

# Unlocking urbanization — leveraging coalitions for transformative change in Indian cities

Jaya Dhindaw<sup>1\*</sup>, Kanchana Ganesan<sup>2</sup> and Madhav Pai<sup>1</sup>

1. World Resources Institute (WRI) India, #156, 3rd Cross, 1st Block Jayanagar, Bengaluru, India  
 2. Green Umbrella Design Collective

**Abstract:** India is going through the early phase of urbanization with 33% of its citizens currently living in urban areas, with the number expected to go up to 40% by 2030. The sudden growth in Indian cities has led to challenges in infrastructure provisioning and service delivery which have not kept pace. Evidence in the form of case examples from across cities point to the possibility that there is room for leveraging disruptive innovation in filling the space in efficient service delivery via institutions outside the formal public setup. In the context of the gaps in governance, this paper seeks to examine the role of institutions and the potential of coalitions as ‘agents of change’ that can empower and equip the government and citizenry with technical capacity and methodologies for action, enabling sustainable development and eventually, triggering broader cross-sectoral, city-wide transformation.

**Keywords:** leverage investments, coalitions, agents of change, service delivery, governance, urbanization

\*Correspondence to: Jaya Dhindaw, WRI India, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, No. 93/2, G Towers, South End Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru 560004, India; E-mail: [jdhindaw@yahoo.com](mailto:jdhindaw@yahoo.com)

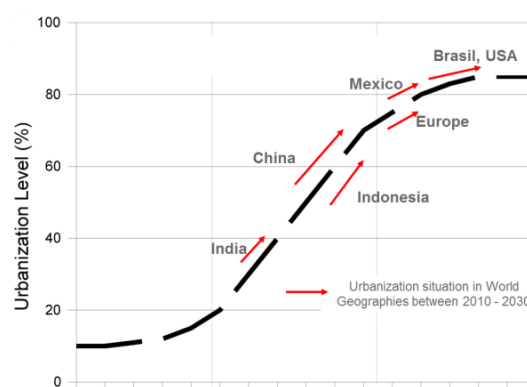
**Received:** January 20, 2017; **Accepted:** February 8, 2017; **Published Online:** February 27, 2017

**Citation:** Dhindaw J, Ganesan K and Pai M, 2017, Unlocking urbanisation — leveraging coalitions for transformative change in Indian cities. *Journal of Sustainable Urbanization, Planning and Progress*, vol.2(1): 5–19. <http://doi.org/10.18063/JSUPP.2017.01.006>.

## 1. India’s Urbanization

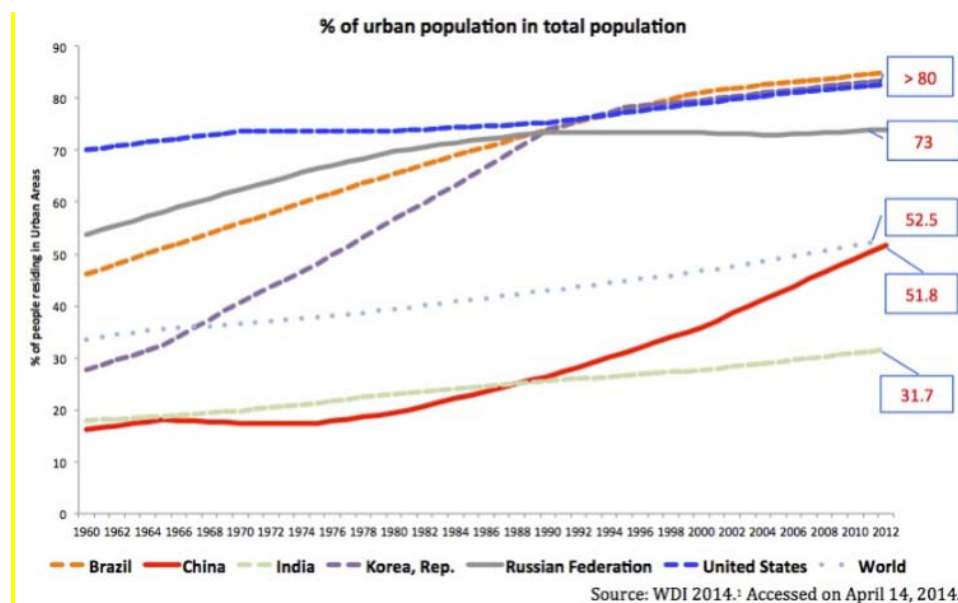
India, though rapidly urbanizing, is in the early phases of urbanization with 40% of its citizens expected to live in cities by 2030. Five states — Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Punjab — are likely to have more urban than rural populations. Of these, Mumbai and Delhi will be among the five largest cities in the world by 2030<sup>[1]</sup>. This means that an additional 220 million people will call urban India home over the next decade and a half. While Indian cities’ global presence has led to increased incomes, negative externalities such as overstressed infrastructure, unequal access to water, unreliable power supply, air pollution and traffic congestion in the city, have also arisen.

As per World Bank, India will lead the world’s urban population surge by 2050 along with China, Indonesia, Nigeria and the United States. A study at IHS estimates that India will add at least 300 million



**Figure 1.** 2010 and 2030 Urban Population Projections in World Geographies plotted on an urbanization S curve

in the next three decades (2011–2031) and have 78 cities with a population of over a million — the second largest urbanization in human history, after China’s<sup>[2]</sup>. While urban transformation is not being viewed with urgency in India, China is internally developing every element of the urbanization operating



**Figure 2.** Percentage of urban to total population in countries Source: World Development Indicators 2014, World Bank

model, right from funding, governance, planning, sectoral policies, to the pattern of urbanization, both across the nation as a whole and within cities themselves. When compared to China, India spends only 1/10<sup>th</sup> of per capita on capital investments on its urban infrastructure annually — i.e., India's \$17 vs China's \$116. Moreover, China has a mature planning regime with powerful political appointees as mayors, as opposed to India's devolved power and accountability to its cities.

