

Searchlight

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FEATURE

Ending the Cycle of Neglect

BY NOOPUR DESAI

Sharadha, aged 14, lives in one of Hyderabad's slums. Her mother works as domestic help in local housing complexes. Sharadha likes going to school and aspires to be a teacher someday. However, because she has a poor attendance record, she may not be able to move onto the next grade. She has invariably been skipping school for five days every month since she was 12 because it was "that time of the month."

A SOCIAL TABOO

Sharadha's story is an all too familiar one throughout South Asia. A large proportion of girls in India miss an average of 4-5 days of school, and at least **23% of girls** in India drop out of school when they start

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menstruating. Around 300 million Indian women and girls do not have access to safe menstrual hygiene products. Over 88% of women use unhygienic alternatives during menstruation: women living in urban slums and rural villages use dirty rags or nothing at all during their menses. About 77% of women in India use an old cloth during menstruation. Unhygienic practices largely prevail amongst lower-income groups.

In Bangladesh, 80% of women use an old cloth for absorption of blood and 42% dried the same cloth under the sun before reusing it. Most women in Indian slums dry their homemade sanitary napkins behind doors, so that they are out of sight, and remove them when male family members return home. These women wear the napkins again, even if they are still wet. These unhygienic practices can cause various vaginal and urinary tract infections, as well as skin diseases. Reproductive tract infections are 70% more common in women who use unhygienic alternatives to recommended sanitary napkins during menstruation.

The subject of menstruation in South Asia and its underlying issues are a social taboo that brings about shame. More often than not, women of any social strata are

Over 88% of women use unhygienic alternatives during menstruation: women living in urban slums and rural villages use dirty rags or nothing at all during their menses.

uncomfortable openly discussing what is perceived as a private, unclean matter. Lower-income women, in particular, follow certain social exclusion trends that include not being able to visit a place of worship, not bathing, sleeping separately from her family, not eating certain foods, and in extreme cases, not being able to leave their dwellings. A WaterAid study in Nepal shows that 89% of women abide by some form of social exclusion or restrictions during menstruation.

PRECIOUS SANITARY NAPKINS

Female sanitation facilities are inadequate and suffer the most due to the long tradition of taboo attached to menstruation. Using sanitary napkins can considerably change the face of female sanitation across South Asia. International organizations, private NGOs and social enterprises have been working towards developing adequate female sanitation awareness and facilities in the region. For example, through their WASH projects, WaterAid has implemented programs to provide hygienic sanitary napkins to girls and women from underserved communities.

Even private players, like Proctor & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson, are working with governments and NGOs to provide free or subsidized sanitary napkins to the poor. Some other, simple steps have been taken at the grassroots level to improve the poor's access to sanitary napkins. For example, teachers at the [Jana Jagriti Secondary School](#) contribute INR1 (~US\$0.02) per day from their salaries to buy sanitary napkins for schoolgirls.

Accessibility and affordability of sanitary napkins are major issues for low-income groups. There has been an innovative movement to produce affordable and environmentally-friendly sanitary napkins to promote menstrual hygiene for the bottom of the pyramid. Modern feminine hygiene, including sanitary napkins, is perceived as a luxury by the poor, and older traditions of using cloths are preferred. [Goonj](#), an Indian NGO, started the 'Not Just a Piece of Cloth' initiative that uses cloth from urban households to make sanitary napkins that are sold at

FEATURE continued

INR5 (US\$0.09) for a pack of five. After the waste cloth is collected, it is recycled, cleaned and cut into appropriate lengths. This cloth napkin is cleaned, unlike the dirty rags that are generally used. The cloth napkins are [100% biodegradable](#) and can be reused or disposed. The process to manufacture these cloths is manual and provides employment to women in slums, supplying the poor in rural and urban areas with a comfortable, hygienic good and spreading awareness about the issue.

Education about menstruation being a natural biological function, and not a shameful taboo, is an important distinction that needs to be supported by larger scale awareness campaigns.

Urban poor women are more aware about what sanitary napkins are, compared to their rural counterparts, since they are exposed to more feminine hygiene awareness and options in the city. The widespread availability of [kirana stores](#) and pharmacies makes the market for sanitary napkins and other menstrual hygiene products larger than that in rural areas. However, this does not necessarily remove the perception of menstruation as taboo in the urban poor woman's life. In addition to the social taboo inside and outside her home, she is faced with challenges of affordability, insufficient knowledge of women's health and poor living conditions.

ADDRESSING NEED THROUGH INNOVATION

Given the gravity of the situation, there are various innovative initiatives unfolding in the field to meet the needs of women and girls. Arunachalam Muruganandam, founder of the well-known [Jayaashree Industries](#), gained appreciation for his low-cost, environmentally-friendly sanitary napkins for underserved women by poor women through an easily replicable manufacturing process using a small machine. Currently, over 225 Jayaashree machines have been set up across 14 states in India.

Picking up on the concept of producing affordable and easy-to-dispose sanitary napkins, methods using different raw materials have come into play. The Department of Textiles at Lady Irwin College, Delhi University is attempting to produce low-cost sanitary napkins by using cotton fiber from [knitwear waste](#). In 2012, SaferWe Foundation launched a program in Karnataka to provide pads made of [bamboo pulp and cotton](#) to rural and urban women.

Another such organization is [Aakar Innovations](#), a social enterprise born out of India's [National Innovation Foundation \(NIF\)](#) large database. Aakar started by using Muruganandam's mini-sanitary napkin machine and has developed it further to produce 2,000-2,500 napkins daily, involving self-help groups and women in the entire process. It uses raw materials like banana stems, bagasse, bio plastic and water hyacinth pulp. Jaydeep Mandal, founder of Aakar Innovations, says that, "The machine is going to launch soon and is going to create hygienic, low-cost and biodegradable sanitary napkins." Aakar is set to install its machines in the slums of Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata, along with launching 600 machines in five years across Gujarat state in partnership with State Government of Gujarat.

The momentum of providing hygienic feminine sanitation has grown in Bangladesh, too. [Phulki](#) is an NGO that started working with poor migrant women in Dhaka. One of its focus areas is building awareness of positive hygiene practices during menstruation to avoid infection, as well as producing and supplying affordable



From Menstrupedia.
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sanitary napkins. The issue of a lack of hygienic sanitation for women surfaced during Phulki's [slum sanitation development program](#). Phulki researched the requirements of sanitary napkins, set up machines and trained women from the community to produce and sell low-cost sanitary napkins in slums. The organization has focused on garment workers in Bangladesh: the garment industry employs 1.5 million workers in factories across the country and 80% are women. The NGO initiated talks with different garment factories to set up sanitary napkin machines on their premises. To date, five garment factories have set up machines where, at some point in the day, each worker produces these napkins in bulk, which are then sold at an average rate of ~BDT30 (US\$0.38) per pack.

