EXCLUSIVELY INCLUSIVE

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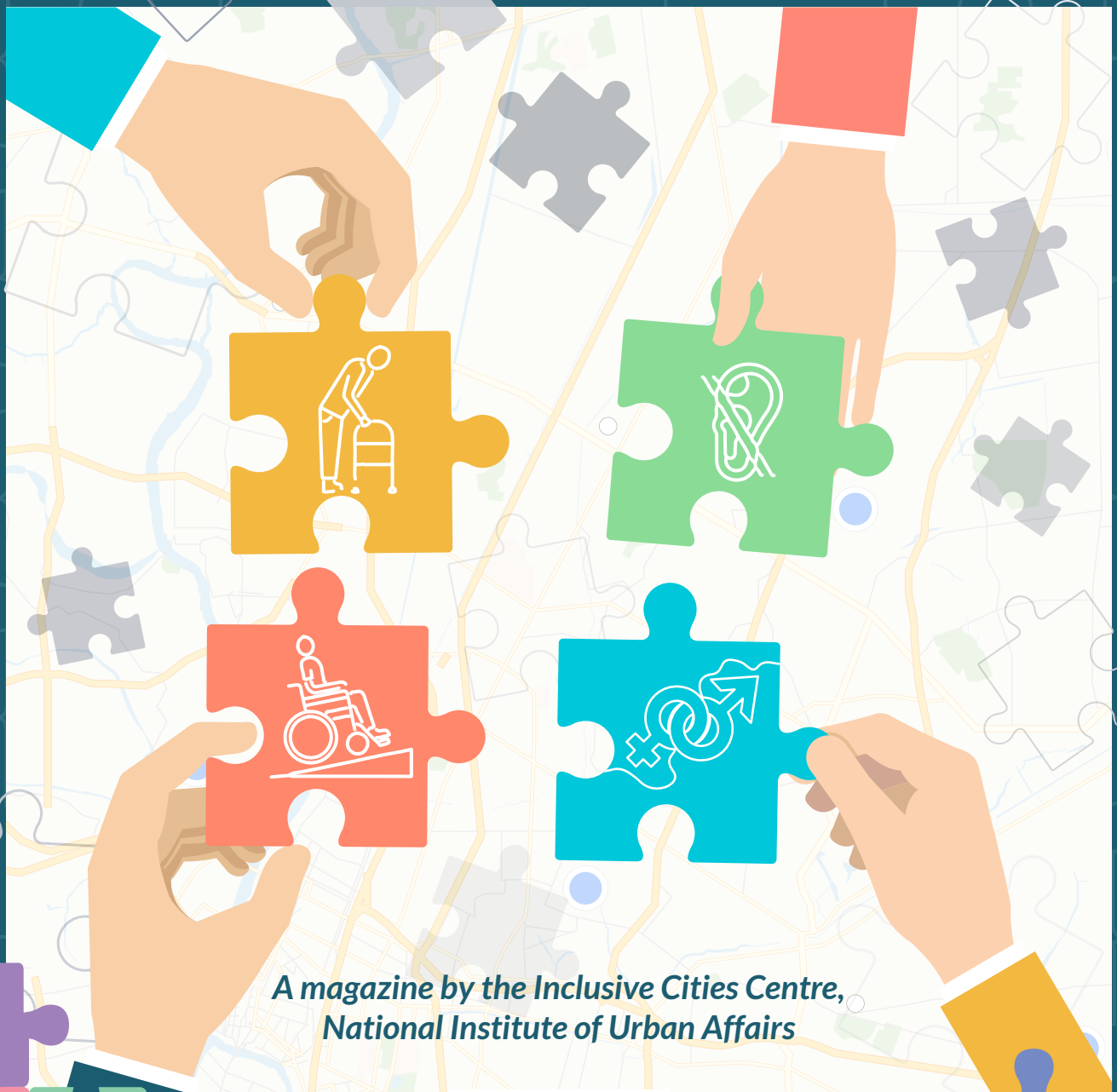

A magazine by the Inclusive Cities Centre, National Institute of Urban Affairs

INCLUSIVE CITIES CENTRE
Towards Shared Urban Futures

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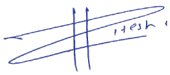
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is targeting cities to be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Cities are making increased efforts to become 'more digitised,' 'more intelligent,' and 'smarter' to contribute to the global target - a powerful metaphor for the way ahead. Cities are spaces where everyone has the ownership of progress and aspirations towards an improved 'ease of living'. To meet the increasing needs and aspirations of city-dwellers, especially marginalised groups, it becomes necessary to create sustainable, inclusive, safe and vibrant spaces - both physical and virtual. This can best be achieved through participatory and citizen centric approaches. In the dynamic urban settings in the country, becoming 'smart' and data-driven is the key to an efficient, inclusive and sustainable future. In order to achieve inclusion, city governments need to engage with their citizens and adopt a participatory approach to involve the communities at every stage of the development process. Innovative mechanisms need to be evolved in the local context by the cities to particularly improve the participation of marginalised communities in decision-making and city planning processes.

The Inclusive Cities Centre of the National Institute of Urban Affairs is launching its second edition of the bi-annual magazine - 'Exclusively Inclusive'. It is a notable effort of curating knowledge to promote adoption of participatory processes as the core indicator for inclusive city development. The magazine collates programmes and initiatives for urban regeneration that have been evolved, planned and delivered through multi stakeholder partnerships in India. The magazine captures the current practices and the constraints experienced in such processes, and the conditions required to enhance the "inclusiveness" in urban regeneration. The magazine will prove to be a significant knowledge resource for the urbanists in the pursuit of formulating a comprehensive strategy for integrating inclusive principles as a pervasive philosophy in the development of 'Cities for All'. Participation being the "new tyranny", urban development practice in India has adopted and promoted participation as the principle for planning and implementing urban regeneration investments.

Taking cognisance of this growing trend that is projected to expand to a larger urban population, the Centre has taken initiatives for ensuring that various marginalised demographics have an equal and fair chance to be involved and actively participate in the urban regeneration progress. I must congratulate the Inclusive Cities Centre (ICC) team for bringing out this second edition of the magazine. This edition brings forward good practices around communities' participation and partnerships which have the potential to inform our inclusive development agenda. The magazine includes a wide range of articles, drawing on the ground-level experiences of the contributors. Words of encouragement to the team to keep on beaming valuable insights from works on pressing urban issues and actionize inclusive development.



Hitesh Vaidya,
Director
National Institute of Urban Affairs

About Inclusive City Centre

Cities are engines of growth providing numerous opportunities for individuals and contributing significantly to the national economy. This acts as the pull factor reflected in the significant increase in urban population, especially in the last two decades. While the total population in India increased by 35%, the urban population grew by 85% during 1991 - 2011. As stated by the Honourable Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, "India stands at the threshold of a critical 'moment' in its developmental trajectory with a need to create adequate opportunities for cities/towns to grow, flourish and become vibrant centres of investment and productivity." To achieve this, it is critical to adopt a sustainable growth model for cities/regions based on inclusion, ecological balance, better governance, efficient resource management and a unique identity for communities. The rapid industrialisation and exponential growth of the service sector has led to the high growth of the urban areas putting forth numerous challenges – keeping pace with the demand for housing, infrastructure, and social facilities, and ensuring most productive use of the human resource in cities. Indian cities have, in general, experienced spontaneous growth rather than planned expansion. The cities have been unable to respond adequately to the demands arising from unprecedented in-migration as is reflected in inadequate infrastructure and the uncontrolled growth of informal settlements.

With lack of access to affordable formal housing, most of the urban migrants find shelter in slums, unauthorised tenements, and settlements in peri-urban areas. This deprives them access to social facilities and income earning opportunities for various reasons including people's perceptions and lack of mobility. Census 2011 enumerated 65.5 million persons living in slums which accounted for 17.4% of India's urban population. The economic and housing vulnerabilities of the marginalised segments of urban population has been highlighted in the on-going pandemic-induced crisis. The prolonged national lockdown in 2020 led to shut down of all non-critical establishments and activities. This adversely affected the income flows resulting in economic hardships, particularly for the daily wage earners and informal sector workers. In addition, the high population densities in informal settlements posed the challenge of containing the spread of the contagion. The vulnerabilities of the marginalised groups, most of whom are migrants, forced them to return to their native places resulting in reverse migration from urban centres away from the overcrowded living areas and uncertain employment prospects. The national government has responded to the pandemic and the resultant situation to promote inclusive development in cities as is reflected in the strategies to contain the spread, mitigate the impacts of the lockdown, and rebuild better.

It is in the above context that a need has emerged for an aggregated approach to urban development - one that encapsulates the various economic, spatial, digital, and structural concepts and intersects the diversities in the society with respect to gender, abilities and age. Under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) with strategic support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) have formalised a 'Inclusive Cities Centre' (ICC) to facilitate cities in evidence-based planning and investments for inclusive development to improve urban productivity and quality of life for all focus is on the most vulnerable groups in cities including urban poor, persons with disabilities, women, children, youth and the elderly.

The specific objectives of the Inclusive Cities Centre are as follow:

- Reducing inequity in access to public goods and services including urban infrastructure such as WASH services, social facilities such as education and health, public transport, electricity and public spaces, among others.
- Promoting local economic development and facilitating access to income earning opportunities for all.
- Supporting cities to improve livability in low-income settlements and planning the delivery of a bouquet of housing solutions for various market segments by public agencies, private sector and community groups.
- Improving participation by all in urban governance through multi-stakeholder engagements including community groups, covering issues related to city planning, budgeting and project cycle.
- Establish benchmarks to track progress in achieving inclusive development in urban India, adopt indicators- and indices-based approaches.
- Partnering with national, sub-regional, regional and global networks and think-tanks for advocacy, knowledge exchange and to draw inputs for developing cutting-edge knowledge products and tools for the cities.

