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<u>Innovations In Public Policies Targeted towards Urban Slum Development</u>

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1.0 Policy Context

The world's urban population is increasing by about 70 million people a year (Fiscella & Williams, 2004). This increase in population comes with an increase in the basic human requirements for survival which include shelter, employment, food, healthcare etc. However, various developing economies and governments fail to provide these for all its population. Thus, it forces the ones left out to rely on or create their own informal network and infrastructure, a manifestation of such state of affairs are urban slums. Due to their informal and unsafe nature; slums are illegal settlements and have become the living space for millions of people around the world. As per an Indian Government 2010 report "A compact settlement of at least 20 households with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions is a slum."(Government of India,2010)

This further gives rise to not only informal housing but to informal services and employment which distorts the proper functioning of market economy and gives rise to a vicious cycle of poverty and anti-social, illegal economic activities all of which compliments the low standards of living in the slums.

Slums are further characterized by the following attributes: a) lack of basic services; b) substandard housing or illegal and inadequate building structures; c) overcrowding and high density; d) unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations; e) insecure tenure, irregular or informal settlements; f) poverty and social exclusion; and, g) minimum settlement size. (Human Settlements Programme, 2003)

The unhygienic standards in the slums cause them to be the epicentre of multiple epidemics like, ebola, HIV, leprosy, tuberculosis, dengue, malaria, diarrhoea etc. This is especially true vis-a-vis the developing states and third-world economies. Due to the rapid urbanisation in the developing economies, there is a rise in the slum dwellings and governments have repeatedly launched various Slum Rehabilitation Schemes (SRS) worth millions of dollars. However, all these schemes have not been successful in inclusion and reduction of slums due to multiple reasons as elucidated in this brief later. With India being ranked as the world's 2nd fastest growing economy in 2018 by the World Economic Outlook (The Day After, 2019), it seems as though economic growth would upgrade the standards of living in urbanised cities. However, such quantitative indicators often project misleading images of harsh ground realities.

India has over 78 million homeless people and over 200 million people living in Urban Slums (unstats|Millennium Indicators, n.d) where the living conditions are not only inhumane but become a home for various diseases. Considering the aforesaid facts, the urgency of slum up-gradation and development programmes can't be questioned.

Slum population 1991	46.26 million
Slum population 2001	61.28 million
No. of towns reporting slums in Census 2001	42.58 million
Population of towns/cities reporting slums, 2001	640
Reported slum population in 640 towns, 2001	184.35 million

TABLE 1.0 (Government of India| Census, 2001)

In this light, the trajectory of the population living in slums is continuously rising despite the government's pre-existing, redundant and futile attempts made towards urban slum development. With over 5000 projects worth 699 million Dollars already initiated, the rate of integration and reduction in slum dwellings remains low.(Balasubramanian, 2019)This is not just alarming but puts the social policy processes in India under a big question. This clearly points to the requirement of innovative implementation of such programmes, with clear policy agenda and framework. The most striking observation is the need of proper programme evaluation and thereafter new execution. Thus, review and remedy is extremely fundamental in implementation of slum development programmes. It becomes imperative to highlight the most common grievances addressed by earlier projects and policy initiatives, why they have not been successful and why, population in slums has been increasing. (Refer table 1.0)

2.0 Previous Policy Findings

Denying the academic discourse upheld by scholars that believe, public policy briefing and analysis fails to provide solutions to society's ill. (Sunday, 2013), This briefing emphasizes that a

scrutinized and hand-picked policy choice can certainly assist the purpose of serving the society. While there have been countless attempts to rehabilitate slum dwellers none has shown impressive results. This is primarily true due to the vicious cycle that surrounds the political economy within SRSs with the following stakeholders; i. Governments, ii. Private developers, iii. Slum Dwellers. Following is the course of each stakeholder in an SRS; The government promises free houses to slum dwellers in exchange for political support (votes) and hands out rehabilitation and redevelopment projects to private developers or subordinating agencies.