This is a small step in promoting the cause of female sanitation in Bangladesh. Suraiya Haque, founder of Phulki, says that, "There is a lot that needs to be done towards improving the sanitary conditions of women, which not only includes providing low-cost sanitary napkins, but also provision of adequate toilets, especially in schools." Shar-

Providing sanitary napkins alone is not going to solve the issue of menstrual hygiene and health.

adha's story echoes this fact: girls are missing school because there is no separate toilet facility for them, which is especially important during their menstruation days.

Municipal bodies in Mumbai provide [5,993 public toilets for men](#), compared to only 3,536 for women. In Delhi, there are an estimated 1,534 public toilets for men and 132 for women. Most government schools located near slums do not have a separate toilet facility for girls. The idea of inadequate provision of toilets has resonated with international programs like [WASH](#), who is working towards providing appropriate infrastructure so that girls can safely and privately have access to a toilet.

A STARK INFORMATION GAP

Regardless of the interventions, fighting the large awareness gap that includes knowledge on the process of menstruation and women's health versus the myths that exist is imperative. "One of the biggest challenges of promoting menstrual hygiene and supply[ing] sanitary napkins is that there exists a large awareness gap in slums and villages," says Mandal. Providing sanitary napkins alone is not going to solve the issue of menstrual hygiene and health. "Awareness in terms of what menstruation is and disposal of materials is very weak especially amongst low-income groups. Due to [a] lack of infrastructure, slum women especially have no place to hide or dispose their cloths or napkins; and therefore turn to unhygienic methods," explains Haque.

Education about menstruation being a natural biological function, and not a shameful taboo, is an important distinction that needs to be supported by larger scale awareness campaigns. In 2012, Geneva-based [Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council](#) (WSSCC) arranged for a public education campaign to raise awareness about menstrual hygiene; around 200,000 people participated. WSSCC interviewed 775 people individually, as well as a focus group of 12,000 people, and it was found that [90% of the women](#) did not know what menstruation was until they had their first menses. After this campaign in 2012, the WSSCC successfully introduced the idea of menstrual hygiene management as a part of the future 2015 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets on water, sanitation and hygiene.

To close this awareness gap, Aditi Gupta, a former student from the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, started [Menstrupedia](#) in October 2012. Gupta aims to raise awareness of menstruation and break all misconceptions around it. "Girls start menstruating even before the subject is introduced in their syllabus," says Gupta. Menstrupedia has an online platform through which information on the subject is

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shared. It is in the process of creating a [comic book](#) that parents can buy for their daughters to make learning about menstruation more acceptable. To cater to the needs of low-income groups, Menstrupedia will ensure that its comic books are available in regional languages. It is starting to rope in NGOs for awareness and distribution programs, and aims to implement the program within a year.

Along with making women aware about the process of menstruation, breaking myths around it and providing them with hygienic avenues, medical support is also essential. [Samhita Social Ventures](#) partnered with Johnson & Johnson's [Stayfree Women for Change Program](#) to spread awareness of the issue and to also provide medical support. Medical health camps are set up in slums where women can speak to volunteer gynecologists about general information or specific issues they are facing. The Program also provides counselling on nutrition and healthcare practices. Each health camp gives out a kit that contains any prescribed medication for three months, and a free, six-month supply of sanitary napkins.

Priya Naik from Samhita Social Ventures suggests that urban poor women are exposed to media, and though that is certainly one way of highlighting these critical issues, the scope of the problem is large and various additional steps need to be taken. To that end, Samhita Social Ventures is in the process of training college students and giving them resources to organize camps to reach out to the poor.

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CONCLUSION

“The cause for menstrual hygiene and health does not stop at providing sanitary napkins. It is in fact a long process,” says Naik. The cause of hygienic menstruation has various strings attached to it that include awareness and medical support. Single players in the field cannot fulfill the large-scale need. “As a long-term goal, Samhita Social Ventures is looking to create a consortium with like-minded companies, including pharmaceuticals and NGOs, to make a large-scale impact,” says Naik.

While there have been many socially-driven innovative interventions, the impacts have been on a much smaller scale. In order to address the issue at large, a comprehensive approach is required where all stakeholders, including the government, the private sector and civil society, collaborate and take equal responsibility in promoting the cause of menstrual hygiene and health. Also, through technology platforms and media, the taboo factor attached to menstruation needs to be broken across the country regardless of economic stature.

Owing to lack of awareness on the importance of feminine hygiene, the idea of spending on sanitary napkins might not fit into their monthly expenses. Urban poor women also face issues of privacy because of the lack of space and inadequate sanitation facilities. To top it up, age-old myths and traditions around menstruation endure. There is a strong need to promote better living conditions for urban poor women, in conjunction to spreading awareness of menstruation and women's health, so that they may lead an informed, healthy life with dignity.



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DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Local Businesses and Slum Redevelopment

BY SHREE RAVINDRANATH

Slum redevelopment and rehabilitation projects are often in a state of deadlock: any significant change requires more resources and land. However, availing of more resources and land requires significant change on the ground. Reflecting the magnitude of the challenge, several ambitious slum redevelopment projects have either been ineffective or have become notorious non-starters. For example in Dhaka, [a study conducted in 2011](#) found that the Bhasantek Rehabilitation Project, started in 1998, had failed to provide shelter to evicted slum-dwellers. In India, plans to [redevelop Dharavi](#) have been discussed since 1997 with little progress.

Public opinion of slum redevelopment projects argues for and against redevelopment. The middle- and upper-classes, especially those living close to a slum community, are gratified by the expected improvement to their surroundings. However, the urban poor are by-and-large suspicious of such initiatives, predicting them to be inequitable.

This is largely due to the manner in which redevelopment projects have been handled in the past. Historically, the urban poor have not been included in plans for redevelopment, nor in efforts to relocate them. When provided, temporary facilities are woefully inadequate, and the living and working needs of the urban poor are rarely incorporated into the design of new buildings. Promises of project deadlines and available facilities at redeveloped sites are rarely kept. While real estate developers seem to gain from redevelopment efforts, the urban poor realize little value for themselves, resulting in a historic distrust of developers and redevelopment efforts. Local enterprises in particular have been hard hit, due to both a need for increased investments, as well as the opportunity cost of having to move locations twice over.

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In spite of poor historic performance and perceptions, there are new models emerging that indicate a change in how developers approach redevelopment projects, and these efforts finally seem to address the critical issue of building trust within urban poor communities.

WHAT WORKS

Currently, there seems to be two models of slum and cluster redevelopment that work. One is promoted by private developers such as **Omkar**. They offer temporary residential facilities that are as convenient as can be made possible. These private developers design the redevelopment project for dual purposes: to build low-income, high-rise housing and commercial space for slum-dwellers, and to build luxury apartment complexes or commercial space. The sale of luxury apartments or commercial space then more than covers the costs of redevelopment projects.

Historically, the urban poor have not been included in plans for redevelopment, nor in efforts to relocate them. When provided, temporary facilities are woefully inadequate, and the living and working needs of the urban poor are rarely incorporated into the design of new buildings.