The Centre will focus on, but not limit itself to, the following thematic areas:

1. **Spatial inclusion:**
   Reducing spatial segregation by provision of affordable land, housing, and Infrastructure and basic services

2. **Social inclusion:**
   One of the key aspects of social inclusion is participation in governance by urban poor, women and PwDs, to help improve citizen engagement, reduce crime and support community based organisations.

3. **Economic inclusion:**
   By incorporating informal economy, job creation, access to jobs, skill development and access to credit and finance.

4. Leveraging current ICT based solutions to improve digital interface between city and citizenry

Projects under the Centre

1. **The Building, Safe, Accessible and Inclusive Indian Cities (BASIIC)** project of the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) was formulated in partnership with the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in September 2019. The programme aims to support select Indian cities towards ensuring universal access and strengthening the institutional capacities of cities to be sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups. It endeavours to promulgate the tenets of accessibility, inclusion, and safety in the ethos of urban planning and design. The project is being implemented with support from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).The key activities undertaken by BASIIC programme are- formulation of focused policy-level interventions; pilot demonstration of innovative solutions; training and capacity development and; formulation of quality knowledge and research. To facilitate and drive this initiative, a Technical Assistance and Support Unit (TASU) was established at NIUA in October 2019. Over the past two years, TASU has created a vast knowledge network that includes government agencies, civil society organisations, research and academic institutions, and start-ups across the globe. In collaboration with its knowledge partners, it has developed a reservoir of knowledge products, guidelines, and IEC materials, provided technical assistance on the ground and continuously engaged in dialogues to advocate for disability inclusion.

Some noteworthy achievements of the project include; the revision of the Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standards for Barrier-Free Built Environment for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons in collaboration with IIT-Roorkee; formulation of an Inclusive Cities Framework in collaboration with IIT-Kharagpur, preparing a City Audit toolkit, and launching a training programme for city officials on fundamentals of disability inclusion in collaboration with AIILSG. TASU has been working closely with the partner city of Varanasi for making its public spaces more accessible and inclusive.

2. **Infant Toddler and Caregiver-Friendly Neighbourhoods (ITCN) Capacity Building Programme** has been designed to implement a structured multi-level ITCN training and capacity building with specific outcomes for city officials and young professionals over a period of two years starting January 2021. The programme utilises the vast body of knowledge developed by BvLF partnership programme and NIUA under the CFSC initiative and develop knowledge products and training modules covering new aspects of ITC. The major milestones are- on-boarding of ToT agencies and training delivery agencies; Knowledge Needs Assessment study; several rounds of consultations with government officials; development of training modules for capacity building of urban local bodies officials, state department officials and young professionals; creation of a toolkit on data baseline for young children in cities; training of close to 250 government officials from 10 states and 100 cities of India on the basic level of course covering 4 training modules by 5 training delivery agencies. The programme successfully orientated and sensitized city officials on the relevance of young children and caregiver-friendly neighbourhoods. The Programme developed a policy brief which looks at the impact of COVID-19 on the health and well-being of young children and their caregivers and a policy advisory which recommends specific areas of intervention for creating ITC-friendly cities. The knowledge products developed under ITCN programme have been launched during the ' World Urban Forum 11' held in Poland in June 2022. The programme aims at creating more knowledge products in the form of training modules, toolkits, policy briefs, policy advisories; capacity building of the government officials on advanced level of course; and capacity building of close to 300 young professionals from several parts of India.

3. The project **Shaping Youth Futures** was initiated in March 2020, in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), International Centre for Research and Policy on Childhood (CIESPI), at Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and Fields of View. Since its inception, the partners have established community-based Youth Expert Groups (YEG) in India and Brazil who have participated as co-

researchers and advisors throughout the project, carried out policy analysis in both the countries focused on youth livelihoods, drawing on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), national census and other relevant datasets, and conducted two 'City Caravans' that supported youth-led social innovation projects (one in Mumbai, India and one in Volta Redonda, Brazil). In addition, practices related to youth engagement are in the process of compilation based on the knowledge exchange activities of the research to inform the national level policies, along with a youth engagement model toolkit for policy development. Apart from the above, 2 peer-reviewed publications are produced by partners addressing specific disciplinary audiences on youth livelihoods and inclusive cities.

To facilitate and sustain the network created between India and Brazil, a knowledge exchange event was organised in Rio de Janeiro in May-June 2022 that saw research outputs presented by youth groups from both countries and interactions between experts from Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Canada, and India. A similar knowledge exchange event is planned to be organised in New Delhi, India in December 2022, which will bring together Indian experts as well as experts from neighbouring countries of Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Bhutan.

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A Bottom-Up Perspective to Heritage, Communities and Placemaking

Aishwarya Tipnis
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The state of the historic buildings and precincts in most Indian cities is dismal, plagued by issues of structural degradation as well as a host of economic and legal issues. Old buildings are being replaced with nondescript buildings, affecting the climate and the local communities. This is leading to the cities' landscape rapidly changing and their health rapidly degrading. Research has proven that restoration and adaptive reuse of existing buildings contribute to achieving a circular economy (European Commission, 2020). However, in the Indian context, lack of access to information, experience and technical skills makes the decision to retain and retrofit an old building confusing and appear unviable. To address this issue, we founded Jugaadopolis in 2019, as a social innovation initiative sited at the intersection of heritage conservation, education and community development with the aim of creating awareness about the rich tangible and intangible heritage of India through innovative and out of box interactive tools.

The process of heritage conservation is concerned with not just the physical place but also with the relationships of the users and stakeholders with that place. It is about engagement in multiple ways physical, social and emotional, where social values are placed at the centre of the process (Carmona et al., 2003; Lang, 2017). However, in India, the conservation of heritage buildings and spaces has largely been a top-down elitist process. Hence, one of the primary challenges that urban heritage conservation faced was defining what qualified as a heritage for communities. Did a building, structure or precinct have to cross a certain timeline or benchmark? Who decides what is of heritage value and what is not? Are expert values always the same as community values? In reality, there is often tension if not a conflict between preserving the image of the past or creating a new one for the future. While theorists identify urban heritage conservation as a process of managing change, who is responsible for this process? In the Indian context, what role do the local communities actually play in the top-down urban regeneration process?

Our experience over the last two decades helped us identify a gap in practice particularly related to the role citizens can play in the process, which we tried to address through various mediums such as student

workshops, research programmes, skill and capacity building initiatives, blogs, books and manuals to demystify the process of heritage conservation for local communities. Applying tools of game-based learning we have simulated scenarios that helped stakeholders to articulate their values, define a collective vision and draw together a road map that balances the needs of the 21st century with the heritage values.

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jugaadopolis developed an online mentorship programme for young architects to engage them in the process of heritage conservation. We co-created a crowdsourced dynamic open-source map of the Industrial Heritage of India. This repository allows citizens to contribute to the open archive of what industrial heritage means in the Indian context. With severe travel restrictions imposed, the pandemic forced us to rethink the way we were working. It led us to develop more tools for co-production, easy-to-use graphic manuals and guides which helped the contractors and clients to carry out heritage conservation in the physical absence of the architect.

The pandemic has certainly made us all reassess the way we work with communities and the role heritage spaces can play in social cohesion and identity building. Over a period of years, three cohorts of young architects co-created user-friendly manuals for the restoration and maintenance of heritage materials. This DIY material library which we called The Restoration Toolbox evolved into a digital participatory

Image 1: Aishwarya Tipnis. Engaging community through simple art. Retrieved from the Author.

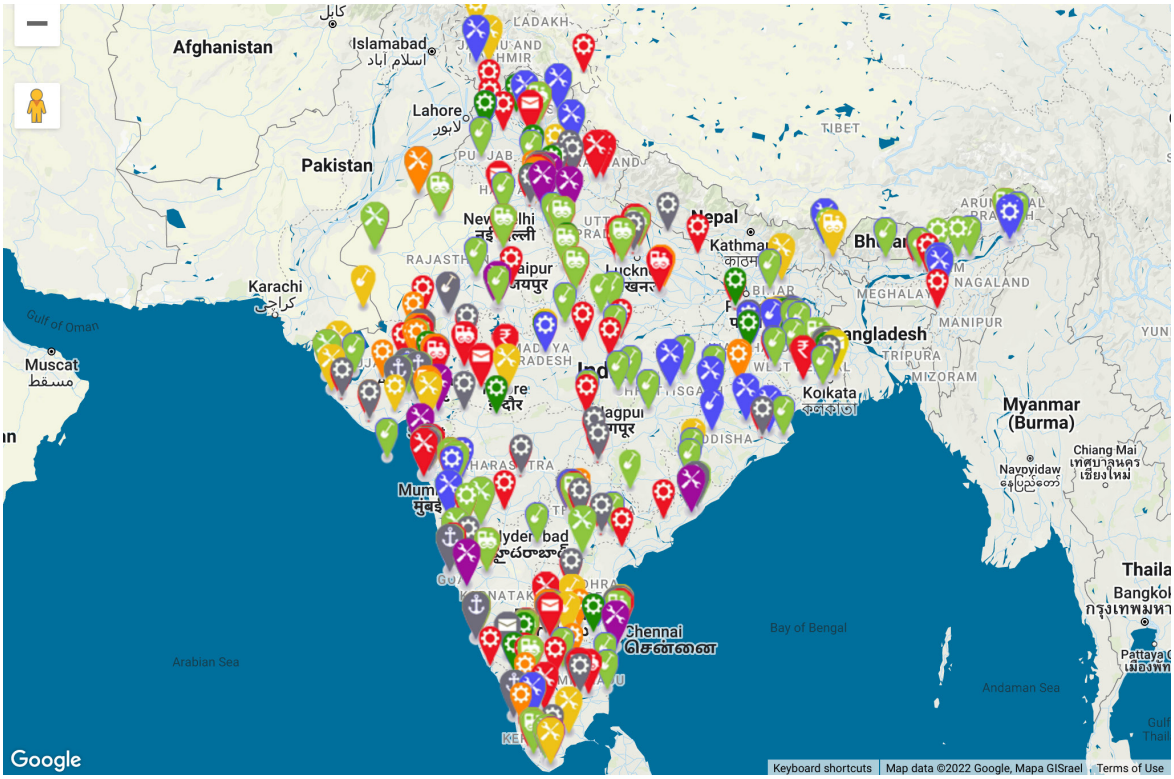

Image 2: Aishwarya Tipnis. Indian Industrial Heritage Map. Retrieved from the Author.