These agencies are then supposed to provide rehabilitation and housing to the dwellers while making sure a surrender of the occupied lands by the slums. However, each agency is corrupt in its own way due to lack of policy monitoring and strictness. For instance, in the case of Sultanpuri slum relocation, the dwellers sold all their new houses and reoccupied the slums. Many times the governments and private stakeholders feed on the SRS Budget and thereby, corruption exists on all levels of implementation. One way to put an end to this is by breaking the vicious cycle by introducing various policy reforms on a case to case basis.

While it certainly is impossible to analyse and brief thousands of policy initiatives made in this sphere. Many of them have common findings and realizations on evaluation. A brief understanding of which is below. The following list displays the most common issues addressed by slum upgrading programs in India:

- Legalization of tenure status for sites and houses, including regularization of rental agreements to ensure improved tenure
- Provision or improvement of technical services e.g., water, waste and wastewater management, sanitation, electricity, road pavement, street lighting, etc.
- Provision or improvement of social infrastructure such as schools, clinics, community centres, playgrounds, green areas, etc.
- Physical improvement of the built environment, including rehabilitation/improvement of existing housing stock.
- Construction of new housing units (Housing construction can but doesn't necessarily form part of upgrading schemes. Often enhancing and rehabilitating the existing housing

stock is much more sensible and effective and can be achieved at little cost through the legalization of tenure status or regularization of rental agreements.)

- Changes in the regulatory framework to better suit the needs and opportunities available to the poor, as far as possible keeping to existing settlement patterns.

The failure of many of these programs goes to either one or a combination of the below-mentioned reasons:

- Lack of on-field assistance, functioning and implementation, so to say a major share of work happens not as per the policy in theory but as per the ones responsible for the execution.
- Bureaucratic barriers often delay processes, cause frustration and discourage the smooth functioning of policy flow.
- Corruption remains a major reason for lack of funds and resources available at the ground level
- Lack of policy evaluation, Also even after successive policy failures, similar policies are passed for execution repeatedly. For instance, the forced demolition and relocation acts and policies that were used during the 60s in Maharashtra, India
- The lack of leadership in the execution of such policies which makes the policy foundation weak when faced with on-ground challenges.
- The main cause of failure also remains the general and holistic approach of these policies, whereby, many policies are aimed at general development and upgradation, the need, however, is felt for more direct and specific policies aimed at the development of a specific aspect. For instance, policies specifically aimed at Right to Education in urban slums.
- Serious lack of manpower and human resource to carry forth overly ambitious projects.
- Weak reviewing process
- Weak monitoring and checks.
- Lack of political consensus on passing and executing policy schemes
- Lack of proper targeting of policy and resources.
- A major influence of variable factors in policy implementation for instance, caste, religion, race etc.

Out of an entire plethora of reasons and arguments, above mentioned shall serve as a foundational discourse in building up of policy recommendation.

3.0 Recommendations

Based on the above analysis, recommendations can be formulated relating to the three actions of a successful practice that are likely to improve the policy system and execution. These actions focus on the perspectives and roles of key stakeholders within Policy implementation – namely, heads and managers of Governmental Organisations ('creation action'); Volunteers/ on-field staff/support staff (execution action'); slum dwellers (impact action'); These actions will be in relation to the current and future slum conditions.

The three actions are overlapping and mutually supportive. Therefore, the policy must place equal emphasis on all three actions at the same time in order to achieve improvements within slums. Thus, the policy recommendation will keep in mind the outcome indicators and will jointly talk about all the three actions.

Recommendations Brief Descriptions of Outcome Indicators

	Recommendations	Brief Descriptions	Outcome Indicators
1.	Create a binding legal framework for all parties involved	Set up a legal framework and agreement among all the services involved: NGOs, Volunteers, governmental and foreign aid etc. This will allow ground-level organizations to work in an orderly fashion. Thus, standardizing the working of on-field employees	Ease of adaptability and standardized policy execution, assisting the monitoring and reviewing.
2.	Promote central leadership in policy execution rather than departmentalizing execution.	Lack of leadership puts a well-drafted policy to jeopardy when it comes to execution. Thus, under execution action, a central leadership must be encouraged this will facilitate policy implementation multifold.	Leadership, increase in accountability and centralized procedure to assist policy execution.
3.	Formulate a monitoring mechanism	Monitoring is essential in policy execution and correct monitoring has always been lacking in Indian Policy Execution. A legally backed up monitoring mechanism will unroot corruption and encourage proper functioning of the policy.	Corruption takes away over 60% resources that should reach the target site, curbing it points to OPTIMUM UTILIZATION of resources.