The second model is **coordinated** by not-for-profit entities, such as trusts, along with private partners like design firms. In this model, the government provides funding while not-for-profit entities are involved in community mobilization and facilitate development of the master redevelopment plan. This model typically has no for-sale luxury component, and the redeveloped area often remains entirely with the erstwhile slum residents.

A critical component for the success of these two different models is community mobilization and engagement; model success depends on including the community, recognizing their needs and addressing them effectively. This has been recognized and included in the “**Delhi Declaration**,” after the International Conference on Inclusive Urban Planning in New Delhi on February 18-19, 2013.

While non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have traditionally been able to work with the community based on their longstanding goodwill and familiarity with residents, private companies are now adopting a similar approach with intense community engagement over a shorter time period. Private players are able to increase their efficacy by enabling their field people to make small, on-the-spot investment and design decisions that will help solve relatively simple problems as they crop up.

Irrespective of which model of redevelopment is adopted, the greatest challenge is building trust within urban poor communities where education is low and most transactions informal. Convincing such communities of the value of written agreements and contracts, and helping them understand design, financial projections and other aspects of the project can be very time- and resource-intensive with no guarantee of results.

Aside from private and not-for-profit players, the critical stakeholder group that holds the keys to the success of any redevelopment project are local businesses, resident employers of informal workers and home-based workers, many of whom are women.

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ENTERPRISE CONCERNS

Most slum communities are hubs of **informal entrepreneurial activity**. These enterprises are vital not only for the micro economy of a slum, but also to the wider macro economy of a city and its country. Since these enterprises provide livelihoods to the local urban poor, it is understandable that any redevelopment proposal is met with serious reservations regarding the cost of temporary dwellings, re-establishment, loss of customers and maintenance costs of the new buildings.

Given the impact local enterprises have on the urban poor, any redevelopment proposal is likely to affect enterprise owners and employees. Not only would productivity and revenues suffer in the short-term during the transition period, but also, the enterprises will incur costs in moving their machinery and equipment. This uncertainty of enterprise tenure would prevail until construction is completed on

Irrespective of which model of redevelopment is adopted, the greatest challenge is building trust within urban poor communities where education is low and most transactions informal.

the redevelopment project and possession handed back over to slum-dwellers, whereupon local entrepreneurs have to undertake the exercise of moving back to their original place of business. For enterprises that are directly interacting with customers, this could translate into a significant financial loss since they are unlikely to spend additional time or money looking for shops in another location.

Another important concern is the time needed for redevelopment and the probability of a project being completed on time. In the event of project delays, the financial losses to these slum enterprises may mount on account of extended leases at temporary locations, and a costly change in plans and schedules.

For most local entrepreneurs in slum communities, the long-term concern is the location of the shop post-redevelopment, the amount of space available and the suitability of that space for their enterprise. In most redevelopment plans, proposals are dominated by new multi-story buildings, as opposed to single-story homes, in order to make space for roads and other infrastructural amenities. As a result, many existing enterprises would need to find a new way of conducting business; the benefits that came from proximity and visibility to the streets may be lost, thereby making the possibility of losing existing and new customers a serious challenge.

Enterprises may be offered a choice between a smaller space on the ground floor of a redeveloped building or a larger space on a higher floor. The suitability of the solution depends on the nature of the business. For example, retailers would prefer to have their shops on the ground floor and close to a street, even if it means a smaller shop area. On the other hand, service providers may be more amenable to the idea of a higher floor with larger area.

Another significant concern of urban poor entrepreneurs and enterprises is the suitability of the planned buildings and infrastructure for their business. Enterprises that work with oversized raw material, such as timber and wrought iron, often need to transport and store them in close proximity to their workplace. Even relatively lightweight raw materials such as rags and scraps come in voluminous bulk packaging. The standardized design of the redeveloped tenements may offer less opportunity for such business-driven space customization. Businesses such as tanning shops and

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pottery, amongst others, are likely to need customized infrastructure that has to be incorporated in the master redevelopment plan.

Lastly, but arguably most important, is the fact that the cost of maintaining residence and work in a redeveloped building is an aspect that gets little attention in the planning process. While the durability of makeshift homes in slums may be inferior, seasonal maintenance requirements, such as fortification during the rainy season, can be easily and inexpensively met. However, high-rise buildings would constantly require resources – electricity to run elevator banks or to pump water to rooftop tanks for general building use. In addition, these buildings require expensive diesel power backup to reliably maintain essential services during times of power outages.

It is the people – the urban poor – not the buildings, that are at the center of slum redevelopment. Many of these people are entrepreneurs or self-employed, and are looking for means to protect and expand their livelihoods.

There is little data available to compare the direct and indirect maintenance costs of living in informal slum dwellings versus brick-and-mortar buildings built as redeveloped housing. However, [anecdotal evidence](#) suggests that the urban poor often vacate the redeveloped property that they receive and resume living in a different slum community due to the new, higher maintenance costs, as well as the profit potential of renting or selling a newly redeveloped residence to complement other income generation efforts.

LEARNING FROM BHENDI BAZAAR

Bhendi Bazaar is a settlement in south Mumbai that is over 100 years old, and while it is not a slum, there are some unique aspects to its redevelopment that are worth understanding as lessons for slum rehabilitation. Age, a dense population and lack of infrastructure upgradation has left the area with narrow and squalid dead-end alleyways, crumbling buildings that are dangerous and unfit for human habitation, and limited water and sanitation facilities – not unlike many slum communities. The majority of the buildings in the area are *chawls*, or lower-middle class housing with shared verandas and bathrooms, and often rented out to several families.

The Bhendi Bazaar Redevelopment Project (BBRP) received [environmental clearance](#) in March 2013. It is currently the [first major cluster redevelopment](#) project in Mumbai and is being overseen by the charitable [Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust](#) (SBUT). The Trust has engaged several reputable private firms and consultants to work on this project.

The plan covers 16.5 acres of land, a notably small area compared to Dharavi's sprawl of over 500 acres, for instance. The project affects more than 20,000 people, compared to Dharavi's over 600,000. The plan includes about 270 buildings with 3,200 residential houses between 100 to 300 square feet each, and over 1,200 businesses.

The master plan has gone through several participatory iterations. Abbas Master, the CEO of the BBRP, emphasizes inclusive and secular planning. "From the very beginning of the project, we took a participatory approach to the project and involved all the stakeholders through focus group discussions. Apart from this, we had involved representatives from various businesses, where we discussed all issues that will affect

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them and their suggestions during transit phase of the project and their preferences in the development of the Master Plan as to what kind of environment needs to be for commercial to flourish. All communities residing in the area were involved, and the Trust clearly communicated that the redevelopment was to benefit all of them.”

Since residents chose a high-street shopping design for the redeveloped locality while participating in the master plan development exercise, most existing enterprises will continue to face the street even after redevelopment. The design has incentivized enterprises to move to higher floors if they so choose by providing larger shop areas. While customizing construction for specific enterprises is still a challenge, it is overcome by appropriately allocating area on the higher floors when possible.

