



HUMARA BACHPAN

**State Level Civil Society Consultation: Government of India's Urban
Development Policies and Programs**

Date: 23 August, 2015

Venue: HumaraBachpan Office, Bhubaneswar

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Background:

Urban Poverty and increasing slums is one of the most serious matters of concern in Urban Development at present. Rapid urbanization and large scale migrations from rural areas have led to an increased growth of slum settlements in all cities in India. The slum dwellers have been residing in adverse inhuman conditions with lack of proper housing facilities and basic amenities, denying them a life of dignity, security and a healthy environment. The worst sufferers have always been children. According to Census 2011, there are 13.7 million slum household in India with children in the age group 0-6 forming 12.3% of the slum population of India.

The Government of India (GOI) has recognized the importance of urban areas and has designed various policies and schemes to address the issues of poverty, livelihood and housing. But, these policies have never included the specific needs of children which have a direct impact on their growth and development. So far, while designing policies, issues related to meeting of basic services have been addressed but these initiatives lack quality of life and a child's perspective. City development plans make no mention of a city being developed from a child's perspective.

Most recently the GOI launched its new policies on urban development, the Smart Cities Mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and the Housing for All (Urban). It has been declared that two cities from Odisha will be included in the Smart Cities Initiative with cities like Bhubaneswar and Rourkela competing for the same. Apart from that AMRUT and Housing for All (Urban) will also be implemented in the state. In order to brainstorm the opportunities and gaps in the guidelines of the new urban development policies and programmes, HumaraBachpan Campaign (HBC) organized a one day State Level Civil Society in the city of Bhubaneswar on 23 August, 2015 in Bhubaneswar. This consultation aimed to facilitate united voices of civil societies so that young children growing up in urban poverty have access to safer and healthier environment.

A total of 38 participants from 14 different organizations in the state working on the issues concerning children along with 20 child leaders from different slums across Odisha participated in the consultation. HBC staff from the national and regional office coordinated and facilitated the consultation.

Objectives:

The major objectives of the consultation was:

1. To identify gaps in the guidelines of the urban policies and schemes from children's perspective

2. To conduct meaningful discussions on how cities can adopt child friendly components
3. To develop recommendations to advocate for child friendly urban policies in the state

Brief Proceedings of the consultation

The day began with Ms. Sradhanjali Sahoo, Regional Coordinator (East) – HBC welcoming all the participants and sharing the purpose of the consultation to the participants followed by a brief round of introduction of the participants.

Session 1: Presentations

Ms. Preeti Prada, National Campaign Coordinator – HBC gave a presentation on Humara Bachpan Campaign and its objectives. She discussed various aspects and strategies of the campaign, emphasizing on the dire need of a child friendly city.

She further added that the recommendations from the consultation will be submitted to Honorable Union Minister of Urban Development, Government of India Shri Venkaiah Naidu to be adopted in the urban renewal policies.

Followed by her presentation, **Ms. Anwikshika Das, Research Officer - HBC** then presented on the three new

urban development policies: Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT and PMAY. She shared that the purpose of these policies was to redevelop and recreate cities and towns by providing basic services and building amenities in the cities to improve the quality of life of the citizens. She stated that though there is a mention of citizen consultation in the guidelines yet there has been very little mention of children participating. She further added that children have been mentioned twice or thrice and in not more than just one component whereas one of the essentials of a child friendly city is children participation which is not reflected in the policies.

She urged the participants to identify the gaps in the policy guidelines and suggest measures on how the policies would take into account the needs of children and look up for other components, other than the ones mentioned, where children could be mentioned.

Session 2: Group Activity on developing recommendations

After having a fair view of the policies and the expectations from the consultation, the participants were divided into groups of three which included the NGO representatives, child leaders and HBC personnel who discussed for the next couple of hours, the various policy gaps with regard to inclusion of child friendly components. Each group was assigned one policy to deliberate and discuss on and come up with recommendations to improve it.

Session 3: Presentation on the recommendations:

After the group activity, each group shared the gaps identified and based on those shared their recommendations.



Following are the various recommendations that came up from the discussions:

RECOMMENDATIONS

AMRUT

It was recommended that there should be clean and regular supply of water to all the houses in the neighborhood. The water pipe should be built at a considerable distance from the sewage pipes to ensure that any breakage doesn't cause an alteration in the quality of water. Contaminated or waste water should be treated to be made reusable and promote water conservation.

Roads and transport planning to be made more pedestrian centric rather than making it automobile centric. The roads should have a separate lane for emergency purposes such as ambulance and fire trucks and separate lane for bikers and

Smart Cities Mission

The group recommended that water supply should be continuous and water taps to be built at lower heights for it to remain accessible to children. The apartment model houses should not exceed more than five floors. Water taps should be provided in both, kitchen and bathroom, also an overhead tank to be constructed that caters to the need of four houses at least. The city metro and bus

PMAY

It was stated that the houses to be constructed under PMAY, should be child friendly in terms of having proper ventilation and sufficient space in between houses. The apartment model houses should not exceed more than five floors.

pedestrians. Roads, to also have a facilities should be made more
footpath with safety railings. accessible so as to reduce the
dependency on automobiles. All the
Zebra crossings and speed breakers major squares and educational
should be constructed in front of institutions to have a zebra crossing
schools to ensure safety of children and speed breakers to ensure the
while crossing roads. safety of children while crossing

There should be adequate traffic posts roads.

to regulate traffic. The public transport
system to be made child friendly in
terms of building low rise steps and
slides for physically disabled children.

Solar Street lights also to be installed at
regular intervals to ensure sufficient
lighting.

Public spaces should have child friendly They also said that the electrification To prevent electric shocks the
components and ensure safety of should be made underground to wiring should be made
children. It was recommended that prevent electric shocks. They spoke of underground, also the flooring
boundaries around the park should be houses being made more resilient should be such that, the children
made of cement and not barbed wires towards natural calamities and having don't slip and fall.

to prevent injury. The toilets should be provision for ventilation.

made child friendly with smaller pans
and water taps should be at a lower
base for easy accessibility. Sufficient
dustbins should also be provided to
avoid littering.

With regard to sanitation facilities,
they said that the toilets should be
child friendly in terms of having
smaller toilet pans, with proper
electricity and water supply. The
drains in the slums should be
connected to the main sewage canal
so as to ensure proper flow of drain
water.

Speaking of health and education, the group stated that the anganwadicentres should be spacious and regular supply of water and electricity should be ensured.

Lastly, to ensure security and vigilance, there should be police outposts at accessible distance from the slums in case of emergency.

Concluding Remarks:

The consultation ended with Mr. Bibhu Prasad Sahoo, Secretary of Youth for Social Development, thanking all the participants for being a part of the consultation and providing their valuable recommendations. “It was a great pleasure to watch such young children so empowered and vocal about their rights”, he said. He urged everyone to take inspiration from these child leaders and hold their hands to support them in their endeavor.

He thanked HBC for its efforts and made an appeal to everyone that, each one be attached to the cause, so that everyone can contribute towards making the children realize their dreams.

Future Plan:

The report of the consultation will be shared with the participants and also with other organizations that did not participate in the consultation, for them to give them their recommendations. A follow up consultation will be conducted in the future to get more recommendations on the policy guidelines. All the recommendations from the civil societies will be compiled and presented before government officials.