space. It is a user-friendly platform where the various actors involved in the urban regeneration space can interact and co-create solutions to the problem at hand. We have developed a technology that helps citizens flag and map heritage buildings which are at risk in an inclusive way. Meaning that the technology allows not only the experts to use it, but also the interested citizens. We tested the platform through a series of workshops with students from India, the UK and China. The platform helps citizens at every step of the process from conceptualising, designing, financing and implementing a building adaptation project through a process of collaboration and co-creation. In the process, we realised that the sustainability of the platform is dependent on direct outreach to the communities it impacts. Thus, building on the ideas of digital equity, inclusion, democracy and innovation, The Restoration Toolbox evolved into an open-source digital platform. For this, the usage of Decidim was adopted for the platform. It offers a stable, ethical, and modular architecture maintaining its code and ethical compass while translating the model for the usage of heritage communities. In addition to the digital platform, user-friendly manuals are now available in print format. With this digital tool, we aim to reach out to more communities directly and connect them to the relevant actors (local bodies, policymakers, funding agencies, local businesses), and guide them to make sustainable choices for urban regeneration.

In addition, we have also launched The Restoration Clinic, an initiative that provides hands-on training

opportunities for young professionals while empowering stakeholders to save their own buildings. It helps homeowners to co-create their projects with subsidised access to expert advice.

Our work with diverse communities has made us realise that everyday heritage helps in building a sense of pride, reinforces individual and collective identities, brings together communities and contributes to a sustainable future. It promotes intergenerational learning that not only inspires young people to explore their surroundings but also empowers them to safeguard them in the future. By undertaking such community and student-led projects which employ multi-disciplinary design through co-creation, we aim to help communities make decisions about the future of their heritage.

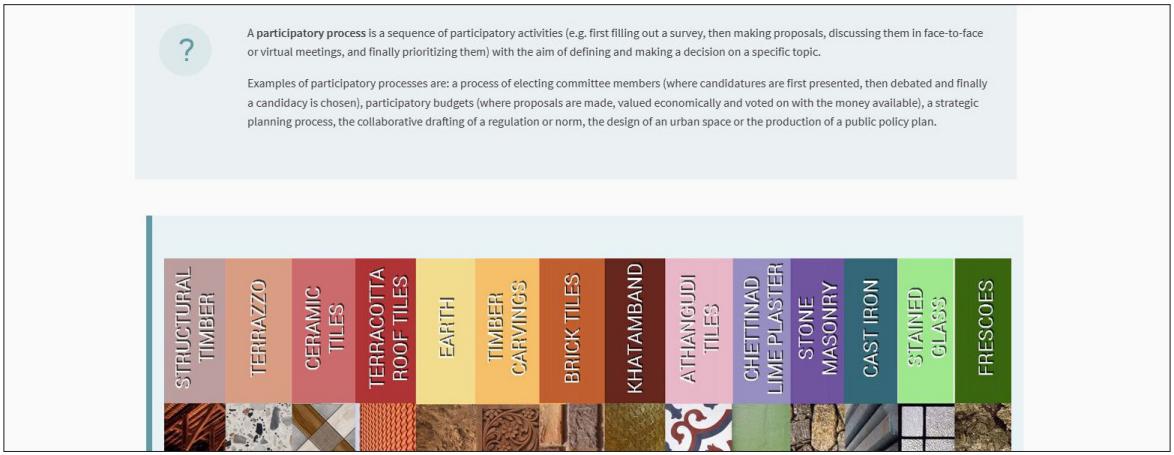

Image 3: Aishwarya Tipnis. The Restoration Toolbox. Retrieved from the Author.

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Towards Climate Just Action: Developing Community-based Climate Action Plans in Bhopal

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As climatic catastrophes escalate, the global calls for climate-just action across multiple scales and geographies are gaining traction. The need for climate-just actions is particularly critical in cities of the global South, India included, where existing socio-economic precarity and multi-dimensional inequality - aided and abetted by outdated urban planning approaches – impacts the urban poor disproportionately. Against this context, questions arise on how climate action can be steered such that it does not entrench existing inequalities; how can we conceptualise a climate urbanism model that ensures social, economic, and climate justice; and, how can the informal economy, spaces and people - largely invisibilised by formal plans - be foregrounded in urban and climate planning assume significance.

Addressing these questions requires urban and climate action planning to break out of conventional disciplinary boundaries and evolve innovative pathways towards inclusive plans that respond to the lived urban realities. We draw upon our research in the urban poor settlements of Indra Nagar, Bagsewaniya, and Nehru Colony in Bhopal, India (See Figure 1) to demonstrate collaboration and co-production pathways to evolve community-based climate action plans (C-CAPs) while suggesting methods to integrate these into city planning tools. The evolution of C-CAPs in all three settlements involved four key stakeholders and their respective knowledge and skills (See Figure 2).

The C-CAPs were initiated with a vulnerability assessment of and by the communities. This was mobilised and guided by the NGO that has a long standing relationship with the communities. Basis this vulnerability assessment, the communities chalked out their action plans outlining strategic solutions, timelines and budgets. These short-term action plans were communicated to and negotiated with the local government for immediate resolution (See Figure 3).

The socio-economic precarity that the communities experience in their everyday living limits their vision to short-term actions such as planting trees, keeping water pots in common areas and regular fumigation to avoid vector propagation. While these short-term actions are critical, the importance of long-term

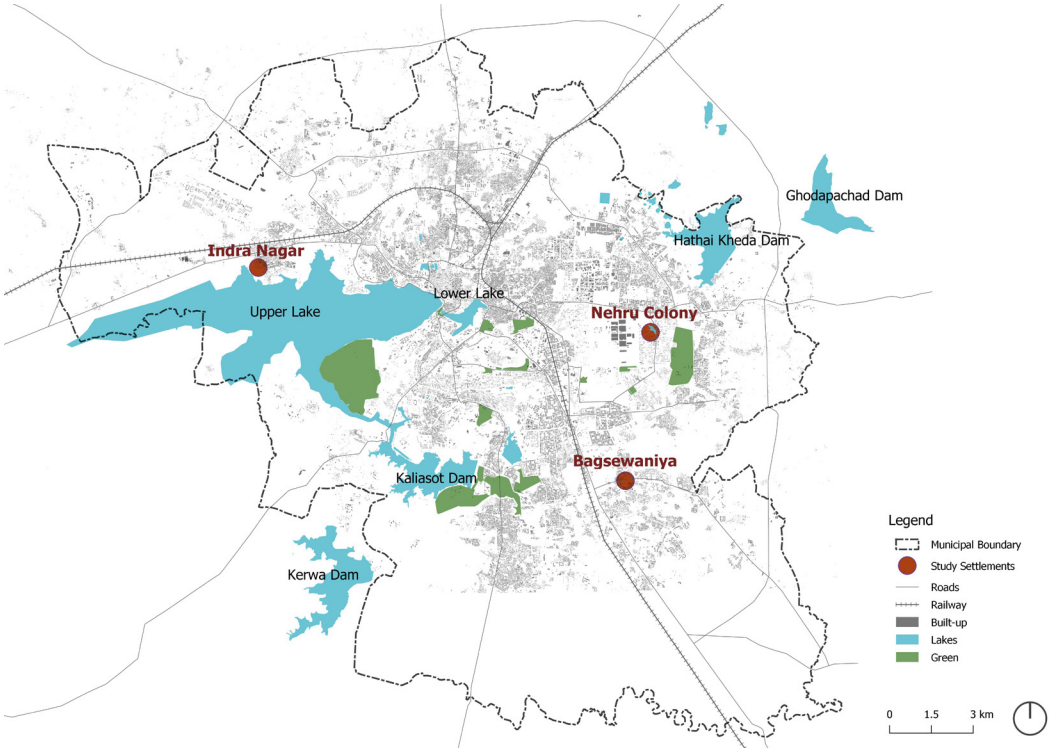

Image 1: Location of Study Settlements in Bhopal. Retrieved from the Author.

Stakeholder	Need for involving this stakeholder	Role in C-CAP preparation
The Community	Because they are the most aware of their local context, in addition to experiencing the harshest impacts of climate change. At the same time, they also aspire for an improved quality of life.	Share their experiential knowledge including priorities, needs, knowledge, and capacities with other stakeholders and co-develop solutions with them.
The NGO	Because of their expertise in engaging with the community and empowering them to adapt and work towards an improved quality of life.	Nudge the community (through various participatory methods) in elucidating not just their issues, priorities and needs, but also their knowledge and capacities in the context of a changing climate. Support them in preparing the short-term action plan.
The Planner	Because of their expertise to technically strengthen the short-term action plan developed by the community based on technical knowledge on the city and settlement (evolution, natural environment, climate change among others).	Works with the NGO and the community to craft contextually suited solutions that respond to their needs, aspirations, issues, and challenges. The planner also explores pathways along with the government to institutionalise efforts like C-CAP.
The Local and State Government	Because of their mandate and power to support and institutionalise efforts like the C-CAP.	**Local government:** Engage with the community to address their short-term needs. **State government:** Engage with NGO and planner to explore pathways to institutionalise efforts like C-CAP.