The Trust is using smart design to ensure that the redevelopment is green, easy to maintain, and stays cool. The proposed towers are organized by height to allow the cooling sea breezes to reach residents. The project has been designed to consume less electricity than market standards, and by recycling and sewage treatment, it discharges less sewage. This addresses concerns around the availability of water and electricity, and also reduces the need for air-conditioning, as well as the overall maintenance costs of the buildings.

Interestingly, the project makes no distinction between the residences that would be allocated to current residents and those that are earmarked for sale. This has ensured that existing residents are treated on-par with new buyers. However, this has only been possible due to the unique not-for-profit nature of the project. “The project is run under the aegis of His Holiness Dr. Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin Saheb, and profits, if any, are earmarked for community and neighborhood development initiatives. This has greatly enhanced the trust of locals in the project,” Abbas explains.

He also points out the primary difference between the Bhendi Bazaar project and other slum redevelopment projects is education. “The residents of Bhendi Bazaar are engaged in various businesses and are educated. Our Project is under the Urban Renewal Scheme as against the scheme for Slum Redevelopment under which the Dharavi Redevelopment Project is. In comparison to Dharavi, the size of our Project is smaller and more manageable,” he says. This, along with tenure security, are aspects that will need to be addressed in all upcoming slum redevelopment projects.

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CONCLUSION

It is the people – the urban poor – not the buildings, that are at the center of slum redevelopment. Many of these people are entrepreneurs or self-employed, and are looking for means to protect and expand their livelihoods. Due to the long drawn-out process and uncertainty of outcomes, redevelopment projects on large expanses of slum-dwelling land are viewed with suspicion.

Entrepreneurs and their enterprises in slums are a critical stakeholder group for redevelopment. While tenure is a long-recognized challenge that needs to be addressed for slum-dwellers, education seems to be another significant area for intervention. However, both of these are long-term interventions and progress is slow.

As a starting point, however, building trust with urban poor communities by carefully identifying their concerns and addressing them can mean progress. The BBRP example reiterates that projects and services for any community, including the urban poor, cannot afford to be poorly conceived, designed and implemented.

There is, in fact, a pressing need to make slum redevelopment projects greener, cleaner and less polluting than before. This would make resources such as electricity and water less of a concern and add to the chances of the urban poor actually living in them by making the maintenance costs less burdensome.

If more such initiatives could be undertaken, there would be greater precedent of whether collaboration between the community, and private and not-for-profit stakeholders provides the “perfect” equation for equitable redevelopment for the urban poor and the city.



FLICKR USER TOGA WONDERING

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Data on Indian Slums

BY UTHARA GANESH

In March 2013, the Registrar General of India (RGI) published, for the very first time, [comprehensive datasets](#) on housing, amenities and assets in Indian slums, based on information collected during [the 2011 Census](#). Up until this report, the assessment of challenges pertaining to urban poverty had no disaggregated numbers to substantiate or inform policy design.

The RGI report says that 68 million people, or one in six Indians, live in slum communities across 2,543 – out of a total of 4,041 – Indian towns. This amounts to 17.4% of the urban Indian population and is a dip from figures reported in the 2001 Census that estimated the number at 27.5% of the total urban population. While the figures imply a reduction in India’s total slum-dwelling population, closer scrutiny of the data suggests the report does not depict an entirely accurate picture.

FIGURES IN CONTEXT

The Census makes a clear [administrative distinction](#) between what are termed “statutory” and “Census” towns. While statutory towns are those with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee, Census towns are those that have a population of at least 5,000 individuals, with over 75% of the male workforce engaged in non-agricultural livelihood pursuits, and a minimum population density of 400 persons per square kilometer.

Since the 2001 Census, India has seen greater growth in the number of its Census towns than its statutory towns. The number of Census towns in India has grown by 186%, from [1,362 in 2001](#) to [3,894 in 2011](#). In the same period, the number of statutory towns increased from [3,799 in 2001](#) to [4,041 in 2011](#), representing a relatively meager growth of 6%.

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The figures presented in the RGI report seem to suggest a decrease in India's urban slum population. However, the figures used only include the much smaller proportion of statutory towns. In essence, the existence of slums in the growing number of Census towns – that currently represent 49% of all Indian towns – has been disregarded by the report. As bottlenecks build in the face of rural to urban migration, Census towns have actually become home to a rapidly growing number of slum communities. This reality needs to be captured in any report clarifying the situation of the urban poor in order to give policymakers a more accurate view of what is happening on-the-ground.

The RGI data has also attempted to indicate the general demographic and spatial spread of Indian slums. The report suggests that 71% of slum communities are located in the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Three cities in Andhra Pradesh have populations greater than 10 million people and also claim a higher proportion of slum households. The southern city of Visakhapatnam has recorded the highest proportion of slum households to total urban households in India at 44.1%, two rankings higher than famously overcrowded Mumbai.

While the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh report the highest proportions of slum communities to total urban population – with the numbers standing at 35.7%, 32% and 28%, respectively – Kerala and Assam have much lower slum population proportions at only 1.5% and 4.8%, respectively. It is clear, however,

Even among the larger and relatively more organized urban slum communities, as many as 34% of households do not have access to a toilet on or within their premises.

that these numbers in themselves can only illustrate a partial portrait of the presence and distribution of slums across India, especially considering how a sizeable number of towns with slum populations have been left out of the RGI report's scope.

CIVIC AMENITIES FOR THE URBAN POOR

The implied errors of data exclusion serve to paint a contrarian portrait with regard to the provision of civic amenities in Indian slums. According to the report, slums have coverage rates that are almost at-par with non-slum communities in cities, with no acknowledgement of the differences between slum households and non-slum households investigated and discussed in past research reports and media articles.

For example, the report's figures show that more Indian slum households have tap water connections than non-slum households: 74% versus 70.6%, respectively. The report also cites that 10.4% of slum households own one desktop computer, 51.3% use LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections, 90.5% have electricity connections and 63.5% have mobile phone connections. While treated tap water sources are actually three percentage points greater for slum households, non-slum urban communities register only marginally higher percentages for mobile phone connections (64.3%), LPG connections (65%) and television connections (69.9%). And while only 36.9% of slum communities have closed drains, non-slum communities also have a low number of closed drainage systems at 45%.

These figures are misleading in a way that they suggest a more or less equal usage of specific amenities amongst all urban communities. It is important to note though how the RGI is categorizing communities as "legitimate" slums: requiring a minimum of 300 residents to a settlement, the relatively high number serves to exclude a

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE
continued

large number of smaller or more temporary urban slum communities, which would further inflate the total slum population. What is particularly surprising is that the RGI retained this approach to slum identification in its first detailed slum census survey, despite criticism by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation of the methodology in a recent [report](#).