Of the 220 million expected to be living in India's urban areas in 2030, 100 million will be born in or go to the top 10 cities in India. The remaining will be born in or go to the next 90 cities of India's top 100 cities. Most of the immigration in top 10 cities will be into slums or on the urban periphery. This makes regional thinking, data-based planning and sustainable paths for cities essential. It requires initiating a process towards efficient use of resources, smarter mobility, infrastructure, economy, environment, livability, people-centered development and governance.

The prospective growth over the next 20 years presents a unique opportunity to influence policy and decision makers to intelligently leverage investments being made in the city, however, there are several challenges that a growing economy presents.

## 2. Pressures of Growing Economy Challenges

Economic reforms and growing employment opportunities in cities will accelerate the pace of urbanization. Since the spatial expansion of Indian cities is not

fully stabilized, an urban demographic shift of this stature would require 200% to 400% more urban area to accommodate this growth<sup>[3]</sup>. According to a World Bank report, the reason most Indian cities are not able to fully realize their potential for prosperity and a good quality of life for their citizens, is due to 'messy' and 'hidden' urbanization. Messy is reflected in the poor quality of life, the lack of access to basic services and amenities for all citizens and the widening demand-supply gap for various urban services. Urbanization is also hidden, as much of the growth happens outside a city's municipal boundaries versus inside, thereby understating the share of the city's population living in areas with urban characteristics. Unfortunately, this growth is largely unplanned, creating a high risk of unsustainable sprawl. The negative externalities of sprawl on social, economic and environmental aspects are well documented and are already being experienced by major cities in India. Messy and hidden urbanization are symptoms of the failure to effectively plan for and address the pressures that growing economies place on infrastructure, services and the environment on a regional scale. Some of the challenges India's growing economy presents are below:

*Skewed Political Representation:* In India's federal governance structure, cities are underrepresented. The rate of urbanization of national politics lags behind the rate of actual urbanization. Today India has 30% urban population and 10% urban representation in parliament. Though cities are the primary drivers of eco-

conomic growth, the state leaders lack incentives to fix cities due to political underrepresentation of the urban population. In general, the comprehension of how urbanization will pan out is also very low<sup>[4]</sup>.

*Infrastructure Investment Required:* Over the next few years, the requirements for Indian infrastructure investments are estimated at one trillion USD. The top 100 cities in India account for 16% of the population, and occupy .026% of the land, which is projected to increase by at least five times. An increase of almost 35 times in overall investment in urban areas from 2012–2031, as compared to investments made under the JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission) from 2006–2011, has been proposed by the High Powered Expert Committee (HPEC) for estimating investment requirements for urban infrastructure services.

*Disconnected Planning Process:* Cities and regions in India do not integrate land use and sectoral (transport, water, power, etc.) planning and implementation to create or guide structures for sustainable growth. Many decisions are influenced by principles of ‘modern planning’ from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century designed around automobiles, with precedence for sprawl, moving away from traditional walkable districts. In addition, the plans have been developed in a technocratic top-down approach, rather than a participatory and inclusive process with no focus on improving implementation. As a result, they become irrelevant for several groups of the populations, especially the vulnerable.

*Inequity in Development:* Equity is a big issue in India. For example, in Bangalore 20% of the population consumes 80% of the electricity. In Mumbai, 3% percent of the population uses automobiles to go to work but 75% of the investment in the last decade has been on improving car mobility<sup>[5]</sup>. A deeper understanding of the possible impacts of new policies, regulations and projects on different sectors and especially the urban poor/disadvantaged is required.

*Need for Capacity:* At this — early but accelerated — stage of urbanization the rate of transformation of all systems is very rapid and institutional and systematic solutions that require stability are difficult to implement. As this is the first or second decade of urbanization, technical capacity to ensure high quality implementation is extremely limited. In general, technical and human resource capacity is low across all stakeholder groups – government, private sector and civil society. Extensive outreach aimed at strengthen-

ing capacities, sharing best practices and providing platforms for learning for all stakeholders is required.

The above challenges and lack of evidence-based planning along with technical and political difficulties in delivering on mandates, have influenced infrastructure decisions that have lock-in effects of 40-100 years. Institutional responses to manage rapid urbanization have also been weak. With budget constraints, unclear targets and fragmented governance systems, the city’s ability to realize transformative change is limited. A paradigm shift is necessary to seamlessly translate ambitious schemes and reforms to on-ground change.

## 2.1 What can be Changed?

Given the socio-political challenges coupled with the pressures of a growing economy and recognizing that structural changes in governance will not be immediate, incremental systemic interventions can be leveraged to bring about transformational change in cities.

Literature and case studies from cities around the world reveal that under these conditions promising solutions arise by the intervention of ‘change agents’ who have the potential to empower and equip the government and citizenry with technical capacity and methodologies for action by building coalitions. Several successful cities such as New York and Portland have used this to drive transformational change.

In order to understand whether change agents forming coalitions can enable such transformative urban changes in Indian cities, this study will examine the potential of these approaches across a few city- level case studies, based on the following questions:

- Can coalitions bridge the governance gap in Indian cities to become catalysts that lead to or support transformative urban change?
- What, if any, is the framework for successful coalitions? How can a variety of stakeholders lead new coalitions that respond to local market dynamics and facilitate sustainable decision-making/avoid unsustainable lock-ins.

There is a pressing need to understand the forces and processes that shape the transformation in cities in order to scale-up and replicate their ‘people-centered’ actions. Thus, this paper will examine the role of institutions and the potential of coalitions as an approach to trigger broader cross-sectoral, city-wide transformation.

## 2.2 Role of Civil Society Institutions and Coalitions

A coalition is a group of people, groups, or countries who have joined together for a common purpose (Webster's Dictionary). It maybe a purpose-oriented and/or a means-oriented arrangement, that allows distinct people or organizational entities to pool resources and combine efforts in order to affect desired changes. The coalitions could be temporary or long term depending on the cause.

As groups of individuals and institutions who come together around a specific theme, subject, philosophy or profession, coalitions bring with them the collective knowledge and wisdom of their members and global networks. They can create a space for members to experiment freely with innovative approaches and are flexible enough to adapt to local situations and respond to local needs. They have the potential to establish a good rapport among stakeholders and are able to communicate at all levels, from the citizens to the top levels of government. They are able to facilitate active participation and recruit both experts and highly motivated staff and volunteers.