Image 2: Stakeholders involved in the C-CAP development process. Retrieved from the Author.

systemic change in plan, policy and action cannot be overemphasized. Towards this end, deep and engaging conversations across the three settlements revealed heat stress, flooding and vector propagation as the communities' main vulnerabilities. Data and spatial maps that traced the urban growth trajectory of Bhopal and the three settlements, along with an understanding of changing temperatures and relative humidity - captured at the city and settlement level – helped contextualise these vulnerabilities and their drivers.

For instance, while the average city temperature of Bhopal on 29th April 2022 was 410C, the temperatures measured at various locations with the settlements were ranging between 38- 440C (See Figure 4) A further mapping of the settlements evidenced high built densities, use of heat-absorbing materials for construction, and lack of open spaces, amongst others as the drivers for increased temperatures in select pockets. This analysis and its spatial mapping, by the planner, facilitated conversations with communities, enhancing their understanding of climate change impacts.

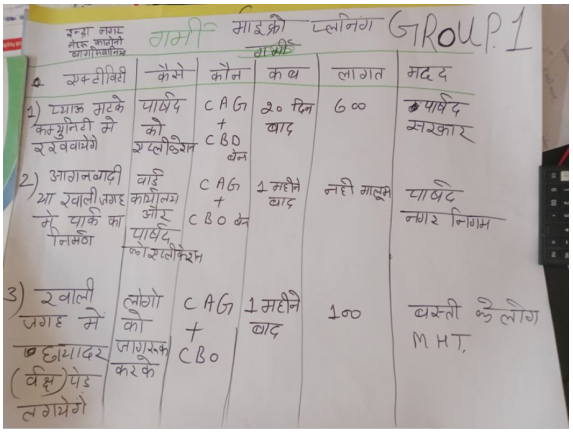

Image 3: Action Plan developed by the community in Nehru Colony (Source: Community-based Climate Action Plan: A Case of Bhopal. Retrieved from:

Image 4: Temperature profile (Nehru Colony, 29th April 2022, 11 a.m.). Community-based Climate Action Plan: A Case of Bhopal. Retrieved from:

Next, the communities were encouraged to discuss the coping mechanisms that they deployed during heat waves and flooding. These served as an entry point for the planner to design a long-term C-CAP that framed climate actions (premised on passive technologies) and accompanying programmatic interventions required to enhance the adaptive capacity of the communities. Technical expertise was thus plugged in to develop technically robust solutions based on scientific data and local knowledge (See Figure 5). Climate modelling simulations (using ENVI-met software) were used to calibrate the reduction in local temperatures once the solutions were implemented. An average reduction of 10C is anticipated upon implementation.

Pertinently, climate-change impacts within informal settlements are dependent on city-wide infrastructure, making the settlement-city-region links critical. Thus, outlining potential pathways for dovetailing efforts like the C-CAP into the larger urban and climate planning initiatives was foregrounded with the state government through organised workshops. An exploration of the formal plan and policy landscape of Bhopal showed the existence of several statutory tools such as the Bhopal Master Plan and quasi-legal tools such as the climate-friendly smart city plans. Yet, these policies and plans are neither integrated amongst themselves nor do

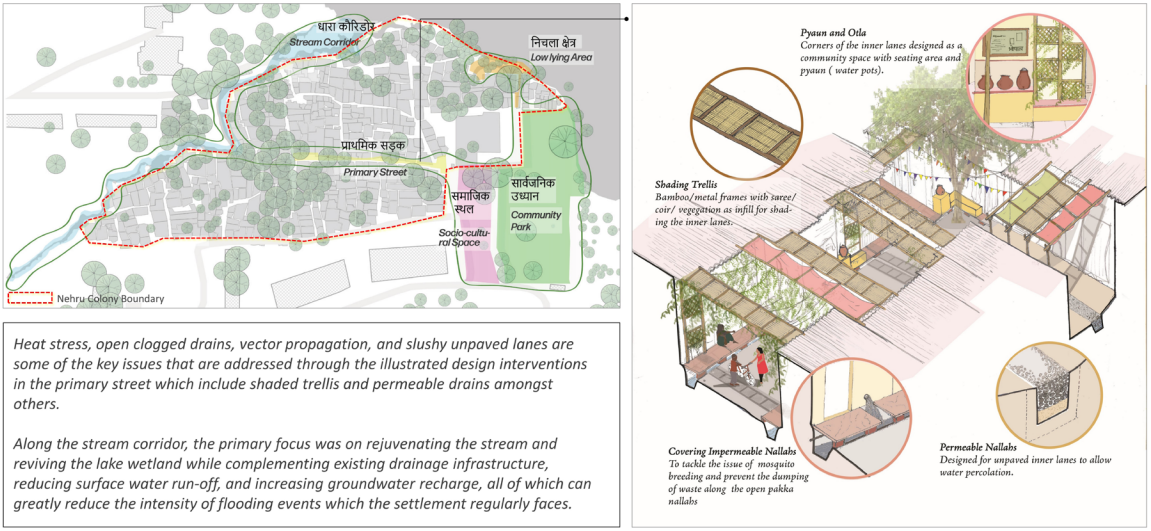

Image 5: Solutions at the settlement scale (Nehru Colony). Community-based Climate Action Plan: A Case of Bhopal. Retrieved from:

they speak to or incorporate the numerous informal ground efforts such as the C-CAP. Even as the urban and climate plans require disaggregation into local area plans that incorporate initiatives like the C-CAP, it is critical that the on-ground initiatives are cognitive of the formal plan and policy tenets. In the absence of such integration, disconnected, overlapping, and sometimes even conflicting efforts at multiple scales is not surprising.

Evolving innovative planning frameworks premised on a decentralised, democratic, and bottom-up approach anchored in and emanating from the socio-cultural and economic realities is the need of the hour. Involving those who are most impacted by changing climates – the urban poor- in planning for climate action is a critical step in addressing this need for climate-just actions.

Acknowledgement: This research was carried out in partnership with Gujarat Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT) and was supported by Humanitarian Innovation Fund, ELRHA and SEEDS India (Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society).

Note: According to the authors, the quasi-legal tools are mandated by national/state schemes or programmes like smart city missions. These do not have the backing of an act or a law such as the State Town and Country Planning Acts that mandate the preparation of urban plans for cities.

Multi-Stakeholder Participatory Approach for Developing and Implementing Urban Outcomes Framework, 2022

Prof. Debjani Ghosh, Project Lead of Urban Outcomes Framework, Associate Professor at the National Institute of Urban Affairs

Team Urban Outcomes Framework - Abbas Haider Naqvi, Anna Brittas, Riya Robi, Samridhi Pandey, Shreyas Chorgi, Simran Purswani

Image 1: Orientation Workshop for Data-filling in Amplifi at Delhi. Retrieved from the Author.

India is witnessing a dual wave of rapid urbanisation and technological transformation, with many of its urban centres becoming the hub for development. Cities have traditionally been described as engines of growth, but it is safe to affirm that not all citizens and communities benefit from the dividends of urbanisation equitably. While urbanisation brings forth substantial opportunities, the scale and pace of the process amplify the complications of planning and delivery of urban infrastructure and services to a radically diverse population.

Recognising the need to address the challenges faced by cities, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched various initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Smart Cities Mission (SCM), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY-NULM) and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY-U) to ensure quality infrastructure provision to the urban citizenry. However, as these programmes crossed key milestones, it became imperative to measure their outcomes and establish standards to guarantee social inclusion, improved governance and equitable resource management. As data is at the core of all the initiatives, a move to develop various indices to assess the cities and provide insights into their performance was set in motion by the government.

MoHUA released the first-ever Ease of Living Index (EOL) in 2018, followed by the Municipal Performance Index (MPI) in 2021. (MoHUA 2022) In addition to EOL and MPI, two other frameworks viz. Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF) and Data Maturity Assessment Framework (DMAF) were also developed to assess cities based on their climate roadmap and urban data preparedness respectively.

The primary agenda behind the creation of these frameworks was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the quality of life, sustainability, economic ability and data readiness of the cities so as to cater to the overarching goal of evidence-based

Image 2: The ULB Awareness Programme under the Citizen Perception Survey in Agartala. Retrieved from the Author.

targeted policymaking. However, multiple frameworks managed by independent programme teams and varied data collection timelines posed varied challenges for cities in terms of overlapping data, shortage of time and duplication of effort. Therefore, after two iterations of the frameworks, multi-level consultations were held with the sector experts, municipalities, academicians and key stakeholders. Additionally, a thorough review of the indicators through the lenses of gender, disability and young children by sector experts was undertaken to add value to the existing dataset. Post this, it was unanimously decided that the four mentioned frameworks and the additional suggestions by sector experts would be integrated by MoHUA into the Urban Outcomes Framework (UOF).

UOF encompasses 440 plus data points across 14 sectors for 250 plus cities. It is envisaged to be India's first-of-its-kind Urban Data Bank, which will encourage research and evidence-based policy-making and further act as a check towards cities' attempt at being future-ready. The formulation of indicators and creation of a methodological framework for UOF involved participation of its major stakeholders from the quadruple helix viz. MoHUA, in-house teams of the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)/Smart Cities/Other Parastatals/ Statutory bodies, Institute for Competitiveness (IFC), external industry experts and citizens. (MoHUA 2022) The additional component of the Citizen Perception Survey(CPS) under EOL involves the direct

Image 3: The ULB Awareness Programme under the Citizen Perception Survey In Amritsar. Retrieved from the Author.

participation of citizens through a standardised survey on the civic amenities and service delivery of their respective ULBs for more than 250 plus cities.