A NOTE ON SANITATION

One of the key insights from the RGI report could be the numbers it shares on the state of urban sanitation. While the evidence reported may not be robust, it is noteworthy considering that even as a conservative assessment, the results are bleak. The cost of poor sanitation to the country, according to a 2011 High Powered Expert Committee [report](#) entitled “Estimating the Investment Requirements for Urban Infrastructure Services” by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, is estimated at INR5,400 (~US\$100) per person per year. Even among the larger and relatively more organized urban slum communities, as many as 34% of households do not have access to a toilet on or within their premises. Given how sanitation has become an important

The implied errors of data exclusion serve to paint a contrarian portrait with regard to the provision of civic amenities in Indian slums.

national agenda priority, urban policy in India must also prioritize the issue, particularly in light of how inadequate sanitation is affecting the health of the urban poor.

OWNERSHIP: SUCCESS OF URBAN HOUSING POLICIES?

The RGI report makes significant claims regarding urban housing. It states that the proportion of slum residents who own their homes is actually higher than that of non-slum residents, 70.2% versus 69.2%, respectively. Real life evidence across major Indian cities, however, does not corroborate with this finding. The ease with which slum evictions take place across the country indicate the oversight of any rights slum-dwellers may have to the land on which they reside. For example, earlier this year, as many as 1,200 families were forcibly evicted from their makeshift homes in the Ejjipura slum in Bangalore, and the incident only served to underscore the extent to which the urban poor continue to face insecurity of tenure.

Without a doubt, urban housing is an area that requires immediate and concerted action. The draft 12th Five-Year Plan [notes](#), “As the urban population and incomes increase, demand for every key service such as water, transportation, sewage treatment, low income housing will increase five- to seven-fold in cities of every size and type. And if India continues on its current path, urban infrastructure will fall woefully short of what is necessary to sustain prosperous cities.” India’s widening housing and infrastructural gaps in cities are serious challenges that must be addressed. According to a recent McKinsey & Company [study](#), “India’s urban awakening: Building inclusive cities, sustaining economic growth,” over US\$1.2tn is needed for appropriate infrastructure investment in India – this without even addressing the housing gap. Still, even at its current rate of spending, the central government cannot meet many of the infrastructural needs in Indian cities.

The danger of the numbers reported by the RGI is that it grossly trivializes the issue of urban housing and infrastructure. With official projections themselves stating that for each of the next 25 years Indian cities shall add 12 million people to their populations, the rights of the unrecognized urban poor shall only be further marginalized.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE continued

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DRIVING INDIAN CONSUMPTION

The fact that the bottom of the pyramid is the fastest growing consumer market in the coming decades has been widely acknowledged, and therefore, slum-dwellers from larger slum inhabitations present a huge new target market for businesses. In a March 2013 [article](#) on *LiveMint*, representatives from companies selling fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) recognized the fact that slum residents represent an important, albeit price sensitive, market segment.

Recent years have seen acceleration in consumption of lower-income segments, while consumption by middle- and high-income groups has remained resilient. A [report](#) entitled “India Market Strategy” by Credit Suisse Securities, however, reiterates the *LiveMint* article in its assertion that the main stimulus to Indian consumption over the next few years will be driven by low-income groups. The direct benefit and direct cash transfer schemes rolled out across the country further contribute to the increased purchasing power of the low-income consumer. While this may portend well for the market, the strengthening of consumer protection laws and the protection of rights – especially of the vulnerable low-income urban consumer – is an issue that shall become increasingly relevant. The RGI data clearly indicates a growth in lower-income consumption, but how far the data is representative of the total number of the urban poor in the country is questionable.

CONCLUSION

What the RGI report has accomplished is to draw up some basic data on the conditions of Indian slums. The methodology it adopted, however, is flawed and has consequently depicted a skewed state of affairs that refutes conventional wisdom on Indian slums. Considering that Census data is perceived as highly credible though, it is not unreasonable to assume that it will be used to inform future policy. The RGI would do well to clearly classify the data released in this report, come clean on its limited scope and the problematic nature of its implications. This would only aid in the more efficient allocation of administrative and financial resources towards urban policy and ensure that it is informed by an accurate assessment and understanding of the operational realities.

While governments have failed to efficiently serve all types of urban communities, it is certain that the urban poor are most adversely affected by defunct delivery mechanisms and are more vulnerable to the logistical inefficiencies of government due to their considerably lower economic bargaining power. Yet again, the oversight of RGI’s reporting only serves to alienate the most vulnerable communities. While it is laudable that the government is initiating efforts towards a better understanding of the contextual landscape of urban poverty and slums, they can only be of value if they are designed with an intent to correctly and thoroughly understand the span of the issue.



FLICKR USER PADMANABAOI

NEWS DEEP DIVE

Understanding Urban Skills Development

BY MEENA AIER

After a slew of scams and controversies for India's ruling UPA (United Progressive Alliance) coalition, the newly unveiled 2013-2014 budget signals a return to the UPA's primary agenda of economic growth. At various points in his speech, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram assured investors and voters that the UPA government was firmly committed to the "Indian Growth Story." Exclusive focus on education, skills development and employability underlined the government's "*mool mantra*" of "higher growth leading to inclusive and sustainable development."

In particular, the new budget emphasizes the central government's continued policy thrust towards skilling India's burgeoning youth population to improve the country's prospects. To this effect, it is allocating **INR1,000 crores** (~US\$183.7m) to skills development and has directed the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to set uniform curricula and standards for various skills training. In addition, to further incentivize India's youth to improve their skills, a lump sum of **INR10,000** (US\$184.64) is guaranteed to any candidate who passes official tests upon completion of training.

Government funding is also being directed to the National Urban Livelihoods Mission to ensure support for the implementation of these skills initiatives. With these policies, the government is hoping to leverage India's "demographic dividend," thereby kick-starting a period of sustained growth and development.

THE ECONOMICS OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Economic growth theories assert that the latent potential of abundant labor resources, as India has, can be harnessed through quality education and training systems. Armed with this "human capital" perspective of economic growth, India's policymakers are embarking upon massive skills development initiatives across the country. India has a unique advan-

NEWS DEEP DIVE continued

tage of being one of the youngest countries worldwide for the next three decades. By 2020, most developed countries will be faced with a declining working age population, with the average age in the late 40s. India, on the other hand, will be one of few countries where the average age will be [only 29](#).

Historically, other countries with similarly growing young populations have been able to successfully capitalize on their youth populations through skills training programs and the ensuing higher productivity. Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Germany

Exclusive focus on education, skills development and employability underlined the government’s “mool mantra” of “higher growth leading to inclusive and sustainable development.”

and the U.K. present some compelling case studies for developing countries in the 21st century. [Singapore and South Korea](#), in particular, faced similar challenges as India, in terms of high rates of urbanization and rising urban poverty levels. The subsequent economic growth and development experienced by these countries, however, has led to a deeply ingrained belief in India’s ability to successfully replicate their tried and tested policy practices.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR URBAN INDIA

Although the skills development rhetoric has gained traction in India only over the recent decade, education-linked employability has been a long standing – albeit less prominent – theme in the Indian policy scenario. The first hint of policies created to tackle urban poverty dates back to the [seventh Five-Year Plan \(1985-1990\)](#), when development in urban areas was initiated through schemes focused on improving infrastructural amenities, environmental standards and livelihood promotion for the urban poor. Subsequent plans saw a steady increase in funding allocations for urban poverty alleviation with improved and more targeted schemes for achieving the various objectives of urban development.