## 3. Scope and Limitations

This paper outlines the state of practice, current approaches and experiences of various Indian cities with coalitions as agents of change.

The case studies presented in this paper are derived based on the following criteria-

1. In order to demonstrate conclusive evidence of performance and outcomes, the coalitions should have formed prior to 2012 to allow for their gestation and maturity to be able to more accurately measure demonstrated outcomes and cull out substantive learnings. However, given their dynamic nature, they may or may not be viable presently.
2. Since coalitions affecting transformative change in Indian cities have emerged at various scales and levels with a vast spread in terms of sectors, the study does not look at these cases through a specific sectoral lens but considers its framework with which to evaluate the relevance of coalitions and extend that to suggest strategies that can be adopted for instituting effective coalitions.
3. Given that coalitions as potential solutions, for governance gaps in the context of rapidly urbanizing cities, is being explored for the first time, the study limits itself to cases where there

was a documented outcome, either in the form of programmatic success, failure or institutional relevance. Although all the cases are in public domain, not all have been documented via academic discourses. Therefore, the study relies on media and other relevant and credible mediums as well and the data is limited to that available in the public domain.

## 4. Methodology

The method for the study was qualitative case study based, where literature review was conducted and relevant case studies were identified. This was followed by formulating a broad framework for evaluating the case studies to showcase and highlight common principles and strategies. Key and pertinent learnings and recommendations were then derived based on the framework.

## 5. Case Studies

The case studies presented here explicitly examine the role of coalitions of public, private and civil society actors and how it leads to a sector or citywide transformation. The paper analyzes the enabling framework for successful coalitions through the case studies.

### 5.1 Accessing Government Programs: Tata Institute of Social Sciences(TISS) + M Ward Convener Forum, Mumbai

At a macro level a city struggles with the challenges of a growing economy, and the pressures on various sectors and civic bodies, at the micro level, resettlement colonies and slum rehabilitation areas often suffer neglect, and over time end up becoming one of the poorest parts of the city, with deteriorating living conditions. The M-Ward in Mumbai is one of the consequences of the exponential population growth of the city. It is a resettlement and rehabilitation colony of people affected by the city's infrastructural projects. Over time, it has become one of the poorest parts of the city. Despite having a population of over 8,07,720, the residents struggled with sub-par services and were denied access to basic amenities. Unhygienic conditions and open defecation due to dirty and dilapidated toilets, were synonymous with this area and were the leading cause of diseases. It also had one of the highest infant mortality rates of around 66.47 per thousand live births (Mumbai's average is 40 per 1000 births), 1490 out-of-school children, 6-14 years of age (an

equal number of boys and girls), and malnourishment was evident in more than 50 percent children (HDR, 2009)<sup>[6]</sup>. The ward lacked even a basic database of details of residents and as a result there was also no system in place to ask for available obligatory services. In November 2011, the neighboring Tata Institute of Social Sciences intervened in the area, starting with baseline studies and socioeconomic surveys of households to first create a database. Over time, through collaboration with the residents, they were able to add the needs and aspirations of slum communities to the database, and eventually conduct a micro-planning exercise of 78 communities. In the health sector they facilitated routine checks of maternal health and nutritional quality of child health for children under five years of age, to tackle the high infant mortality rate in that area. Over time, they successfully established an M-Ward Convener forum to enable the community to have a voice for themselves. Since then, this forum, along with the project staff have been actively involved in advocacy initiatives, including dialogues with the government (Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai), and evaluating government programs that are implemented in the ward.

This led to the implementation of several government initiatives in the previously neglected community. The community benefited from several initiatives such as a large school mid-day meal scheme, mobile health clinic, and, constant community based monitoring of schools to reduce dropouts. These initiatives had a huge impact on the community and brought about a transformational change contributing towards better living conditions and community empowerment<sup>[7]</sup>.

## 5.2 Health Systems and Governance: City of Surat, Gujarat

Cities under crisis call for expedited decision making and immediate action at multiple levels. In such situations, a top-down approach in decision making only slows down the mitigation process and exacerbates the crisis as opposed to a decentralized system. A successful example of a city which overcame a crisis through decentralization strategies, would be Surat when it was hit by plague. Surat, often referred to as a 'transit camp' for migrant workers, had been struggling to cope with a population explosion. Though the city's economic activity increased manifold through the growth of its industries and its diamond trade, the living conditions of people continued to deteriorate. The development of basic amenities did not keep pace

with the growth in the city's population and as a result the plague which struck Surat in September 1994 played havoc with the city and its occupants. A few hundred thousand residents (over 60% of the population) fled the city overnight to escape a possible quarantine and huge losses were faced by the businessmen (estimated loss of Rs.12 billion)<sup>[8]</sup>. An epidemic of pneumonic plague was reported, and government officials declared an international public health emergency. The citizens and the government civic bodies blamed each other for their lack of civic sense. The Surat Municipal Corporation did not have an elected civic body for the city at that time. The city underwent a complete transformation from a dirty, garbage-strewn city, to one of the cleanest cities in the country, largely due to the formation of a coalition between the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) and the efforts of the community. The crisis which impacted them, connected with the masses, hence they had a vested interest to problem-solve. Decentralized decision making, accountability and transparency in governance systems led to empowerment of various rungs of administrators in the urban local body who could make immediate decisions at the ground level without being stuck in red tape. The municipality was categorized into six zones and subdivided further into 52 sanitary districts for more efficient waste collection and better administration, decentralization of garbage collection and outsourcing the same, construction and maintenance of roads and maintenance and repair of sewage and water plants. Citizens were incentivized by the municipality through an initiative called Anudan for following best practices<sup>[9]</sup>. Prior to the onset of plague, Surat was tantamount to open drains, up to 40% of the population lived in slums, groundwater sources were highly polluted, waste was dumped in the open, sewage overflowed in the city and public toilets were very few. Improvements to public health, climate resilience, efficient provision of services like water supply and waste management, and poverty alleviation through clean development was brought about through administrative restructuring and policy reforms to shake off the image of being highly unhygienic<sup>[10]</sup>. In a macro-environment, the government proposed a Disaster Management Policy to avoid situations like the chaos in September 1994. It has one of the most commendable grievance redressal systems in the country.