The Quality Council of India (QCI) was onboarded to undertake the data collection for UOF and to conduct CPS in all the selected cities. The firm has a vast network of affiliated Pan-India professionals who assist the cities in dynamic ways at the local level, keeping in mind the culture and language of the urban centres. QCI provided each city with a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and a ground-level coordinator to guide them in the data collection process and also deployed surveyors to the cities to conduct offline surveys for CPS.

Approaches adopted to bring multiple stakeholders to the same table:

- Consultations and FGDs for formulation of indicators, assigning weights and developing the methodological framework by in-house experts from NIUA, MoHUA, IFC as well as other sectoral experts.
- Public consultation before finalising the indicator matrix through opinion surveys on MyGov portal and Smart Net.
- Municipal Commissioners/CEOs of the UOF cities were approached for the appointment of nodal officers to steer the exercise. The selected cities were on-boarded through the appointment of these nodal officers which was achieved through regular communication and coordination between the Urban Local Bodies, Smart City SPVs, and Urban Development/ Municipal Administration Department of State Governments.
- A series of offline and online capacity-building workshops were conducted. The nodal officers and their supporting officials were given detailed and comprehensive training about the data points, assessment frameworks, citizen perception survey and the AMPLIFI Portal through workshop series. Based on the feedback received in the workshops, several data points were revised.
- Cities adopted multiple strategies to streamline collection of the data along with supporting documents from respective departments.
- Dedicated teams from NIUA and QCI supported the nodal officers in data collection through one-to-one interaction and frequent online clinics for training. On-ground coordinators were also deployed to the cities to provide the necessary support to the officers involved and coordinate between various departments.
- The validation of the data collected from the cities was carried out at two levels by the teams from QCI and NIUA in three cycles. A precise rectification of data and supporting documents was conducted to assess data quality, through continuous communication with the city officials.
- Apart from the data collected from the cities, which has 70% weightage, the Citizen Perception Survey (CPS) is also a crucial component for the Ease of Living Index (EOL) that accounts for the other 30% which collects feedback of citizens both online and offline. CPS directly captures insights from more than 70 lakh plus citizens on the quality of life and urban service delivery in their cities.

Challenges faced while actionizing a participatory approach in UOF:

- The process of informing the 266 cities about UOF and on boarding them to participate in this framework by appointing a nodal officer, involved continuous cycles of correspondence and follow up calls with the nodal officers.
- Cities that were participating in the assessment for the first time were not aware about the data granularities and also faced challenges due to shortage of staff.

- Non-availability of authentic data posed a challenge to find alternative data sources without compromising the ranking exercise.
- While collating centrally filled data points, few data points were only available at the district- level and not at city-level, which created a challenge to configure a statistical approach to bring the data down at city-level without compromising the sanctity of the data.

It is vital to understand the processes behind the creation of any framework that has the potential to be a data repository. We are not only looking at data accessibility, availability, quality, consistency, but also at the questions we pose today and the kind of datasets these questions create. Do our data points and processes shed light on the services provided or not to the under-represented and marginalised communities? What kind of urban paradigm emerges from India's urban stories and what remains missing?

UOF has been developed by ensuring that a participatory process is weaved-in at every stage of the exercise. A key learning for the team has been that fostering inclusion does not necessarily require erasing the drawing board and starting from scratch, rather small yet incremental changes at every stage can ensure data inclusion that positively impacts citizens' lives. Conducting multi-stakeholder engagements with competent consultative groups based out of different parts of the country, coordinating with city level officials and also adding the voice of the citizens is a laborious task. However, the returns in the form of transparent outcomes and holistic involvement of all the stakeholders at all levels outweigh the challenges. It paves the way for data democratisation and evidence-based policy making.

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Multi-Stakeholder Participatory Approach to Develop Capacity Building Modules for the ULBs Officials

Krishnakant Pandey, Team Lead, ITCN Capacity Building Programme, National Institute of Urban Affairs

Strengthening urban local governments through capacity building is identified as a key strategy for urban development in the 11th plan (2007-2012) of the Five-Year Plan. The plan identified a lack of skilled manpower as one of the main concerns. The Government of India has undertaken several initiatives under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and other schemes to augment the capacity of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to implement projects and reforms.

A participatory approach is one in which everyone who has a stake in the intervention has a voice and their perspective is considered. The process brings together representatives of all the stakeholders of the Programme. The stakeholders can be organizations, groups and individuals who may be affected, or have an interest in the Programme.

Children are the important stakeholder in a city and urban planning. Urban development should enhance the creativity and aspiration of children. NIUA, with support from Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF), is implementing the 'Infant, Toddler and Caregiver-Friendly Neighbourhoods (ITCN) Capacity Building Programme' focused on city officials and young professionals. The Programme is anchored by the Inclusive Cities Centre (ICC) at NIUA and aims at addressing the development needs of the cities' youngest citizens, below the age of six years, and their caregivers through planning and development interventions at the neighbourhood level on a city-wide scale. The Programme follows the capacity building strategy of NIUA which focuses on an individual approach leading to institutional strengthening within an enabling environment by adopting guiding pillars such as demand driven, modularity, inclusivity and scalability among others.

The Programme focuses on institutional capacity building, developing knowledge repositories, skilling urban practitioners ,young professionals and advocacy for young child friendly cities. The Programme has developed several capacity building modules and

toolkits to build the capacity of ULBs on the issues related to ITCN. These modules are the outcome of a participatory approach and multi stakeholder consultations. The stakeholders were identified at the beginning of the Programme and included ULBs officials, state department officials, sector experts, Training of Trainers (ToT) agency, training delivery agencies from various regions of the country, and civil society organizations.

A Knowledge Needs Assessment (KNA) study was conducted under the Programme in 2021 to understand the knowledge and skills gap and the related demands by city officials to design and create young children and the caregiver-friendly built environments. A structured questionnaire was developed in consultation with the urban sector, child development and urban governance experts and used for the assessment. City officials from various cities participated in the study through online surveys and focus group discussions; civil society organizations were also engaged in a separate discussion. The findings of the KNA study indicated that there was a strong need to build the capacities of city officials across the hierarchy on the issues related to ITCN.

The Programme on-boarded partner agencies to develop the training modules, organize ToT and deliver training to the city officials. Also, mobilized city officials across the country through several rounds of e-consultations to orient and sensitize them on the issues related to ITCN. The modules considered the profile of city officials who represented various departments of ULBs. The module development processes included sharing of resource materials with the ToT agency, discussion on the outline and content of the modules amongst Programme partners and review of modules by experts from NIUA and BvLF.

ToT on the modules was organized involving trainers from training delivery agencies, followed by delivery of the modules to the city officials from close to 100 cities of India through online mode followed by their assessment on the National Urban Learning Platform (NULP). The modules were designed to facilitate two-way communication, time was dedicated to participant engagement using several tools and methods, understanding the challenges, and local examples were included wherever possible.

The consultation process was not a one-time event, it followed throughout the project implementation before and after the delivery of the module contents. The methods used were online consultations, virtual meetings, individual discussions, online surveys, focus group discussions and in-person workshops. The agenda of the consultations, with a clear objectives and structure of the event, was shared in advance for meaningful discussions and engagement. The Programme ensured that all stakeholders are represented in the consultation. Considering the participant's profile, both Hindi and English languages were used during the discussion to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to present their views. Engaging tools such as mentimeter and online polls were also used to engage with the stakeholders. Their inputs received during delivery of the training and post training workshops were incorporated into the module content and Programme decision making; key discussions were documented and stakeholders were also informed how their views and inputs were incorporated. The participating city officials were of the view that the training has essentially added value to the understanding of ITC needs at the city level and equipped them with the required knowledge and skills. The post training assessment of ULBs also confirmed the same. The entire process improved the quality of knowledge products, promoted ownership among the ULBs and training delivery agencies and they are willing to take the Programme forward which is reflected in their active participation in post training consultations and other Programme related activities.

The stakeholder consultation should start as early in the project cycle as possible. It should be considered as an iterative process, not an isolated event. It enables the users to make an 'informed choice' about what will become their system. Stakeholders consultation strengthens the quality of the Programme by capturing the views and perceptions of people and integration of their view in the planning and implementation of the Programme. The Programme successfully mobilized and engaged several stakeholders for capacity building of ULBs in India and intends to engage them through the entire Programme cycle.

Co-creating Neighbourhoods: The Fragile Commons of Agra

Dr. Renu Khosla,
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The road to regenerative urban development begins with people – and unthinking participation.

Agra city has over 500 years of continuous history that has produced a mix of built, cultural, natural, and living heritage. Co-existing communities have embodied the city with monuments, structures, an urban morphology of *Mandis*, *Bazaars*, *Ganjs*, *Katras*, gardens, water bodies, and an intangible culture of traditions, arts, and crafts. But as Agra grew, and its economic core diversified, many areas, particularly the inner-city, became distressed by bad services, poor housing and decaying streets and public spaces, weakening its image and livability and undermining its productivity and potential.

Agra is in need of urgent regeneration. Regeneration that is led by its people.