The [Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana \(SJSRY\)](#), launched in 1997, was the first prominent policy scheme to exclusively focus on providing gainful employment to the urban unemployed through self-employment or entrepreneurial ventures and other regular employment opportunities. The scheme’s focus on fostering entrepreneurship through training was – and still is – a model of progressive, innovative policy and did garner great support. However after the year 2000, with the advent of the IT revolution and the rise in demand for skilled workers, SJSRY failed to perform in northern and north-eastern Indian states, such as [Nagaland](#), [Uttar Pradesh](#) and [Bihar](#), and the scheme was subsequently revised. The revision adopted a multipronged approach of tackling urban poverty through entrepreneurship, skills training programs and self-managed community structures. These initiatives targeted those urban residents living below the poverty line, as defined by the Planning Commission.

Despite its extensive coverage of employment avenues, the SJSRY scheme failed on multiple counts. On the financial front, relatively low levels of funding were made available for the scheme, thereby reducing its ability to reach and benefit the maximum number of urban poor people. As a result, only [250,000](#) of an estimated 81 million urban poor benefitted from this scheme annually – that is far less than 1% of those in need, a meager improvement in a looming, problematic context.

NEWS DEEP DIVE continued

Furthermore, the SJSRY scheme suffered from a lack of coordination between government agencies, and an unavailability of expert trainers and staff on the field. More often than not, training centers could not be put to use on account of the lack of qualified trainers. The few centers that did manage to acquire trainers were not able to tailor courses to suit industry needs, nor were they effective in helping their candidates successfully transition from the classroom to the office. Employment exchanges, too, were not equipped to effectively coordinate between training institutions and companies, thereby nullifying the advantages offered by skills training programs.

NATIONAL URBAN LIVELIHOODS MISSION

Despite these glaring loopholes and failures, the SJSRY scheme did prove to be successful to a degree, in states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, where dedicated administrative structures were created to support the self-help group (SHG) movement, stimulate skills participation and improve employability amongst the urban poor. Of the 250,000 people served by the scheme annually, a majority of beneficiaries were located in these states. It can be argued that active participation by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local governing bodies enabled the urban poor in these states to gain access to employment and credit opportunities that would have been otherwise beyond their reach, and transformed their classroom lessons to employable skills.

Spurred by these success stories as much as by failures, the [12th Planning Commission](#) recommended a “mission – mode” approach to urban development. This approach is based on three key areas: strengthening micro-enterprises and skills development initiatives for the urban poor; compulsory allocation of spaces within cities for the seamless integration between the private and working lives of the urban poor; and legislative action to ensure

Eight hundred million people in India would be in the productive age group by 2015, as compared to China's 600 million. The net addition to the formal Indian workforce is expected to be 89 million, of which 57 million would be school dropouts.

the guaranteed right of the urban poor to productive livelihoods. In 2012, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation adopted this three-pronged approach aimed at the integration of existing skills development schemes with social security and appropriate legislative provisions, and was called the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM).

The NULM has been touted as an initiative that would make state and city officials focus on tangible outcomes based on established stringent evaluation and monitoring procedures. It is set to be implemented in a phased manner over the next five years across various urban areas of India. The Mission is a departure from previous skills development schemes on account of the flexibility it provides to states to formulate their individual, tailored strategies for urban livelihoods based on their respective contexts. By taking note of important structural deficiencies in the implementation of SJSRY schemes, policymakers are optimistic about the NULM's scope of success in effectively addressing rising urban poverty.

NEWS DEEP DIVE continued

THE EMPIRICS OF SKILLING

The NULM along with the three-tier institutional structure of skills development (the Prime Minister's National Council on Skill Development, the National Skill Development Coordination Board and the NSDC) seem to be well-poised to administer the skills development objectives envisioned by the Prime Minister and may very well have a serious impact on urban poverty alleviation. However, the aim of training 500 million Indians over the next decade seems to be a lofty goal in the present context.

Eight hundred million people in India would be in the productive age group by 2015, as compared to China's 600 million. The net addition to the formal Indian workforce is expected to be 89 million, of which 57 million would be school drop-outs. On the other hand, a significant proportion of incremental industry demand is expected to be aimed at skilled labor – young people familiar and comfortable with technology, and possessing the ability to quickly adapt to changing knowledge and production standards. However, the present available training capacity is sufficient to train only about 3.1 million Indian youths annually.

In the urban context, empirics present a grim scenario. The share of the urban population has increased rapidly from 17.3% in 1951 to 31.16% in 2011. It is estimated that over 600 million Indians will be living in urban areas by 2030. In 2005, over 26% of the urban population were living on less than INR538.6 (~US\$10) per month. In addition, 15% of the urban population is just at the poverty line. In spite of the relatively higher availability of training opportunities in urban areas, only 6% of urban youth have undergone any form of formal or vocational training. In the absence

This dearth of trainers well-acquainted with teaching practices as well as industry standards is likely to impact the efficacy of skills development programs.

of education and formal training, a majority of the urban poor resort to working in the informal economy: 72-82% of men and 78-80% of women amongst the urban poor are reported to be either casually employed or informally self-employed.

IS SKILLING ENOUGH?

In the present context of urban India, are these skilling initiatives – though well-intentioned – enough to tackle the problem of urban poverty? The district-level, state-specific skills gap studies produced by the NSDC does provide state policy officials with pointers for skills training needs and could possibly produce some level of impact. However, the NULM and skills training programs at large need to evolve continuously to address the future demands of the changing job market. Although self-employment does combat urban poverty in the long run, reports by the Planning Commission note that a major concern is whether, the inadequacy of training or mentoring may result in poor proposals that are not properly developed. Without this crucial foundation, it would become next to impossible to get financial institutions to invest in these entrepreneurial ventures.

Likewise, skilling initiatives meant for the urban poor engaged in the informal economy need to focus on so-called upskilling rather than starting from scratch since individuals already employed would be unwilling, and likely unable, to forfeit current earned income to start afresh. Loss of income, even for a short period, can result in extreme poverty for those eking out a hand-to-mouth existence. Furthermore, reports suggest that most qualified trainers are concentrated in Tier-I cities, thereby leading

NEWS DEEP DIVE continued

to a deficit of trainers in vocational education institutions across India's other urban areas. This dearth of trainers well-acquainted with teaching practices as well as industry standards is likely to impact the efficacy of skills development programs. Training the trainers, either through public-private partnerships (as proposed by the NSDC) or through exclusive teacher training programs, is critical to ensuring the success of skills development schemes.

