic civic infrastructure and social amenities and decent shelter. RAY as a mission that encourages states/union territories to tackle slums in a definitive manner”. (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Allievation). RAY ultimately is implemented by urban local bodies and focuses on the following objectives:

1. Improving and provisioning of housing with basic civic infrastructure and social amenities in slums where RAY intervenes.
2. Enabling reforms to address some of the causes leading to creation of slums proactively.
3. Institutionalizing mechanisms for prevention of slums by creation of affordable housing stock.
4. Facilitating a supportive environment for expanding institutional credit linkages for the urban poor.
5. Empowering community by ensuring their participation at every stage of decision making through strengthening and nurturing Slum Dwellers’ Association/Federations.
6. Strengthening institutional and human resource capacities at the Municipal, City and State levels through comprehensive capacity building and strengthening of resource networks.

RAY was supposed to be implemented in a mission mode and provide financial support to states, union territories and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)/Central Government Agencies for providing housing, improvement of basic civic infrastructure and social amenities in each selected slum. Rental and transit housing could be admissible under the scheme. Operation and maintenance of assets created under this scheme will also be eligible for funding.

This programme is applicable to all slums within a city, irrespective of the fact whether they are notified or non-notified, whether located on lands belonging to Central Government or its Undertakings, Urban Local Bodies like MC or any other public agency and private sector. It is also applicable to “urbanized villages” inside the local planning area of the city, urban homeless and pavement dwellers.

MCJ has taken some important initiatives to solve the problems of its citizens in slums. One of the recent most such effort is execution of provision of Rajive Awas Yojna in its slums which has shined as a Ray of hope for the slum dwellers. This project has been initiated in total 9 slums including : New Anand Nagar, Kot Sadiq, Chohkan Kalan, Amarjit Nagar- Basti Peer Daad, Rasila Nagar and New Rasila Nagar, Jaimal Nagar, New Suraj Ganj & Bhargo Camp, Abadpura, Village Dhillwan. The salient features of the pilot project have been discussed below:

- Total 442 families living in 9 different wards have been benefitted by the pilot project. Most of the beneficiaries selected are poorest among the poor. Maximum beneficiaries belong to schedule caste

who are from Kot Sadiq in ward number 58 and Village Dhilwan in ward number 11 i.e. 119 and 111 respectively. Lowest beneficiaries are 13 from Jaimal Singh Nagar in ward number 13.

- The project is proposed to be developed in 9 non-notified slums. Such identified localities have conditions worse than notified slums which were prioritized after a detailed preliminary survey by MC Jalandhar. The entire project is an in-situ slum up-gradation project.
- First of all the status of ownership of land where the project was to be implemented was made clear and taken over as possession by MC Jalandhar or Punjab Government or the beneficiary as a standard practice.
- It was ensured that the land where the project was to be implemented was residential i.e. compatible with town planning norms and free from all encumbrances. The already approved Master Plan Jalandhar (2009 -2031) helped the cause as land use of the city has already been fixed.
- The cost estimates of the project were made by considering standard schedule of rates while confirming the same to proposed design of housing and other structures quantitatively. Inflation rate was also considered and in any case if escalation could occur then the same would be borne by state government and ULB Jalandhar which saves the economically weaker beneficiary.
- MC Jalandhar took the initiative to safeguard the spaces from any encroachments in improved slums after the completion of the project. Further the organized green spaces, playgrounds and public open spaces demarcated on the proposed layouts of various slums will be developed and maintained by the MC Jalandhar ensuring long term efficiency of such infrastructure.
- Slums covered under the mission once improved shall be de-notified thus ensuring up-gradation of data pertaining to slums in the city.
- Allotment of the housing space has been made in the name of wife or in the name of both husband and wife to encourage gender equality and women empowerment.
- The best practiced feature is that whole slum has been considered while formulating the slum development plan under the mission in Jalandhar city. All the katcha and semi-pucca housing units have been taken up for reconstruction and up-gradation. Moreover, the entire basic infrastructure i.e. water supply, sewerage, paved roads, drains, solid waste management and electrification have enhanced the quality of life of the urban poor. In addition to this basic infrastructure will be integrated with the city level main networks as well giving it the dimension of slum networking at a micro scale which is an ideal best practice. Moreover, ULB shall ensure adequate social infrastructure i.e. health and education facilities by surveying the existing facilities in the surrounding areas/slums. ULB has also ensured to give social security to the beneficiary slum residents while using the ongoing state and central government schemes as well.

- Public participation lead to confirmation for financial contribution by all the beneficiaries thus helping the city to achieve its objective of the project that end user must pay some amount which helps in gaining financial sustainability at local level. Moreover, the infrastructure created will be operated and maintained by the ULB and beneficiary slum Residents Welfare Association in collaboration. A beneficiary committee supervised the construction work at various stages to ensure quality control which is empowering the poor.

In spite of deserved credit to the MCJ for commendable job, this is worth mention that it must work in consultation with state government to have a provision of property rights to slum dwellers in state legislation which will be a milestone in achieving the goal of empowering the urban poor and slum free cities in future. MCJ also needs to keep in mind that cities like Hyderabad and Indore worked for decades for slum up-gradation and slum networking in the late 1980 to late 1990s and still they are struggling with slums. So, MCJ must keep its efforts at best performance level to meet the challenges of a herculean task ahead to integrate all of the authorized and non-authorized slums with the city infrastructure networks.

Conclusions

Failure of formal housing market does not provide affordable housing options to all especially to the urban poor who resorts to informal affordable options like un-serviced, unplanned areas of the city which forces the poor to live in unhygienic poor conditions. This is definitely a planning policy failure at all levels. The improvement of slums though is the constitutional responsibility of ULB but Punjab Government and Government of India cannot shirk their responsibility at all. But unfortunately governments at all levels have been unable to play the effective role in up-gradation of slums due to variety of reasons as stated above. Yet implementation of pilot project under RAY brings in a strong beam of hope for making Jalandhar, a slum free city for the good practices it practiced while implementing RAY pilot project i.e. in-situ slum up-gradation. The city has gained experience and 'know how' of accessing financial resources to cause administrative and financial reforms in the city. The city administration has enhanced its capacity building to deal with the problems of the slums. Initiatives of MC to safeguard the open spaces of project slums from encroachment and the willingness to maintain the physical and social infrastructure that it developed while charging nominal maintenance costs from the end user i.e. slum dwellers for basic services are all positive administrative and financial reforms. Such experience must be used by the city to tap more financial resources from other central government programmes for mainstreaming its slums dwellers in the city life that provides decent living to all. The MCJ needs to prepare a pan city slum up-gradation or slum networking programme to achieve the ultimate goal of slum free city.

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