## 5.3 Participatory Planning: Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), Kerala

Participatory planning entails self-governance and

empowering citizens. However, in certain socio-political scenarios, the idea of participatory planning or self-governance is often perceived as a threat, owing to misrepresentation and misinformation. This thereby denies the citizens an open dialogue on how to trigger change in the milieu of vested interests. Such situations are salvaged with the presence of a third-party intervention, that initiates a dialogue and finds ways to mobilize public support for the participatory planning process, as demonstrated in Kerala where participatory planning included village administrations or as they are locally known, the *gram panchayats*. The Left-led government found the very idea to be against their principles and they opposed it. After all, they came from the school of thought that people have to struggle for their rights. However, there were also popular Leftists who supported the idea because it resembled the Gandhian idea of Gram Swaraj. The Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), a science and technology based organization, stepped in to support the (CPIM)-dominated Panchayats to enable a nuanced understanding of participatory planning. KSSP created awareness that the aim of participatory planning was to find an effective development path and not to divest power<sup>[11]</sup>. The KSSP managed to gain patronage from the government to lay the groundwork for the entire campaign of the policy, including conducting resource mapping exercises well before the onset of the actual policy. KSSP stimulated the idea that power does not rest with the Panchayat since it was bound by State-made policies. It advocated a diffused authority at the local level. Founded in 1962, KSSP has grown into a movement dedicated to dispersing information on science and technology with the motto of “Science for Social Revolution”.

#### **5.4 Women’s Empowerment: Self-Employment Women’s Association (SEWA), Gujarat**

Women empowerment has been in the forefront of any socio-political scenario and development economics discourse. However, there is a certain complexity to addressing women empowerment, given that, unlike as for other marginalized groups, empowerment would occur at different levels and has different layers to it. Addressing the issues at a grassroots level would be more effective than a top-down trickle down. One such successful model in India is that of Self-Employment Women’s Association (SEWA). SEWA primarily focused on empowering marginalized working women in the informal sector to secure employment and become self-reliant. Started in 1972, as a group of

poor, illiterate women working as casual laborers in the wholesale textile markets, SEWA’s membership has grown to 535,000 in its home state of Gujarat, and to around 700,000 throughout India<sup>[11]</sup>. Apart from the formal election and governance arrangements, its members were engaged in other ways as well.

1) Union – The Union enabled members in their collective struggle for access to justice, to markets, services and fair treatment. With an urban as well as rural representation, the union handled varied issues. The urban branch focused on upgrading skills in changing markets and seeking better wages and benefits whereas, the rural branch worked towards creating alternative employment through handicrafts and high value crops, thus reversing a trend of declining agricultural wages and seasonal migration of female agricultural workers.

2) Cooperatives – The Cooperatives helped members produce and market products, and build assets. They helped women improve the quality of handicrafts, woven items, and anything else that they produced. They were taught the importance of consistency, timely delivery, and salability and were helped to improve their marketing strategies. Cooperatives, besides being a rural marketing organization and a Trade Facilitation Center, also promoted new agricultural products, and techniques that added value to traditional products.

3) Member services – Women could also avail member services that were partly financed by users, in part by donors, and by government departments. Thus the women could avail services in the key areas of health care, child care, insurance, and housing. Over time SEWA was able to influence policies dealing with maternity benefits, insurance schemes, getting banks to provide subsidized credit etc. SEWA was instrumental in getting recognition for these women within the national five-year plans. SEWA affiliated organizations such as the SEWA Bank, addressed the need for savings for underprivileged women and supported employment by providing them with a working capital. The SEWA Bank also provided housing loans for the purchase of a new house and also for repairs. The schemes insisted on women’s ownership of the house, which enabled them to be independent, with an asset in their name. A sister organization, Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT), led the shelter division and advised those who levy loans on buying new houses and improvements and extensions to existing ones. Parivartan or the Slum Networking Project

(SNP), a program of SEWA in Ahmedabad, worked on improving the socio-economic conditions and quality of life of residents of slums making it a community based intervention where the needs and aspirations of the residents greatly influenced the planning.

### 5.5 Environment Support: Parisar, Pune

Rapid urbanization often leads to short-term decisions to mitigate the immediate, rather than decisions that are based on working towards a projected growth, and therefore long term solutions. Urban planning is not looked at holistically and is localized, without taking into account the larger context and implications. Under these circumstances, educating the citizens about the implications of these decisions is very essential. Such an urban milieu creates a space for a coalition body, that acts as an interface between the government and the citizens, that educates them about the implications of governmental policies and enables them to take informed decisions and actions. This can be seen in the work of Parisar, a civil society agency formed in response to deteriorating environments in Pune. Parisar worked on lobbying and advocacy for sustainable urban transport and development. Pune like any other Indian city grew haphazardly, affecting human development and quality of life<sup>[13]</sup> Since its inception in the 1980s Parisar has attempted to find solutions to urban issues. It was in the forefront for challenging the modifications to the Pune Development Plan sanctioned in 1987 and also opposed construction in certain areas that were reserved for a public use in the development plan. The sanctioned plan would have converted the reserved area to a residential zone. Through these advocacy movements, they were successful in making people aware about damage to the environment. Parisar was also actively involved in reducing the number of road accident related deaths in Pune<sup>[14]</sup>. It supported non-motorized transport use and creating efficient public transport options, which it believed could greatly reduce congestion and pollution. Parisar along with other NGOs like Bombay Environmental Action Group (BEAG) and Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) was also involved in urban heritage conservation and campaigns against the building of flyovers and other private vehicle oriented structures which could harm both built and natural heritage structures. The Urban Heritage Conservation Committee was set up for this purpose. Through its initiatives, Parisar has been successful in pulling people together and creat-

ing an institute that enables a new kind of a governance structure. One of the reasons for the successful interventions by Parisar has been that its appeal was very simple — it made the case for a certain quality of life, in the urban scenario, which connected with the masses. Everyone wants better quality of life and can relate to the agenda. It also utilized media strategically to mobilize people to spread that message and keep the momentum up through sustained media engagement.