CONCLUSION

Human capital is without a doubt a force behind economic growth; however, it alone is not enough to *guarantee* economic growth. Singapore and South Korea have successful track records because their respective skills development policies coordinated with improving Labor Market Information Systems (LMIS) and ensured adequate investment in capital and technology. Economic growth is possible only if human capital can *complement* other factors of production. The inability to align India's labor markets, especially in vast, fast-paced urban areas, posits the key question: Why would the urban poor invest time or money in skills development if it does not support a sustainable livelihood?

In light of how much focus is being given to skills development within the scheme of poverty alleviation, it is important to examine what role skills training will play in the future of urban development. It will be important to ensure that skills training infrastructure over the next decade is built and developed in close coordination with local industries and private players. Additionally, as evidenced by the successes of SJSRY programs in certain states, dedicated community involvement will be crucial in warranting the successful dissemination of these programs across dispersed pockets of the urban poor.

Digital LMIS should be developed by state and local governments to strengthen the linkage between training programs and private companies. This will ensure that skills imparted in the classroom are being successfully absorbed in productive processes. State and local governments will also need to be pushed to carry out data collection and routine evaluations of on-the-ground skills training programs.

Skills programs need to be equipped with robust incubation centers to encourage innovation amongst those hoping to set up entrepreneurial ventures. The innovation funding, released by Chidambaram in the new budget, is a promising start in this direction. However, over the next few years, it is imperative that incubation centers learn and adapt to the needs and aspirations of the urban poor.

The employment-based, skills development schemes, if supported with these complementary measures, could possibly lead India to effectively reap its demographic dividend and emerge as a country that successfully implemented a pro-poor, human capital – centered growth in its cities.

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Regional News Summaries

Development & the Economy

The annual budget for 2013-2014 suggests that India is focusing on inclusive development and poverty alleviation. The State Government of Madhya Pradesh is collaborating with the IFC to work towards developing certain sectors that would help in sustainable development and eradicating poverty.

BUDGET 2013: GROWTH WITH INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

March 1, 2013

[India] The Finance Minister P. Chidambaram focused on the ‘three faces of India’ – the women, youth and the poor. The highlights of the budget include INR1,000 crore (US\$200m) each for an all-women’s PSU bank, a Nirbhaya fund for women’s empowerment (in memory of the Delhi gang-rape victim) and a skills development program for youth with inclusive development as a priority.

<http://www.igovernment.in/site/budget-2013-growth-inclusive-development>

IFC AND MP GOVERNMENT SIGN MOU TO DEVELOP SELECT SECTORS

March 15, 2013

[India] The State Government of Madhya Pradesh collaborated with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to develop public-private partnership (PPP) projects in new and renewable energy, health, agriculture and storage of food grains, water supply in urban areas, and housing schemes for the poor.

<http://www.igovernment.in/site/ifc-and-mp-govt-sign-mou-develop-select-sectors>

Education & Health

Bangladesh is working towards treating tuberculosis by mobilizing its citizens. The health insurance scheme for below poverty line members is gaining momentum in India. Both India and Pakistan are working toward better access to education.

NA PASSES RESOLUTION AGAINST HINDRANCE TO GIRLS’ EDUCATION

March 15, 2013

[Pakistan] In response to the Taliban’s shooting of teenager Malala Yousafzai, the National Assembly in Pakistan passed a unanimous resolution against the practice or act that hampers girls’ education. The Pakistan constitution suggests that education is mandatory to the girl child. The act will be strongly condemned and considered as a criminal offence.

<http://paktribune.com/news/NA-passes-resolution-against-hindrance-to-girls-education-258261.html>

NEWS SUMMARIES continued

65,000 PEOPLE DIE ANNUALLY FROM TUBERCULOSIS IN BANGLADESH

March 25, 2013

[Bangladesh] Over 300,000 people are being infected by tuberculosis (TB), and more than 65,000 die annually. The Government of Bangladesh is making extensive efforts to detect TB patients and bring them under a cost-free direct observation treatment short-course (DOTS) program to make the country free of TB by 2021. There is also talk of building social awareness around the curable disease and mobilizing Bangladeshi citizens to help in detecting and eradicating it in the shortest possible timeframe.

<http://southasia.oneworld.net/news/65-000-die-annually-from-tuberculosis-in-bangladesh#.UWOZP5Ngfzx>

2,500 MODEL SCHOOLS TO BE SET UP UNDER PPP MODE

March 26, 2013

[India] The Government of India has approved setting up 2,500 schools under a PPP model. There is an existing central government scheme to set up a Model Degree College in the 374 identified “educationally backward” districts. Under the scheme, a state government may choose to identify not-for-profit organizations in the PPP model to ensure that the involvement of the private sector does not keep underserved students from accessing education.

<http://www.igovernment.in/site/2500-model-schools-be-set-under-ppp-mode>

ENROLLMENT OF FAMILIES IN RSBY REACHES 34.16 MILLION

March 28, 2013

[India] India’s Ministry of Labor and Employment launched the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) in 2008 to provide health insurance coverage for the below poverty line (BPL) population and informal sector workers. The scheme uses a smart-card-based, cashless and paperless social health insurance scheme wherein 75% of the premium is covered by the central government and the rest by the state government (with the exception of Jammu & Kashmir and other conflict-ridden northeastern states where the central government takes up 90% of the cost). Currently, there are about 171 million people living in households that hold the RSBY smartcard of which 119 million are enrolled in the scheme. The scheme also cover indirect costs such as transportation costs, and has been selected as one of the 18 social security schemes for a UNDP document on “Sharing Innovative Experiences: Social Protection Floor Success Stories.”

<http://www.igovernment.in/site/enrollment-families-rsby-reaches-34.16m>

Energy & the Environment

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A new report highlights the collateral damage of India’s attempts to generate electricity.

INDIA’S COAL POWER PLANTS KILL 120,000 PEOPLE EVERY YEAR

March 10, 2013

[India] A Greenpeace report suggests that there is a public health crisis with 80,000-120,000 premature deaths and 20 million new asthma cases every year due to air pollution from coal power plants. Delhi and Kolkata are some of India’s most polluted areas, followed by Mumbai. Nearly 400 million people in India have no electricity, making the pressure to generate power higher. However, this rapid generation has caused numerous deaths and left thousands of displaced houses.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/mar/10/india-coal-plants-emissions-greenpeace>

NEWS SUMMARIES continued**Government & Policy**

The Indian Government is aiming to improve livelihood conditions by promoting skill development, employability and better housing for the poor. Pakistan is working towards dealing with climate change issues by developing some sectors.

PAKISTAN LAUNCHES FIRST EVER CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

March 4, 2013

[Pakistan] The Ministry of Climate Change in Pakistan finally launched the climate change policy that is essentially a framework to cope with climate-related threats through adaptation and mitigation measures. The policy focuses on development of water, human health, transport and energy, disaster preparedness, and agriculture and livestock. The policy faces implementation challenges, and requires collaboration and cooperation between private and public sectors. A National Climate Change Fund will also be formed. The Ministry is looking for various financing options.