Co-creating the Cultural Commons of Agra

In 2005, the 'Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE) - an unthinking development organization', curated a Mughal Heritage Walk (MHW) at Agra, as part of its effort to build sustainable livelihoods for the poor linked to tourism. The MHW was designed as a one-kilometre walking loop, connecting some unknown monuments to the lives of the poor and disadvantaged people of Kuchpura – a settlement whose story is deeply intertwined with the Taj Mahal. The MHW became the core that nudged the co-creation of the Kuchpura Commons. Participatory processes were used to plan the route map, and improve the legibility and content of the various tangible and intangible aspects of

the Walk – the Sanjhi Art, the village courtyard, the community school, the brick pavements and drains, the clay potters, the leather whip makers, and within the Walk, to make the experience more socially interactive, the tea service and the street plays. Bad or non-delivery of services, especially water and sanitation, had made the Kuchpura community extractive in ways that were ecologically unsustainable. The Walk expanded to address the broad canvas of human needs – enhancing the physical and natural content of Kuchpura's shared commons. Home toilets, Swachh Galis (clean streets), the Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System (DEWATS) on the dirty stormwater drain, and doorstep solid waste management systems, helped improve people's lives and well-being and made these historic areas healthier, safer, and productive. By 2015, the MHW was generating decent incomes for the youth animators, the women souvenir makers, the young street play artists, the home-based tea service providers and others connected to the Walk. The farmers were reusing the treated black water for irrigating their fields, improving the nutrient content of foods grown there, and less dirty water flowed into the River Yamuna. A Maintenance Fund was curated out of the Walk earnings, and banked for community proposals. Toilet building with improved septic tanks ramped up to other streets. House values soared, making all residents better off.

Participatory action led to a regeneration of Kuchpura's Collective Commons - the repaved and safer central courtyard was claimed by children and their mothers from the occupation of male elders; the added toilet in the school that invariably doubled up as a wedding venue, was cared for by the community; the rubbish heap on an open plot was cleared as people disposed waste appropriately; the historical *chabutra* (platform) became a tourist stop with *sanjhi* art – a historical art form from the era of Lord Krishna; home terraces were repurposed as Taj Mahal viewing points; the distant and inaccessible community toilet at the village entrance was demolished and moved closer to the people; the roof of the DEWATS offered a new and cleaner site for community events besides making accessible the Kuchpura community that lived across the dirty storm water drain. Kuchpura became more alive to the city – pushing more development funds in its direction, first under CMs *Bhim Nagari* programme and more recently, redeveloped with SMART City resources.

We decided to replicate the idea of the Walk for heritage conservation. The Taj Mumtazabad Culture Walk inventoried - people, the cultural products, practices, crafts, rituals of Tajganj - the neighbourhood of Taj Mahal. It was designed to enable local-traditional communities to take ownership of their local heritage, preserve it collectively, and sustain the cultural commons for intergenerational transfer of knowledge.

Combining the Walk with projects for ecological restoration, CURE worked to plan, implement and contribute to the construction of community rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharging systems, generating huge amounts of water annually. Besides making people water secure and healthier with safer water, rainwater has contributed to the regeneration of groundwater aquifers and greened the spaces around the underground rainwater storage tanks. Even as these made great public spaces, the biggest impact was on the transfigured social relationships between these precarious communities – that became agentic, and the upper income households in neighbouring settlements. These people have become empowered ecological stewards - valuing, owning and safeguarding their water tanks, and influencing others to build small home systems. Such collective caring of shared natural resources secures them for years to come. At the same time, integrating conservation of natural commons with the physical and cultural heritage of historic areas, intersects the socio-economic with the ecological and the intangible – tangible heritage nudging a collaborative conservation process. The success of CURE at Agra has been scaffolded on its participative processes, engagement and involvement of people

in the local curation, planning and implementation. Solutions were co-created with and for people, taking into account, views, ideas and experiences of the most vulnerable, from whom these solutions mattered the most. ***Our work in Agra was therefore not just about building infrastructure. It was about creating a community. It was deeply participative, with collaborative conversations that stimulated the relationship of a people with their lives, heritage and ecology.***

Agra city is not alone in its bad basic services. Every city, despite improvements, has large informal areas that are unintegrated with the city's trunk infrastructure and services, leaving them dirty, neglected and blighted. Solutions used by local people for their everyday needs, such as unchecked extraction of groundwater or direct discharge of sewage and solid waste into water bodies or defecating openly, inflict huge damage to a city's image, livability, productivity, and to its ecology - polluting aquifers, land surfaces, water bodies, and dehydrating them. Distressed, decaying or ecologically stressed cities are in urgent need of regeneration. Here is what the cities must do. ***Regenerating cities should be about regenerating neighbourhoods with equity and inclusiveness.*** Beginning at the neighbourhood level, regeneration should be about localizing solutions and making a place. When people come together to reshape their communities, they bring in local wisdom, local context, local knowledge, and local solutions that are doable, owned, and improve the everydayness of living for the majority, besides being sustainable and ecologically reasonable. Participatory planning gathers diverse people in a community, especially those at the edges, making them visible and amplifying their voice in the planning and designing of their settlements. Women in particular are important actors in sustaining the ecological and cultural content of a community. They defend and promote the intergenerational transfer of ideas, values, practices by socializing the young thereby helping place making. Participatory processes also allow tapping into local talent – lowering costs, and promoting a community's aspiration and potential.

Cities must pursue the goal of: a. bringing a tap and a toilet to every home, especially for the families that are excluded, informal and are offered shared services; b. an affordable house that is close to their places of work to reduce stress on transportation, need to extend transportation to the city edge, besides making the air cleaner; and c. a decent and dignified livelihood with reliable income that enable the poor to have predictable resources to plan for the future. Equitable cities are those whose settlements are integrated with the city – de-engineered, simplified and connected to its physical and social infrastructure. Regenerating cities must therefore invest in the whole urban ecosystem that will improve inclusivity and well-being. Regenerating cities is about building a restorative relationship of people with their ecology. It is about helping communities be environmentally aware – which they usually are, but lack new science and the resources to adapt and thrive within their areas. By building an understanding of the socio-ecological aspects of place among the people, city-making will shift from a largely un-humanistic practice to one that aligns people with their living systems, which is empowering for both - people and the city that can then incorporate biodiversity into their planning and design. ***City planners and managers need community tools to catalyse place-specific-ecosystemic activations*** and not some broad brush Master Plans. While Master Plans may be good in defining the broad principles by which cities must manage urban growth, creating spaces designed for safe living, working, and recreation which integrates the natural commons, needs humanistic planning. City managers need frameworks that enable such co-designing and procurement processes to ground local innovations and content. They must curate democratic spaces for people-city engagement and dialogue that would facilitate localized planning and policy making. Such dialogue must be sustained through strengthening partnerships and creating capacities. Without such local conversations, it would be impossible to construct future frameworks, thereby threatening localized and collective conservation action.

An Inclusive 'River-led' Urban Regeneration: Food for Thought

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In the last few decades of India's development story, we have seen a rapid transformation of cities all across the country. India's urban population has increased exponentially, with 475 million people —35% of the total population—living in cities in 2021. [1]According to a research by ADB, urbanization will peak in 2050, with more than half of India's population living in cities. Despite this, nearly half of India's urban population (42.3%) still continues to reside in one or the other of its 50 metropolitan cities. These cities play an important role in maintaining existing populations and attracting and absorbing new populations while curbing unsustainable growth patterns at the peripheries. [2]

In response to these growing pressures, urban regeneration and redevelopment are increasingly finding their way into the development strategies of many existing cities in India. And why not? Urban regeneration provides a huge opportunity to revisit the earlier urbanization patterns and promote a more sustainable, ecologically-sensitive and equitable development. In the wake of climate change, it is crucial that more and more city regeneration examples are centred on creating sustainable and inclusive urban environments that benefit everyone and incur as less harm to the natural assets as possible.

However, these regeneration processes are also riddled with urban complexities. While planning or strategizing for any city's regeneration, there are always prioritization indecisions between economic development, larger public good or environmental sensitivity. As a result, time and again we see quick-fix

[1] World Bank Database available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL?locations=IN
[2] ADB 2018, ADB SOUTH ASIA WORKING PAPER SERIES (No.58) Apoorva Shenvi and Ron H. Slangen, ENABLING SMART URBAN REDEVELOPMENT IN INDIA THROUGH FLOOR AREA RATIO INCENTIVES; Available at: https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/435936/swp-058-smart-urban-redevelopment-india.pdf

solutions in the form of evictions, relocations, uprooting of livelihoods from ecologically vulnerable areas or conversely raising down forests for development or encroachment on the water bodies. The climate crisis is only increasing these complexities.

In India, cities are still striving to resolve the disparities in the coverage of basic services and uneven supply networks. Now, they also have to contend with the limited stock and capacities of natural resources. This raises the important question, "How can city regeneration programmes designed by us be truly inclusive?"

This also brings into light more questions that cities usually struggle with while ensuring the aspect of 'inclusion' in the urban regeneration processes:

- How can a balance be struck between a city's multiple needs and the health of its natural ecosystems and resources?
- Do any regeneration initiatives employ novel approaches to address the ecological and socioeconomic needs of the initiative?
- Can any city's regeneration be fuelled by shared goals and duties among diverse stakeholders?

With an evolving understanding of ways to regenerate cities sustainably, we are now more conscious of our over-burdened natural systems and understand the critical need to protect and restore them. What is promising is that it is acknowledged by government bodies and citizens alike!

Lately, one such area that has gained extreme importance in cities and among citizens is restoring the rapidly shrinking water resources and water ecosystems. It's common knowledge that these water ecosystems are one of the most contested environments catering to multiple competing needs and demands of the city. However, there is also a growing realization that the regeneration of water ecosystems such as rivers and water bodies can trigger social, economic, and ecological regeneration in any city.

With this thinking and in an effort to restore the balance between the growing demands of urbanization and the health of river(s) flowing through cities, the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) in 2020 came up with a first-of-its-kind strategic framework for managing urban river stretches – Urban River Management Plan (URMP).