### 5.6 Urban Development: Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), New Delhi

Urbanization and its related pace of growth often leaves the marginalized neglected. In order to ensure sustainable urban development, local agencies with capacities for sustainable development need to be strengthened and integrated in the processes of city development. An organization which works in this realm is Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE). CURE is a Development NGO, based out of Delhi which works with urban informal and low-income communities and local governments, with the intent to improve access to basic services, through community participation and eventually contribute to local government planning and design, thereby ensuring inclusive development.

CURE assisted the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) in the *in situ* development of four slums in Kalyanpuri, Delhi. Different types of housing that were sustainable and self-sufficient in design, and methods to procure them, were worked on through community participation. A public health program related to maternal, newborn and childhood health was also initiated in the slums of Delhi. CURE, in order to improve hygiene among poor children, helped schools in East Delhi improve Community Toilet Complexes (CTCs) and school toilets within slums<sup>[15]</sup>. In EDMC (East Delhi Municipal Corporation), a geo-spatial plan using GIS mapping of solid waste and sanitation resources in every ward was designed to support the Corporation in implementing its mandate under the Swachh Bharat Mission. CURE also worked towards restoring one slope of the Aravali Bio-Diversity Park under the Delhi Development Authority which had been ruined by waste accumulation over the years.

One of the primary focus areas of CURE was the water-rich city of Agra which deteriorated to a great extent due to rapid urbanization and degradation of its

water source. Through the Mukhaymantri Jal Bachao Abhiyaan, CURE worked at helping Agra go back to being the water resilient city it once was, by revitalizing the traditional hydrological structures, recharging of groundwater sources, and setting up facilities for treatment and reuse of wastewater and rainwater harvesting at several community sites<sup>[16]</sup>. A community-operated, Decentralized Waste Water Treatment System (DEWATS) was built by CURE using an existing storm-water drain in a low-income settlement in Agra<sup>[17]</sup>. It was involved in making the city slum-free under the Rajiv Avas Yojana (RAY) through a geospatial mapping process and socio-economic survey of all 410 slums in the city. GIS mapping of slums and their topography was done to help reach urban public services to these areas. It put forward proposals to reform land title procurement and strengthen community engagement. It also set up heritage walks in order to create sustainable livelihoods for the urban poor of Agra. A similar plan — Slum Free City Plan of Action (SFCPoA) — was initiated for the cities of Ludhiana, Gangtok and Bhubaneswar as well.

### 5.7 Planning and Service Delivery: Bangalore Groups, Bangalore

Bangalore is one of the few metro cities to have taken account of something most cities in India have missed out on, which is regional planning through the Bangalore Region Governance Act where instead of concentrating on the city core, the larger urban agglomerations are taken into consideration for formulation of growth and expansion plans. It has played around with various planning modalities (often ending in failure) by which authorities have largely taken into consideration the need to keep sections of the society contented. Private enterprise has been the latest entrant in the city-development process, however, there has always been a general lack of enthusiasm about corporate entities having a broad and all-empowering agenda for all sections of the society.

The initial group of change-makers called the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) was set up in 1999 by the then Chief Minister, SM Krishna. While it had prepared road maps to resolve issues faced by Bangalore city at that time, it died a slow death due to several proposed projects being shelved. There was also the controversy that BATF tried to trump the Municipality into submitting to all its plans<sup>[18]</sup>. This led to Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa setting up his own task forces called the Agenda for Bengaluru's Infrastruc-

ture and Development Task Force (ABIDe)<sup>[19]</sup>. The task force was publicized as being established in order to solve bottlenecks between various government agencies that need to function together for the delivery of a single service. ABIDe also set out to develop action plans in sectors like traffic management, urban poor etc. With the failure of ABIDe to see any of the proposed plans through to implementation, with the next election, other new coalition bodies were formed by the government. What was noticeable was that though it consisted of persons from business and industry, several representatives of the city were absent. The aim of this vision group was to find solutions to resolve the city's infrastructure and civic bottlenecks. The formation of the group was in the light of earlier plans not taking off as per plan, however, the group had only recommendatory power and little power to act. Partisan politics, political pressure and a failure to learn from earlier groups' experiences led to this group's becoming redundant.

## 6. Comparative Analysis Across Case Studies

Evaluation parameters to assess the case studies are categorized into eight broad themes on the basis of the knowledge derived from understanding the operations and framework of coalitions under each condition. The eight parameters that are used for evaluating are as follows:

- Enabling framework
- Access to resources
- Governance/institutional structure
- Institutional capacity
- Operational approach
- Agents for primary change & participation mechanism
- Sustainability/Efficiency
- Scalability

### *Enabling framework –*

Presently, service delivery in Indian cities is mostly through archaic and bureaucratic systems which lack clear structures. While in some cases coalitions came into being as a response to a crisis which the masses connected with and which impacted them, so there was an inherent need for the participants to resolve problems. In others it was a reaction to systemic gaps in service delivery which impacted the quality of life or responsiveness by the administration.

### *Access to resources –*

Ability to access resources plays a crucial role in



the manner in which coalitions are able to plan, establish and sustain the change they catalyze over time. This maybe in the form of access to human or capital resources which aid service delivery and affect sectoral/cross-sectoral changes in the city.

*Governance/Institutional structure –*

The way in which coalitions organize themselves and impact changes in the institutional/governance structures of the city to help deliver on mandates more efficiently and effectively, is very important. In most cases this is about decentralization and devolving powers — both administrative and financial — to the local level with increased accountability.

*Institutional capacity –*

This parameter refers to the composition of the coalition in terms of public and private actors and citizens along with their sectoral expertise. It also specifically evaluates the technical capacity of the institution such as the ability to convene technical advisory groups or leverage experts to push for and bring about the required reforms. This is a crucial component to the longevity of coalitions.