<http://paktribune.com/news/Pakistan-launches-first-Ever-National-Climate-Change-Policy-257925.html>

INR5,500 CRORE INDIA INNOVATION FUND TO FOCUS ON JOB CREATION

March 13, 2013

[India] The Government of India launched an INR5,500 crore (US\$1bn) India Inclusive Innovation Fund that is aimed toward generating employment and supporting livelihoods through innovative entrepreneurship. The Fund has been set up by the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in consultation with the National Innovation Council. It will be focused on the poor, combining economic and social returns, driving employment and livelihood generation, and establishing a model for wider inclusive funding.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-03-13/news/37684031_1_india-inclusive-innovation-fund-india-inclusive-innovation-fund-msmes

GOVERNMENT AIMS TO PROVIDE HOUSES FOR ALL HOMELESS

March 14, 2013

[India] So far, 1.57 million dwelling units have been sanctioned under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). The Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) scheme, the preparatory phase of slum-free city planning, has started and under the Affordable Housing in Partnership Scheme, 11 projects in the states of Karnataka and Rajasthan have been sanctioned. The Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation suggested that ensuring homes for all citizens is a state government's duty; however, owing to a large housing shortage and budgetary constraints, public sector efforts alone will not meet demand.

<http://www.igovernment.in/site/govt-aims-provide-houses-all-homeless>

NEWS SUMMARIES continued**People & Poverty**
.....

Nepal and Bangladesh are alleviating poverty faster than India, which is currently facing degrading poverty. To help India in its mission to eradicate poverty, the World Bank is looking to fund large scale poverty mitigation schemes.

HOW TO BEST SERVE PAKISTAN'S 750,000 IDP'S

March 1, 2013

[Pakistan] Natural disasters have led to internal displacement of people in Pakistan, forcing internal refugees to live in tents or makeshift structures. Over 75,000 people live in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and are provided with food aid, medical facilities and drinking water. These camps serve as the one-stop shop for families arriving from areas affected by conflict and natural disaster. However, they account for only 10% of the estimated number of IDP's. Pakistan, humanitarian organizations and NGOs are facing large challenges to providing facilities outside these camps, such as security concerns for the country.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/97570/How-best-to-serve-Pakistan-s-750-000-IDPs>

WORLD BANK PROMISES BIG PUSH TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION SCHEMES IN INDIA

March 14, 2013

[India] The Government of India has requested that the World Bank (WB) extend support to low-income states where most of the country's poor live. The President of the WB Group assured annual funding on US\$3-5bn for the next four years. The funding will be used to develop India's poorest seven low-income states that house 200 million people who lack of access to basic services. Along with the IFC, the WB aims to leverage many more billions of investment in India.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/world-bank-promises-big-push-to-poverty-alleviation-schemes-in-india/article4506331.ece>

NEPAL REDUCING POVERTY FASTER THAN INDIA: STUDY

March 19, 2013

[South Asia] According to a multidimensional poverty index developed by the University of Oxford, Nepal and Bangladesh are reducing poverty faster compared to India. Even the best performing states in India, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, were not more than 50% as fast in reducing multidimensional poverty. Nepal and Bangladesh have not only reduced their respective percentages of poverty, but also its intensity: poor people are, on an average, less poor because they have better access to goods and services than before. The success of Nepal and Bangladesh can be attributed to active civil society engagement combined with impactful social policy investments.

<http://www.igovernment.in/site/nepal-reducing-poverty-faster-india-study>

NEWS SUMMARIES continued

INDIA'S SLUMDOG CENSUS REVEALS POOR CONDITIONS FOR ONE IN SIX URBAN DWELLERS

March 22, 2013

[India] A landmark report addressing urban slums suggests that 64 million Indians live in degrading conditions. The report looked at urban slums in approximately 4,000 towns across India. Mumbai scores the highest with 41% of its 20.5 million denizens living in slums. The report also poses challenges for future urbanization as 10 towns; including areas in Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim, with a population of about 5,000 have been categorized as "all-slum towns." There is talk about having a full survey done that would uncover more issues along with changing the definition of "slum settlement." The current definition suggests that a slum has to have at least 60 households deemed unfit for human habitation; however, the Indian Planning Commission has recommended that urban clusters with as few as 20 households should be categorized as slums.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/mar/22/india-slumdog-census-poor-conditions>

STATES ADVISED TO PROMOTE GENDER SENSITIZATION

March 28, 2013

[India] In light of the gender violence taking place across India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development advised state governments to promote gender sensitization by re-examining and improving school curricula to include gender-positive materials.

<http://www.igovernment.in/site/states-advised-promote-gender-sensitisation>

Water & Sanitation

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Nepal is facing challenges in achieving total sanitation.

GOVERNMENT TOLD TO MEET NATIONAL SANITATION GOAL BY 2017

March 28, 2013

[Nepal] Poor budget allocations, and the lack of maintenance of drinking water and sanitation projects, are posing challenges to achieving the goal of total sanitation in Nepal by 2017. The focus now is on allocating satisfactory budget and involving local communities to ensure access basic drinking water and sanitation to grassroots communities.

<http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2013/03/28/nation/govt-told-to-meet-national-sanitation-goal-by-2017/246949.html>.

Events

ADB ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

May 2-5, 2013

New Delhi, India

<http://www.adb.org/annual-meeting/2013/general-information>

VIOLENCE, INSURGENCIES AND DECEPTIONS: CONCEPTUALIZING URBAN LIFE IN SOUTH ASIA

May 6-7, 2013

Singapore City, Singapore

http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/events_categorydetails.asp?categoryid=6&eventid=1370

SECOND ANNUAL HOSPITAL EXPANSION SUMMIT 2013

May 9-10, 2013

New Delhi, India

<http://www.indiahospitalexpansionsummit.com/>

WORLD CONGRESS ON BUSINESS, FINANCE, MARKETING AND INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

May 25-26, 2013

New Delhi, India

<http://globalconferences.bravesites.com/>

GLOBAL MEET ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2013

June 14-15, 2013

Dhaka, Bangladesh

<http://gc4sd.org/>

Editorial Team

EDITORS

Nisha Kumar Kulkarni
Shree Ravindranath
Usha Ganesh

CONTRIBUTORS

Noopur Desai
Uthara Ganesh
Meena Aier

DESIGN

HNH!digital

SUBSCRIPTION

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About Intellecap

Intellecap is a pioneer in providing innovative business solutions that help build and scale profitable and sustainable enterprises dedicated to social and environmental change.

We seek to build institutional capacity and channel investments in the development sector through Knowledge Services, Consulting, and Investment Banking Services. Intellecap hosts Sankalp Social Enterprise and Investment Forum, Asia's largest social enterprise forum that brings together over 700 investors, innovative social enterprises, policy makers, funders and other key stakeholders from across the world.

Intellecap also promotes I³N, India's first angel investment network that makes early stage investments in double bottom line for-profit enterprises.