



GOVERNANCE & URBAN POOR

A policy watch on young children living in urban poverty
HUMARA BACHPAN CAMPAIGN initiative

Government policies for the urban poor are limited to three approaches; a) Employment and Income enhancement of the poor b) Enhancement of basic services c) Improvement of infrastructure and built environment. The policies do not have a child friendly vision where young children can participate and have a say in matters that concern them, especially those relating to their physical environment. These policies though advocate for providing basic services like health, nutrition and education etc for children but a child friendly approach in other components need to be given importance by ensuring their participation in the governance process.

Introduction

Governance for children is both simple and complex¹. It is simple as children can be ensured with adequate provision towards survival, development and protection. It is complex because it requires action from many fronts required for their safe and healthy physical environment. The young children living in urban locations are always considered to be better off than their rural counterparts in terms of housing, sanitation, access to basic services and opportunities. But in reality conditions of poverty,

¹ Satterthwaite(2000:1)

Issues of Young Children living in urban poverty in India: Some Facts

- About 7.6 million live in slums of India
- 13.1 % live in urban poverty
- Every eighth child (0-6 year age group) lives in a slum
- 53 % are covered by Anganwadi centres
- 71.4 % suffer from Anemia
- 47.1% are underweight
- 54.2 % are stunted
- Under 5 mortality is 72.7 per 1000 live birth
- Infant mortality is 54.6 per 1000 live birth
- 23 million, below the age of 14 at the risk from poor sanitation.

overcrowding, inadequate waste removal, lack of adequate water drainage, and unsafe drinking water and sanitation combine to marginalize urban poor in slums.

Many policies are being framed for the development of these urban children. Some policies directly support child development by ensuring nutrition, health, education etc while others are more indirect like housing, transport and related infrastructure development etc.

Urban Planning and Children

Planning for urban development should essentially be supportive of child development in the cities of our country. The provision of urban services such as transport, communication, water, sanitation and shelter should coincide with the needs of the children. A proper urban development approach must consist of two constituents. The first is the interaction between physical and investment planning and the second is the preparation of regional / sub regional / detailed urban development plans to make the first possible.

In India, five year plans are made to guide the government policies. The issues of urban development are a part of these policies and placed in almost all the five year plan periods. For the first time, Urban Community Development (UCD) project in a pilot basis was started during second five year plan. Urban development particularly the development of slums got prominence during fourth five year plan. Scheme for Environment improvement of urban slums (EIUS) was introduced during this plan period to provide basic amenities like safe drinking water supply, sewerage, drainage, community baths and latrines to slum dwellers. The fifth five year plan introduced Urban

land (Ceiling & Regulation) Act to prevent concentration of land holdings in urban areas and facilitate construction of houses for LIG.

The seventh plan period witnessed a paradigm shift where the concept of Urban Basic Services for the Poor was introduced. A four-pronged strategy namely employment creation for low income communities through promotion of micro enterprises, housing and shelter upgradation, social development planning with special focus on development of children, women and upgradation of slum environments were introduced to address the incidence of urban poverty. As a result two schemes such as Nehru Rojgar Yojana (NRY) and Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP) were introduced. For improving the quality of life of urban poor, Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP) was started during eighth five year plan. During ninth five year plan a scheme namely Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY) was introduced after subsuming the schemes like NRY, UBSP and PMIUPEP.

The tenth five year plan introduced the flagship programme of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and the eleventh five year plan launched Rajiv Awas Yojna (RAY). JnNURM aims at creating 'economically productive, efficient, equitable

and responsive cities' by a strategy of upgrading the social and economic infrastructure in cities, provision of Basic Services to Urban Poor (BSUP) and wide-ranging urban sector reforms to strengthen municipal governance in accordance with the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. Under the RAY guidelines, all the urban local bodies are to take a census of all the slums in the city and create strategies to improve existing slums and prevent future ones.

Though the above policies indirectly affect the lives of young children, they are not even considered as a stakeholder. Child participation has also been stressed in the 12th plan document. It states that children must be provided with an environment wherein they are aware of their rights; possess the freedom and opportunity to fully and freely express their views in accordance with their age and maturity' (Twelfth Five Year Plan, Social Sectors, Volume III, pp.196). Despite these commitments the urban governance policies lack a child's viewpoint and there is hardly any scope for their participation within the policies. Since such large amounts of money, time and resources are being spent for urban development, it only makes sense to strive for and incorporate such changes that will have the greatest impact on the millions of young children living in these high risk areas under deprivation and exclusion.