*Operational approach –*

There are several factors that differentiate the workings or approaches that coalitions adopt to affect change. Under this parameter the methods of functioning and empowerment were studied. This helped assess how systematic the approaches were and whether or not they facilitated active citizenry as part

of their strategy.

*Agents for primary change and participation mechanism –*

Coalitions typically have primary change agents who form the core group, which through strategic questioning involves citizens, leverages experts and people with influence and networks, in addition to using coalition developed tools (technology, etc.) to help execute reforms. These groups come together mostly with a common agenda and use different participation mechanisms and terms of engagement (convening, volunteering) to do so.

*Sustainability/Efficiency –*

One of the key indicators of the success of coalitions measures efficiency in terms of timeliness of actions initiated or completed. It also looks at the longevity of the coalition’s existence beyond the crisis and at mobilizing citizens to focus on a deeper awareness leading to systemic changes in the society and governance structures.

*Scalability –*

Scalability of coalitions is largely determined in two ways — linear growth and nodal growth. In the linear growth model the coalition expands *in situ*, gaining credibility and prominence. In the nodal growth model, their efforts offshoot into other cross-sectoral programs being instituted or lead to formation of innovative partnerships or institutions as a response to the gaps in governance and service delivery.

*Comparative Case Study Analysis*

<i>Enabling Framework</i>	<i>Access to resources</i>	<i>Governance /Institutional Structure</i>	<i>Institutional Capacity</i>	<i>Operational Framework /Approach</i>	<i>Primary Change Agents</i>	<i>Sustainability /Efficiency</i>	<i>Scalability</i>
<b>M Ward</b> M-ward had extremely poor sanitary conditions which caused several health issues. Neighboring TISS conducted socio-economic studies that enabled measures that improved the quality of life of the residents.	Project staff in dialogue with the government assisted the neighborhood access government sponsored schemes	TISS empowered the neighborhood citizens to help them systematize available and obligatory services and hold the local bodies accountable	Technical experts with sectoral socio-economic expertise at TISS (public institute) leveraged data for citizens' empowerment to bring about reforms	1. Data collection & surveys in the non-notified area enabled citizens to access basic services 2. This empowered the formation of citizen-led M ward convener forum 3. The forum has led to a constant dialogue with the government to access and evaluate programs implemented in the area	TISS along with the government was the primary change agent in this coalition and used surveys in the community engagement	A database of community needs and aspirations that was created served as the blueprint for establishing the Convener Forum and further advocacy initiatives and programs	The initiative resulted in a convener forum through which citizens could voice their needs and concerns and form a partnership with the government to aid service delivery.

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<b>Surat</b>	A public health crisis (plague of 1994) led citizens to question the capacity of the urban local bodies. This paved the way for reforms across multiple sectors resulting in effective governance systems being put in place.	Decentralization of municipal government enabled better access to resources, decision-making and accountability giving each local zone the ability to invest in programs they deemed important.	Decentralization of local government for effective implementation at the micro level was the hallmark of the intervention in Surat. This led to empowerment of various rungs of administrators in the urban local bodies.	Local government built sectoral technical capacity in addition to empowerment of administrators.	1. Local bodies were decentralized and empowered 2. Citizens were incentivized to follow best practices 3. A grievance redressal system was put into place 4. State government instituted a policy for disaster management	Government bodies and active citizens were the primary agents who brought about changes in the governance systems.	A decentralized approach involved city administrators in the ULB and improved governance processes. The public health crisis was addressed in a period of 1.5 years. As a result, a new wave of productive economic activity flourished in the city.	The decentralization approach scaled across sectors for effective governance. The waste collection department has one of the most effective grievance redressal systems in the country. The state of Gujarat instituted a disaster management policy thereafter.
<b>KS-SP</b>	Participatory planning as a rapid and effective development tool to mobilize people was encouraged at the local (gram sabha) area level by capacity building of citizens & government through knowledge dissemination by KSSP	KSSP- a science and technology based organization with patronage from the government laid the groundwork for promoting policy	KSSP campaigned for diffused authority at the gram sabha level and strengthening them so that power does not rest solely with the Panchayat	KSSP leveraged science for social revolution. Technical experts across domains advocated change by making information and knowledge accessible to all.	1. KSSP developed the groundwork for promoting gram sabhas for participatory planning through information, education and communication initiatives 2. They conducted resource mapping exercises to mobilize citizens & government to support participatory planning	KSSP, a civil society organization with backing from the government was the primary change agent promulgating the idea and policy for self-governance/participatory planning	The coalition has become a movement dedicated to disseminating information for better governance. Participatory planning in Kerala is now a legacy	The approach of diffused authority to strengthen gram sabhas has gained state-wide acceptance and has led to several programs for the benefit of citizens
<b>SE-WA</b>	With the goal of empowering women in the informal sector, SEWA worked with poor, self-employed women to achieve secure employment and self-reliance	SEWA was instrumental in accessing resources from the World Bank and local cooperatives to enable micro-finance lending to support employment and entrepreneurship	Put in place a highly structured institutional framework with unions, cooperatives and member services to enable members to access services, get representation and build assets	SEWA partnered with and co-opted a full range of technical experts to bring about reforms for women in various sectors including health, finance, housing	1. Organized, enabled and empowered women to rights, services through skill upgradation, alternative employment, market products and build assets 2. Supported employment by providing working capital 3. Assisted in accessing housing (improvement) loans improving socio-economic conditions and quality of life	SEWA was the primary change agent active within urban and rural areas in Gujarat enabling and empowering women by way of access to finance, services and self-governance	Several organizations and programs for women's benefit have evolved from SEWA, with it being instrumental in gaining recognition for women in the national 5-year plans	Started as a group of poor women working as casual labor in the textile industry, SEWA has scaled enormously programmatically & institutionally within and outside Gujarat in several sectors such as housing, banks, electricity supply, etc. by partnering with other public and private institutions