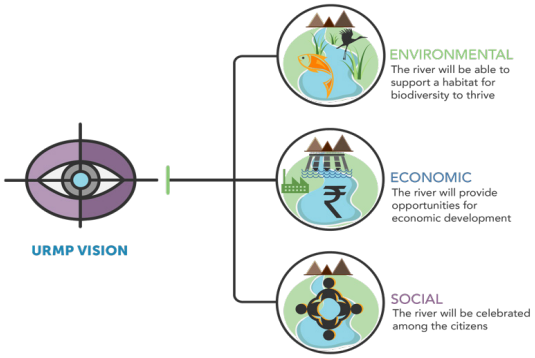

Image 1: Ishleen Kaur. URMP Vision. Retrieved from the Author.

The URMP framework has been designed to help the river cities systematically and holistically plan for interventions required to revive and maintain the rivers within the city limits in a sustainable manner. The URMP is embedded in the central idea that maintaining healthy rivers is crucial to enhance liveability and productivity in the cities.[3]

[3] NIUA 2020, Urban River management Plan Framework, Available at: https://nmcg.nic.in/writereaddata/fileupload/48_Urban%20River%20Management%20Plan%20framework.pdf

Image 2: The 10-point agenda of the Urban River Management Plan Framework covering ecological as well as socio-economic parameters of river management

The Framework, through its 10-point agenda, acknowledges that river ecosystems play multiple roles in a city, and thus, the process of urban river management must look at not only the consumptive aspects but also set forth the ecological, cultural and socio-economic values associated with them.

Another merit of the URMP framework is that it is process-oriented and recommends collective thinking and action at every stage of designing, planning and eventually managing urban rivers. Thus, every intervention that is included in the URMP is a result of collective brainstorming and consensus building and in every way possible promotes joint accountability in planning and implementation.

This is evident in all the five URMPs that NIUA took up in the first phase with cities like Kanpur, Ayodhya, Chattrapati Sambhajinagar (formerly Aurangabad), Moradabad and Bareilly. All these URMPs layout a roadmap for river-led regeneration of the city by considering that the 'healthy' river zones would provide a range of services to the city, including flood control, water supply, and socio-cultural development, which are essential for the health and well-being of both people and the environment.

There have been numerous learnings in the process of formulating these URMPs that can help pave the way for river cities to envision and implement "inclusive" river-led regeneration. Two of the most effective outcomes have been detailed here:

1. 'URMP' Working Group as the driving institution for the URMP

For all five cities, the first step in the URMP formulation process was forming a working group comprising different government departments, private sector stakeholders, civil society, community action groups, academia and research institutions and concerned citizens. The multidimensionality that is endorsed by a number of policy documents was observed clearly in this process and the discussions were rich with different perspectives.

One example of this is the URMP formulation by the temple city of Ayodhya. The city caters to large numbers of floating population in the form of tourists and pilgrims and the Saryu River forms a huge part of this cultural experience. URMP Ayodhya working group collectively came up with a vision that included not only ecological restoration but also focused on strengthening the connection between people and the river. The various parties agreed to leverage the river's cultural value to re-establish the people's connection, and design interventions that can inspire conscientious behaviour towards protecting the river ecosystem. Behaviour change became the most important priority for the city's URMP, thus bringing both people and the river at the centre of the regeneration effort.

Likewise, in the other four cities too, these city-led working groups were instrumental in thrusting an integrated approach, addressing the critical land and water issues, and involving inter-agency and community collaboration.

2. Participatory Approaches Towards Translating Vision To On-Ground Interventions

Another big way in which river restoration can enable participatory approaches is during the translation of the larger vision into on-ground interventions. With multiple user groups of the urban river ecosystems, there are also multiple custodians ready to commit to the cause. This collaborative approach was closely observed in Chattrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad). The city took an action-driven approach to restore its two seasonal rivers -The Kham and Sukhna, shrinking due to rampant encroachments, pollution and extreme solid waste dumping. The rivers until recently were perceived as nullahs (open drains) by its citizens.

The Kham River's journey from nullah (drain) to nadi (river) was a result of persistent on-ground efforts towards restoring the river starting with reviving the natural riparian greens along the first 1.5km pilot stretch. The biggest driver behind the intervention was a shared vision and meaningful partnerships between the Aurangabad Municipal Corporation(AMC), EcoSattva (an Aurangabad-based social enterprise) and Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), local academic institutions and many other stakeholder groups. While AMC brought in the human and financial resources and effective leadership that facilitated the intervention at every step, EcoSattva contributed by technical handholding in design and implementation. Active participation from the Cantonment Board, industrial bodies, resident groups and local universities brought diverse understanding and knowledge resources helping agile decision-making for the progress of the project. The city has now established a ritual of collective discussions between the government and non-government stakeholders towards building strategies.

One of the primary objectives of the URMP Aurangabad was also to create sustainable livelihoods that benefit everyone. This involved providing access to the river for employment opportunities that empower people to earn a living and contribute to the economic growth of their communities. The city set a good example of this by choosing 'not' to relocate the cattle-rearing families and cattle sheds in the river floodplain, but instead, connect them to a slurry treatment plant to address the problem of river pollution. These cattle shed and dependent families have been sustaining in this area for a long and the waste from the sheds was diverted directly into the river. Now, this waste is treated in the pilot slurry treatment plant and the by-products from the plant are used for horticulture and landscaping along the river. Depending on its success, eventually, it is proposed that all nineteen cattle sheds will be linked to it, thus lowering the pollution load in the river. By doing this, the city has shown the way to other river cities too, towards finding a middle ground around the 'river vs economy' debate.

The two examples of different approaches taken by the cities exhibit the momentous shift in general awareness and attitudes of the government bodies, civil society, citizen groups and private sector enterprises, who are all willing to collaborate and contribute. Social expectations have also become an important motivator to strengthen the political will to take action.

It also highlights that regeneration success stories are not confined to only ecological or physical restoration. They are very much a transformation of the people, for the people and most importantly driven by the people.

Regeneration ideas are increasingly dependent on how people envision the future as India's modern cities evolve. Moreover, our understanding of inclusivity has evolved considerably that emphasizes the need for sustainable and inclusive urban environments that provide equal opportunities for all members of the community. And with more such examples emerging, it appears we are moving towards a future where river zones are not just seen as sources of economic growth but also as critical components of our environment and our communities.

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Op-Ed: Community-led Slum Upgradation

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Globally, various approaches have been used to improve the living conditions in urban slums, with varied levels of success. The prevalent slum improvement efforts include relocation to greenfield alternative lots and built-up units such as the – 'Million Houses Programme' in Sri Lanka; in-situ slum upgrading whereby public money is invested in improvement of urban services while households invest in upgrading of their dwelling units (for example, Brazil, Peru, Indonesia, Thailand); and in-situ redevelopment programmes whereby new housing stock is created for slum families at the existing sites (Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) in Maharashtra).

The slum concentration rate in Indian cities was enumerated at around 25 per cent by Census of India, 2011. Slums are generally positioned below the planning radar of city development agencies and local governments. Addressing the challenge of such magnitude through urban regeneration requires a multi-pronged participatory approach which is inclusive of the communities in focus. In an ideal world, the best option is to provide the families with a new serviced dwelling at the existing location. The real world challenge is to increase the housing provision scale by using the occupied lands for construction of new dwellings. These include unavailability of unencumbered land, environmental and planning challenges as well competing development demands on land; unavailability of requisite financial and non-financial resources for such mega-initiatives; and, loose fit between the slum families' preferred housing design and accessibility features; and the options available in walk-up and high-rise slum redevelopment buildings. What has worked globally, at a scale is in-situ slum upgradation whereby local government has assigned de facto or de jure occupancy rights; public agencies have invested in improvement of services and households; and have invested incrementally in improving/expanding their dwellings, with community engagement and participation at each stage of the programme.

Inclusion of a slum settlement in city development plans, after successful negotiations, is followed by an intense planning exercise for improving the urban services and providing social facilities in the settlement. The challenge is creating spaces for circulation, retrofitting network services, and constructing shared facilities such as community toilets and social facilities such as primary school and primary health centre in dense settlements with net land utilisation rate up to 95 per cent.

Community participation is critical for sustainable implementation of an in-situ slum upgradation programme - from negotiations with local government, planning, services improvement, house improvements, and operation and maintenance of shared services. Community engagement with negotiations among residents play a key role in the planning stage and for plot realignment to create the open spaces required for upgrading the services. There are also examples whereby the service delivery agencies are just able to extend the network of the existing services to the settlement but are unable to provide them within the settlement. In such instances, the community members pool their savings to create an upgrading fund to construct a neighbourhood-level network of services. In-situ slum upgradation programmes generally include multiple components such as street pavement, drainage, water supply with individual connections or public taps, sewer network with individual connections or public toilets, public toilets with soak pits, community hall, primary health centre, pre-nursery and primary schools, among others. The challenge is operations and maintenance of such public assets for reaping its optimum benefits. Good examples are communities establishing self-help groups for the O&M, and levying user charges for maintenance.

Slum residents predominantly belong to the Economically Weak Section (EWS). They neither have a savings stock to invest in home improvements nor income flows to contract a home loan. The home improvements/expansion are undertaken incrementally by the households depending on their affordability. Community plays a key role in facilitating improvement of homes as well as the services. The good examples include the community (self-help group) borrowing and repaying on behalf of its members for home improvements from non-banking financial institutions and commercial banks – in Latin American countries. For home improvement, the community could also help with members pooling in labour, such as under the Kampung Improvement Programme in Indonesia.