Policy responses to urban challenges

Urban Challenge	Summary of Issues	Policy Responses
Poverty and Unemployment	Urban population below national poverty line: 20.9 percent in 2012 (UN, 2012b); over 80 million urban poor - incidence of urban poverty growing (GOI and UNDP, 2009). Unemployment rates very high in urban areas, particularly in 15-24 age group; 65-70 percent of urban workforce employed in unorganised sector - many in need of "occupational up-scaling" (GOI, 2010)	Separate ministries for poverty alleviation and urban development - calls for integrated urban governance (GOI, 2011). Central assistance scheme since 1997 for poverty alleviation through employment generation
Inadequate Housing	29.4 percent of urban population lived in slums in 2009 (UN, 2012): 17 percent of notified slums and 51 percent of non-notified slums have no sanitation facilities (GOI, 2008)	Integrated housing and slum development under the JNNURM; security of tenure extended to select slums. Rajiv Awas Yojna for slum free India
Water	95 percent of urban population has access to safe water (UN, 2012), but the quality and quantity of access is unreliable; 74 percent have access to piped water supply (McKinsey and Company, 2010) An average of 105 L of water per capita per day is supplied to urban India as opposed to a basic service standard of 150 L per capita per day (McKinsey and Company, 2010). Non-recovery of costs; rationalising water pricing is a contentious socio-political issue	Provision of drinking water primary objective of the National Water Policy and State Water Policies Service Level Benchmarks (SLBs) established for urban water supply (GOI, 2009). Central assistance schemes since 1993 - 94 for universal water supply in towns with less than 20,000 people

Sanitation	58 percent of urban population with access to “improved sanitation” (UN, 2012); community and shared sanitation facilities used by 28 percent of urban households; 18.5 percent households have no access to drainage networks; 40 percent households are connected to open drains (GOI, 2008). 30 percent of sewage generated in urban areas treated (McKinsey and Company, 2010). Inadequate discharge of untreated municipal/ domestic wastewater has contaminated 75 percent of surface water (GOI, 2008)	A National Urban Sanitation Policy (NUSP), 2008, to achieve total sanitisation SLBs established for sanitation (GOI, 2009). Cities ranked in 2010 under NUSP guidelines to establish a baseline to measure progress.
Municipal Solid Waste Management (MSW)	72 percent of solid waste generated is collected (McKinsey and Company, 2010); 20-25 percent of MSW generated in cities is construction and demolition debris; inadequate waste segregation and recycling practices; non-recovery of sector-costs (TERI, 2009). Most cities not able to provide MSW collection and disposal services uniformly across all areas, especially crowded low-income settlements. More than 90 percent of MSW disposed on low lying lands in unsanitary conditions without leachate collection or landfill gas monitoring/collection systems (Sharholi, Ahmad, Mahmood, & Trivedi, 2008); ‘dump sites’ filling faster than intended design period, shortage of land for additional land-fills (TERI, 2009)	MSW (management and handling) rules, 2000 - large gaps between policy and implementation; draft e-waste (management and handling) rules, 2009, under discussion SLBs for solid waste management (GOI, 2009)
Transport Infrastructure	Travel demand greater than supply; 30 percent of total urban trips are by public transport (McKinsey and Company, 2010); combination of state-run and privately-operated buses ply cities - poorly maintained, and non-recovery of costs by state run operations; exponential increase in number of private vehicles and motorized two-wheelers. Poor traffic management, no lane separation for motorized and non-motorized transport; many accidents (increase from 160,000 in 1981 to 390,000 in 2001) and fatalities (increase from 28,400 in 1981 to 80,000 in 2001) (GOI, 2006)	National Urban Transport Policy (GOI, 2006); SLBs for urban transport in JN-NURM cities (GOI, 2009). Phased harmonisation of vehicle emission standards with European norms; standards stricter in metropolitan cities. Judicial activism: Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), a clean fuel mandated for public transport in Delhi and three major cities of Punjab. CNG buses being progressively introduced in JNNURM cities
Environmental Vulnerability	Air pollution: high vehicular emissions, construction activity, and urban congestion; lack of adequate green spaces for cities. Poor land management: congested and unplanned developments; inadequate waste management and drainage; surface water contamination; spatial expansion of cities into areas important to preserve ecosystem services, e.g. construction along mangrove ecosystems in Mumbai. Climate impacts: Due to infrastructure deficits and urban poverty, cities will have to cope with both hazard exposure and high levels of vulnerability to climate extremities; mega coastal cities (Mumbai and Chennai) vulnerable to climate-induced sea level rise.	Multiple legislations on environmental quality since the 1970 (air, water, etc.). Revised national annual ambient air quality standards, 2009, removed air quality distinctions between residential and industrial areas, increased pollutants monitored. National Mission on Sustainable Habitats, a sub-mission of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (GOI, 2008b) focuses on energy efficient buildings, public transport, MSW management

Compilation Source: *Urban challenges in India: A review of recent policy measures* by Sangeeta Nandi & Shama Gamkhar (Habitat International)

Areas that need attention

The problem with the policies of the Ministry of Urban Development is that it does not take into account the difficulties faced by the urban poor children, especially those living in informal settlements. There is no doubt that nutrition and education are of utmost importance when it comes to children but proper nutrition and educational facilities can only be accessed in an environment conducive to one's physical surroundings. The surroundings should be in decent living condition like proper housing with well ventilated rooms, pollution free air, proper lighting, sanitation and access to other basic services. But there is a huge gap between the ministries in converging each other's work. It is true that an improvement in the quality of housing, water, sanitation, air, soil, transport, etc will help the community as a whole but its benefits will be most pronounced in the case of children. Thus upgrading the physical environment in a child friendly approach is necessary for the holistic growth of children and it requires greater political will.



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