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<b>Pa-risar</b>	The deteriorating environment and quality of life of residents due to urbanization in Pune, led to a coalition of civil society actors coming together to advocate for sustainable development	Parisar with patronage from its (public, private) partners used knowledge, information and communication to advocate for environmental support in the city	Parisar used advocacy to campaign for a better environment and quality of life for citizens with the local government especially as it related to sustainable mobility and the environment	Comprised of technical experts who by way of knowledge-partnering and lobbying raised awareness in citizens and the government about environmental issues	1. The coalition organized itself and opposed the modifications in the Development plan to preserve public commons 2. They then focused on reducing road accident related deaths and promoting sustainable mobility 3. They partnered with civil society organizations to rally support for preservation of heritage sites	Parisar, comprising of citizens and influencers was the primary change agent in advocating sustainable development in Pune	The coalition is active through collaborations & has widened its network through key partnerships within and outside of Pune	The initiative on heritage conservation has scaled resulting in setting up of the Urban Heritage Conservation Committee which reviews/opposes building of private vehicle-oriented structures which harm heritage buildings
<b>CU-RE</b>	Recognizing the need to build resilient cities, CURE worked with low-income communities and local governments to improve access to basic services, inclusive and participatory governance and building of community based information system	Assisted in accessing resources and implementing government schemes and programs in the low income/vulnerable areas of the city	CURE enabled communities access services in-situ thereby upgrading living conditions and also helping the municipal corporation implement mandates through on-the-ground interventions	Technical experts with sectoral expertise at CURE partnered with government to leverage data to bring about reforms and build resilience in low-income communities	1. CURE was engaged in a consulting capacity by the government 2. They conducted scoping exercises in an area/community which involved gathering data 3. Post analysis, they assisted in execution/ implementation of recommendations	CURE along with the government was the primary change agent which affected resilience planning in communities	CURE's model of collaborating with the government and providing assistance to vulnerable communities in utilizing government schemes, especially in sanitation and slum-development/upgradation continues to benefit communities	The coalition has scaled to many cities in India while spawning and implementing several government-led missions and programs
<b>Ban-galore</b>	Bangalore was one of the few cities in India where Regional Planning was enabled through regional governance act. Recognizing that growth pressures were leading to poor infrastructure provision, service delivery and quality of life, the government instituted a task force to aid in preparing road maps to resolve issues faced by the city	The instituted committees consisted of influencers with power and access to resources within the government	The coalition was a closed group of individuals with stakes in the city. The committees constituted external technical advisory groups and consulted with citizens' advisory groups to put forth recommendations to the government	The committees acted as conveners and technical advisors to the government often by co-opting technical experts	1. Tasked with creating a better environment and quality of life for citizens, the committee was to help create sectoral roadmaps for the government 2. Established in order to resolve bottlenecks between agencies which need to coordinate in order to deliver a single service	Influencers with stakes in the city were the primary change agents	Both ABIDE and BATF were dictated by the political milieu of the time and hence were unable to implement several proposed projects. Both committees were short lived and did not evolve beyond mandate. They were also mired in controversy resulting from the perception that they were trying to trump the urban local bodies into submitting to their plans and functions, which was not constitutional	Both coalitions were unsuccessful and disintegrated because of partisan politics

## 7. Learnings — How can Coalitions Intervene and Help Unlock Unsustainable Growth Patterns?

The case studies presented explicitly examine the role of coalitions of public, private and civil society actors in affecting cross-sectoral and/or area-wide transformation, where their principal role was to improve decision making in urban sectors by applying coalition developed tools to carry out assessments and use the results to identify and push for reforms. Further, the coalitions in the case studies, examined, aided with problem perception and shaping public opinion as well as followed an iterative process of policy formulation and implementation while engaging with civil society to create ownership. Analyzing the role of coalitions as a mechanism to catalyze change impresses that such institutions can be most impactful in growing cities where cross-sectoral coordination is needed for effective governance and thereby city-wide transformation.

Key Learnings from the cases presented are as follows:

- A coalition can platform social dialogue about challenges plaguing a city. It can be instrumental in bringing different groups together and can provide a platform for public commitment to work towards common goals.
- Decentralization of power, both administrative and financial, as well as building institutional capacity is crucial to the efficient functioning of cities. In this context coalitions of citizen groups and civil society organizations can optimally act as accountability mechanisms.
- In the context of service provision in India, there exist multiple coalitions between government and non-government agencies or other private sector organizations and citizen groups, primarily in order to fill the gap in mechanisms to deliver services relevant to community requirements.
- In terms of the enabling framework, often a crisis or severe gaps in public service delivery that impacted the quality of life of citizens were the triggers for mobilizing coalitions.
- Access to resources, human and capital, was pivotal to the success of these coalitions. While the human resources in most cases came from civil society institutions and individuals, access to capital resources was mostly driven through patronage of the government. In some cases, such as Surat, the coalition leveraged the private sector and cooperatives for financial assistance. This also points to the fact that partnering with government is essential to the success and viability of coalitions.
- Coalitions were most effective when they played both the advocacy and technical advisory roles, fulfilling the demand and supply of good governance and strategically partnered with the government, which was the key to their success.
- The role of private sector was also key in several instances (such as Surat) where they partnered with CSOs and the government, playing a pivotal role in project formulation and implementation. Trust between these actors formed the basis for business generation and strengthening of the revenue base in cities.
- Involvement only at the local level without political buy-in from the district or state level bureaucracy can be detrimental to the efforts of the coalition and its sustenance as was the case with KSSP.
- Coalitions can help cities take concrete steps to reform their plans, planning processes, institutions and governance. This includes evidence-informed decisions on incorporation of legislations, local area planning and the use of GIS to plan, implement and monitor city development.
- In terms of functioning and operations, coalitions worked best when there was a mutual cognizance of the strengths of each actor involved and overlaps were minimized for efficiency. The group should have the ability to communicate at all levels, from community to the top levels of government, and should be able to facilitate active participation by recruiting both experts and highly motivated staff.
- All coalitions were driven and co-created by an agent of change which was either an institution, individual(s) or infrequently the government
- Once active and entrenched, the aim of most coalitions was to problem-solve and then focus on deeper awareness which leads to behavioral change in governance and/or citizens. They also relied on self-propagation of an idea through empowerment of communities which

was pivotal for programmatic success.