The slum communities' negotiations with various city stakeholders for inclusion of their settlements under urban regeneration programmes are well served by a community database presenting the socio-economic profile of its residents and the habitat condition against the service level benchmarks. There are various examples across Indian cities, as also from cities in other countries, where communities have developed such a GIS-based database through its members' efforts. Such GIS maps, do not only have the site boundaries marked, but also have the footprint of every dwelling demarcated. The dwelling attribute data presents the residents' socio-economic profile and access to urban services and social facilities.

The Government of India is committed to providing everyone with a livable dwelling under its flagship programme – the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). The focus is on creating affordable housing stock under greenfield housing projects and in-situ redevelopment projects; and, promoting individual household efforts in home improvements through grants and home loan interest subsidy. There are also efforts to create affordable rental housing complexes through new public and private investments, and by repurposing existing vacant low-income housing units. The Mission can be further strengthened by including another vertical focused on community-led slum upgrading.

Cultural Urban Regeneration of Musi River in Hyderabad

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"Let the river roll which way it will, cities will rise on its banks."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

We know this saying is true, and have witnessed it - through our history books, through the stories narrated by our grandparents. We have seen rivers roar, we have seen them keep quiet. We have seen them meander through the mountains, and stay still on the plains. But, why do we have to see them die?

Hyderabad is a city where heritage resides at every corner of its vibrant alleys, through its intangible aspects such as its delicacies, festivals, handicrafts; or through its tangible heritage of monuments and natural landscapes. Most of these natural landscapes of Hyderabad come alive through the presence of the Musi river. Though Musi river is an important part of the city's natural heritage, it is being forced to be lost, with its mark being erased from the city it nurtured with its roaring heart.

Rising in the Ananthagiri hills in Ranga Reddy district, the Musi or Muchukunda river flows into the Krishna river at Vadapally in Nalgonda district. In 1589, due to extreme water shortage in the fortified city of Golconda, Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah shifted the city to the banks of the then - majestic Musi river and renamed it 'Hyderabad'. The floods of 1908 led to the then Nizam (6th), Mahbub Ali Pasha, to call on the legendary engineer M. Visweswaraya to build flood-proof Hyderabad. The solution to floods was building water reservoirs in the city which led to the creation of Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar in 1926. Today, owing to the sheer negligence of the state, Musi river has dried up and is reduced to a sewer. When the gates of these reservoirs open, and water flows into the river, it seems as if temporarily though, but relieves its lost glory.

An exact timeline of the Musi drying cannot be traced. According to secondary sources, the four major causes of Musi's water scarcity are as follows:

1. Degradation of the catchment of Musi in the upstream Vikarabad area.
2. Impounding of water by the Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar, and degradation of their immediate catchment areas.
3. Changes in the drainage pattern of the Hyderabad urban region affected the water flow in Musi.
4. Disruption of the interlinkages of the numerous water tanks in the region (numbering more than 1000) and their encroachments over time, which were otherwise feeding the river.

The amount of water in the river has been on a downward slope for years; this adversely affects the river's health by significantly decreasing its self-cleaning capacity. Stains of Hyderabad's pollution can be seen in the river once it enters the city. Further, the river moves forward, flowing into low-lying areas of vegetable fields outside the city, where chemicals seep into the groundwater, which is again used to cultivate fields later and that's how it ends up in a vicious cycle of affecting humans and river health. The chemical waste from Hussain Sagar lake is also being transferred to Musi. Quite a few attempts have been initiated for saving Musi, but it appears that money and policy measures aren't enough to clean up the industrial waste and sewage in Musi.

Image 1: Sonali Mahamna. Musi River. Retrieved from the Author.

Under the Inclusive Heritage-Based City Development Program in India, communities selected in the pilot cities engaged with other stakeholders to profile city heritage assets and prepare plans for city heritage management and investment. The experiences of the pilot cities informed urban revitalization guidelines, which were shared with the national government for adoption in the National Heritage Cities Development and Augmentation Scheme (HRIDAY). The restoration work of Puranapul was carried out under this plan and several promenades, boulevards and parks were also developed along the Musi River.

Musi has been a part of the Central Government's National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) and JNNURM - "Save Musi campaign" was launched in 2005. NRCP has released funds for setting up STPs to treat municipal sewage, but no funds were allocated for the conservation of Musi. In 2016, the City-based forum for Good Governance filed a PIL (Public interest litigation) highlighting that when Musi flows through Hyderabad, it turns into a giant sewer, filled with garbage and industrial waste from the city. The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) government set up the Musi Riverfront Development Corporation in

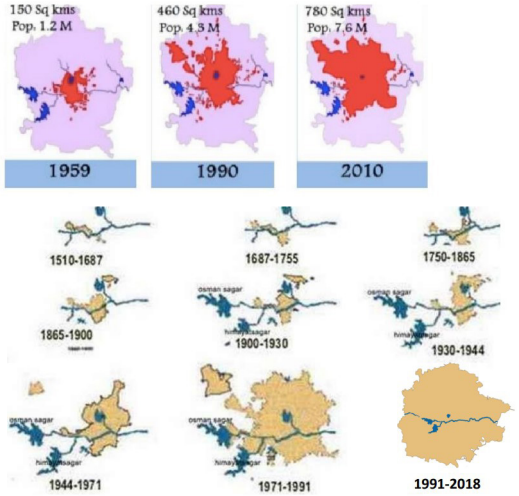

Image 2: Urban development timeline in Hyderabad around Musi river. Retrieved from:

2017. Also the, Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) launched the "Musi revitalization project" in 2018 while announcing a design competition to redesign the 1.5-km Afzalgunj stretch in the old city. Ten design firms, including a couple of international firms, registered for the competition, but even before moving up a next level, everything went woof into thin air.

In the Musi revitalization project, goals were distributed over three major categories - social, economic and environmental. Social goals strived to ensure social cohesion to make the city inclusive and preserve the city's culture and heritage. But the authorities forgot to stretch their efforts further to effectively involve communities in the decision-making.

Under the Save Musi campaign, the nine-acre Imliban park, located on the Afzalgunj stretch, was revitalized in 2007. The initiative proved to be a failure due to the location of the Imliban sewage treatment plant adjacent to the park. Visitors to the Park are greeted by the sight of a long queue of trucks dumping garbage on river banks, entertained by the strong stench of garbage, and bid adios by the breeding mosquitoes on their way out. The park was planned for people, but there was an extreme lack of consideration for the people themselves.

In August 2021, the Musi Riverfront Development Corporation Limited (MRDCL) board of directors had a meeting to discuss the discontinuation of the Musi Rejuvenation and Beautification project. Soon, there was a declaration by the State government to shelve the entire project until a DPR is prepared to tackle urban flooding issues in the city. The decision came after Rs 2-crore expenditure was incurred by the corporation on river development works that got washed away in incessant rains that year. Neither was there a light shed on the supposed DPR preparation nor did the concepts of Musi redevelopment saw the light of day. Overall the changing Musi riverscape offers insights into the power dynamics of social and political forces that work to put urban commons to use. Neoliberal commodification of urban commons and technocratic visions delink their political, historical, and social identities only to result in ecological degradation.

Hyderabad keeps bearing the weight of overflowing rivers year after year. In the monsoon of 2022, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Mayor Gadwal Vijayalaxmi claimed to evacuate 1,500 residents living near the Musi downstream areas, including Puranapul and Chaderghat, and shift them to shelter homes due to an increased flow of floodwater. The need to develop a planned sewage system considering the water bodies and river within the city is felt deeply.

Development or redevelopment plans for Musi would affect numerous people settled around the bank of the river or indirectly rely on it. Implementation of any project plan would involve the eviction of people living within the limits of river banks and lead to the displacement of houses, which affects work and livelihoods. Therefore, it raises the need to understand the ground level situation and have a consultative process for planning and implementation. The physical interventions need to be extremely considerate and sensible about the heritage of the Musi River, its embankments and the various structures located around it. There are heritage regulations that give guidelines for development and restrict development wherever necessary. Conserving Musi and restoring its past glory would also involve extensive heritage conservation.

Till date, the government's approach towards conserving Musi is quite disintegrated, to say the least; many actors are walking towards the same goal in siloes, which wouldn't be as fruitful as required. The involved stakeholders need to work in unison with each other to frame an integrated management of the entire catchment area of the river which would include several other small water bodies, to ensure the water

security of the city in coming years.Government cannot develop Musi in silos because any plan would disrupt the lives of many communities, and a participatory approach is the only way to pave the way for Musi's revitalization.

Musi river is a remarkable heritage that needs to be preserved before being completely lost under the layers of political, ecological, and social compromises. The setting of its landscapes is a beautiful experience that can be leveraged to enhance rejuvenating community engagement in a closely knitted environment. The Distinctive nature of these resonates with multilateral sections of the society which provides an ideal Placemaking opportunity, invoking equal involvement from hierarchical society. Inconsistent with the endless potential of the place, Citizens and government alike have abandoned it completely. People used to come for a river, were greeted by a sewer, and eventually decided to turn a complete blind eye to the failing landscape. General ignorance and nonchalance of the society resulted in discouraging social inclusion and the possible rekindling of the river banks.

Urban renewal has emerged as a strong contender in the planning process to be adopted in city plans which has put the heritage treasures of cities at the core of this urban regeneration. There lies a tremendous potential to be leveraged from the historic sites which can be utilised in the form of social, environmental and economic factors if historic sites can be weaved into the fabric of city development. A city's heritage represents significant physical and socioeconomic capital accumulated by communities as a result of the knowledge, investments and labour of past generations. This "cultural capital" not only confers a distinctive identity to cities but if managed properly, also represents an important component of their wealth through a variety of uses essential to social, economic and environmental sustainability and advancement.

Image 3: Sonali Mahamna. River view from Nayapul. Retrieved from the author.

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