4.	Uniform Institutional framework for bringing professionalism at all levels.	ut Administrative & Organization Reforms at State / District/ Panchayat level.	Defined Roles & Responsibilities with accountability at all stakeholder levels.
5.	Innovative and digitalized policy checks and reviews	Creation of new applications or programmes to encourage civil society participation in running government schemes. Or the creation of digital forums for Government officials to check and take updates on policy implementation	Helps policymakers to always be connected and encourages citizen participation via innovating means.
6.	Conformity to existing Legal framework	Conformity with the existing legal framework Acts) and Rules	Lawful Implementation
7.	Promote and ensure an approach where methodological schemes, materials, assessment methods and goals are tailored to individual needs of the site.	Aimed at realizing and eliminating the influence of variable societal factors like caste, religion etc. on policy implementation. Policy execution will follow a channel of assessments and will be tailored on the basis of these assessments to eliminate societal factors in implementing policy.	Avoiding influence and barriers posed by societal factors and variables Recognizing each slum's individual requirement and likewise, executing policy. Standardized assessment procedure.
8.	Encourage specific policy targets rather than holistic and generalized targets	This is to make policy goals better targeted. For instance, rather than policies aimed at working for child welfare in slums. Policies should be aimed at Child literacy and healthcare in slums.	Better targeting and increased success rate. Easy monitoring and checking.
9.	Easy and innovative hiring mechanisms	The problem of a lack of manpower can be solved with increased citizen participation, which can happen electronically through an easy online procedure. This should allow government departments to hire volunteers and help citizens contribute towards policy execution. For instance, a policy aimed at increasing literacy in slums can call for citizen participation and hire teachers as volunteers on a part-time basis.	Citizen participation. Digitized application process Curbs the lack of human resource in taking up intensive projects.

10.	Digitized and innovative bureaucratic channels	To allow the timely implementation of policy, saving tons of paperwork, ease of access and eliminates all bureaucratic barriers in execution. It will also curb corruption in bureaucracy as everything can be electronically checked and posted	Ease of application, Ease of implementation. Eliminates bureaucratic barriers. Eliminates bureaucratic corruption

4.0 WAY FORWARD

The innovations in slum development policy are inevitable to meet with legislative challenges as they would mean a shift in vote bank balance; this is due to the heavy influence these policies would have on governmental agencies and the slum dwellers. Another reason for this challenge is the status-quo that reaps superficial benefits for stakeholders at the cost of slum dwellers. Nonetheless, the incremental change in the policy narrative is to become the starting point of fresh policy initiative on similar lines.

Market issues of income disparity, lack of economic growth, immigration, redundant regulations etc. all cause poverty and lack of proper housing facilities. A shift in the Slum development policy ought to be complemented with similar policy changes in the aforementioned spheres. It is also to note that, the issue of slum dwelling is not merely an issue based on sociology, economics and governance but extends to being one of psychology and mindset of dwellers as well. Whereby, necessary attention must be given to realise a critical turnaround in the kind of awareness programmes that will compliment SRSs or Slum Inclusion policies to bring about a shift in the perspective of slum dwellers by helping them envision a positive and upgraded lifestyle through employment and better services.

With adequate monitoring and evaluation, significant growth is expected in terms of inclusion and rehabilitation. However, this must be supplemented with governmental action and civil society participation in areas of public service. While not all social policy measures bring forth sudden changes in the developmental trajectory of the issue it deals in; likewise, the trajectory of positive change through these policies and recommendations is to remain slow but consistent.

5.0 Conclusion

The need for establishing an innovative slum development and up-gradation policy is at its peak. The policy is to be fuelled by advances in digital age and use of citizen participation. While also considering the learnings from past policies and programmes.

With a proper legal framework, it assists in avoiding barriers in execution like corruption, social factors, lack of resources etc. Such a developmental policy is not only pertinent to India but most of the developing world and looks at the betterment of human living standards.

In the end, with quantitative and qualitative evaluation standards governments can go on refining such a policy discourse and will see significant success of their policy goals.

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