- Most coalitions aimed at promotion of actions leading to self-governance, asking for due process and access to services versus pushing agenda. Most of the successful cases demonstrated, used technology and data as a platform for awareness and outreach.
- The coalitions engaged citizens in an open dialogue and discussion on how to trigger change in the milieu of vested interests and how to then leverage the powers of the constitution. This type of communication was often instrumental in aligning a broader civic engagement through a common agenda.
- Cases such as the planning groups in Bangalore, explicitly reinforced the fact that for sustainability, efficiency and scalability, coalitions should function independent of political milieu and focus on empowering decision-makers to better understand critical challenges and potential solutions. Also, working along with the community, so that ideas come from them and hence there is ownership, goes a long way in acceptance of implementation strategies.

Failures to address systemic gaps in governance at the city level due to lack of active coalitions can mostly be attributed to the manner in which they function, resulting in the lack of success to get buy-in and participation from citizens. This is often due to multiple factors, such as lack of awareness among people, political milieu, absence of a dedicated core group, overemphasis on targets and time bound programs, vested interests, distrust of civic agencies and lack of decentralized approach.

## 8. Conclusions

Despite the magnitude of looming urbanization, the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act has failed to empower cities, with the state still playing a dominant role in city administration resulting in weak accountability. Indian cities are largely governed by politicians and bureaucrats who have limited tenures. A strong mayor with a long tenure, vested interest in a city's development and clear accountability — a system practiced in most advanced countries, is missing.

At the municipal level there is a lack of organizational structure which results in inefficient service delivery and very slow decision-making. Encumbered by lengthy and time-consuming processes with unde-

defined goals and budgets, and lack of capacity, urban local bodies struggle to meet the ever-rising developmental demands that cities place on them.

The power to be able to shape one's own developmental future is a critical feature that underpins the intentions in the urban missions in India today. At this stage of urbanization in the city, the rate of transformation of all systems is very rapid. Institutional or systematic solutions require stability and will be difficult to implement at this stage. This is a great moment to insert and establish sustainable best practices. However, as this is the first or second decade of urbanization, technical capacity across all stakeholders to ensure high quality implementation is extremely limited. There is therefore the need for strong and creative support and extensive outreach aimed at strengthening capacities, sharing best practices and providing platforms for learning for all stakeholders.

Encouraging cities to embrace a more sustainable path requires initiating a process towards efficient use of resources, people and governance. Coalitions can provide cities with strategies that accomplish this by bridging gaps in governance, capacity building local agencies, mobilizing resources, engaging citizens and assisting in implementing reforms. Moreover, civic technology and coalition-developed tools present an opportunity for people to focus their efforts and technical know-how to resolve challenges facing the public sector. Ultimately coalitions can create the conduit needed for regional level thinking and data-driven planning needed to empower key decisionmakers to better understand critical challenges and deliver solutions. Leveraging coalitions can ensure that concrete steps are taken to reform the city's plans, planning processes, institutions and governance. This can help improve quality of life and sustainability in cities by triggering a virtuous cycle of transformative, inclusive and holistic interventions that are cost-effective and have a high impact. Indian cities can thus move on to a path of improved livability and maintain their competitive status in the global economy.

### 8.1 Building an Effective Coalition

As observed from the case studies, an effective coalition should:

- Act as a convener bringing together groups with cross-sectoral interests and individuals, around a common crisis that impacts quality of life, so that they may collectively generate, implement

or replicate innovations

- Seek to bridge gaps and build capacity among local organizations and stakeholders to enable better service delivery
- Act as a mediator between actors — typically citizens and government
- Use coalition-developed tools/technology for information, education and communication
- Seek representation from low-income, vulnerable and marginalized groups
- Collaborate on program implementation as a resource
- Create a platform for policy makers to learn about, adapt and scale innovations

Civil society groups need to come together with the private sector to address issues with which the government is struggling. Coalitions can thus be established with a joint and a mutual commitment between stakeholders and municipal government to ensure seamless service delivery allowing inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable development.

## 8.2 Steps in Setting up a Coalition

An effective coalition should address a broader process on urban issues, survive multiple administrations and be bipartisan, become part of the civic culture and be embedded in a politically sustainable way. The steps in setting up such a coalition are:

### Step 1

*Come together* — Coalitions often emerge during a crisis or when citizens become frustrated with the governance systems leading to poor service delivery. The first step is usually to set up a stakeholder process. Various views are collected by a core group who then conduct research on options. Public stakeholders are co-opted and buy-in is achieved from all relevant actors.

### Step 2

*Establish an action plan* — The plan of action that is decided upon should support the administration in such a way that the envisioned changes are a result of innovative planning which translate into dynamic action which in turn go on to create binding commitments for the city or stakeholder on a long term basis.

### Step 3

*Delegate responsibilities* — Thematic, administrative and legal working groups should be set up. These may comprise of volunteers with specific agenda or domain expertise and/or the core group consisting of

influencers. Often the administrative and legal group are prioritized, as these are needed to map current institutional responsibilities, laws, and experience of existing bodies. Each working group should come up with their goals.

### Steps 4

*Create Information, education/awareness and communication (IEC)* — Sound channels for sharing of information should be set up and the coalition developed tools and technology to be used for data gathering, analysis and dissemination should be agreed upon. Progress should be monitored closely and local agencies should be empowered for optimal results.

### Step 5

*Set up participatory roles* — The local government partners with and/or actively participates in the implementation of the plans and programs. This helps link back to the program mandates and break barriers for entry for the disenfranchised. Media coverage ensures visibility and scaling of initiatives.

As citizens and change agents continue to push for accountability and pursue paradigm shifts in governance, coalitions can fill interim gaps and provide cities with practical and actionable strategies to move towards a sustainable and equitable city for all. Coalitions can empower and equip change agents to demand, support and deliver on the need for good governance through actionable solutions. There are thus reasons to believe that despite limited uptake in cities and some unsuccessful cases, leveraging coalitions is possibly the way forward to actualize sustainable development in Indian cities.

## Conflict of Interest and Funding

There is no conflict of interest reported by the authors.

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