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Impact of JNNURM and UIDSSMT/ IHSDP Programmes on Infrastructure and Governance Outcomes in Cities/Towns in India

A Review of the State of Knowledge

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Impact of JNNURM and UIDSSMT/ IHSDP programmes on infrastructure and governance outcomes in cities/towns in India – A Review of the State of Knowledge


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SECTION 1

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission* (JNNURM) for 65 mission cities, and its related Sub-Missions for smaller towns in the country - the Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT), and Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP), were launched with much fanfare at the end of 2005. Yet nine years later, citizens and governments alike have little idea about how these ambitious programmes have affected infrastructure and governance outcomes in these target cities and towns. The quality of data available on the projects, reforms, and their impact is poor with data formats designed by the JNNURM secretariat not focusing sufficiently on assessing outcomes for those on the frontline of governance transformations such as urban local bodies (ULBs) and the users of actual services. This makes it hard to assess the performance of the JNNURM, UIDSSMT and IHSDP. Far from undertaking a comprehensive assessment in order to inform the next version of JNNURM, the Central Government seems disinclined to even acknowledge that such an assessment could have tremendous value. Over the seven-year mission period, there have been a number of academic articles and civil society voices from the ground that provided valuable critique on and suggestions for substantially changing the JNNURM but these have been sidelined or looked at piecemeal. By assessing what we know of how the JNNURM and its Sub-Missions have affected infrastructure and governance outcomes and small medium and smaller towns in cities across the country, this paper aims to contribute to a more grounded understanding of the impact of these programmes in a variety of state and city contexts.

The paper is based on a review of the available official data and the existing literature on the Missions. It is divided into three broad sections. The first analyzes data available from the official website (as of March 2014) to elicit broad trends with regard to the projects and reforms at the conclusion of the Mission period in March 2014. Given that the official data doesn't focus on ground-level impacts, the second section focuses on gleaning such insights from a review of literature and reports written on the JNNURM over the mission period. This helps to review the critique of and feedback on improving or substantially changing the JNNURM program  from a variety of perspectives (government reports, academic papers and civil society consultations). In the final section two city level case studies of the JNNURM, Kochi and Surat, are presented based mostly on secondary data, to understand the factors shaping city-level outcomes.

What emerges clearly from the paper is that the JNNURM is a blunt instrument that has not been able to respond well to the finer aspects of the differences between the state and the city contexts. The mission directorate's one-size-fits-all model with its fixed set of reforms, design and procedural guidelines has strait-jacketed different cities into following a uniform pattern, one that is deeply at odds with the federal and highly diverse polity that is characteristic of India and with the different state government' approaches and political imaginations of development that cities are rooted in. The paper reveals that the states and cities have responded in multi-hued ways to this programme – covering the gamut of resistance, subversion, negotiation and compliance – an invariably political strategy that depends on the equation each holds with the centre. As can be expected, infrastructure and governance outcomes are highly diverse and contested.

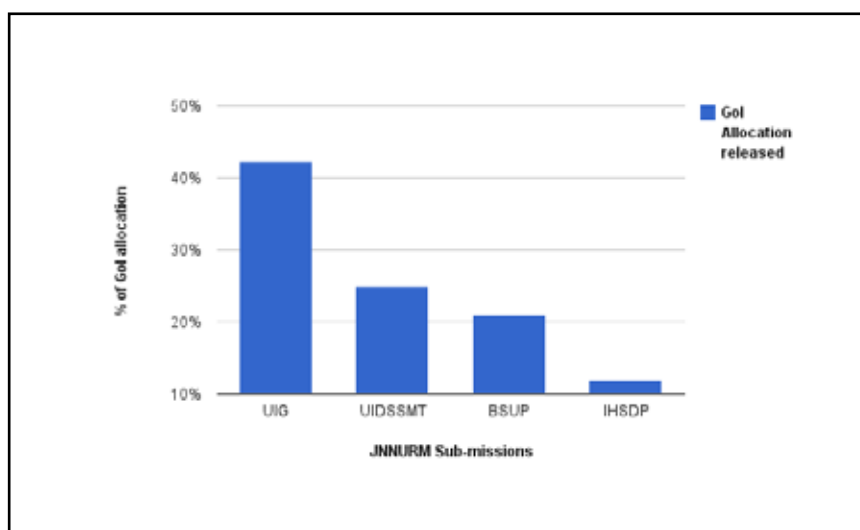
1.1 Current picture of JNNURM and its sub-missions from official data: muddy, partial and difficult to interpret

It is extremely difficult to get a complete picture of how the JNNURM and UIDSSMT projects have fared in big cities, medium and smaller towns with the limited data categories available on the JNNURM website: completion of infrastructure projects, completion of dwelling units, and occupancy of dwelling units. Some important points can be made however, which are elaborated in this section.

1.2 Bias in financial allocations towards infrastructure development, and towards large cities and states

Overall, JNNURM funding allocations are biased towards infrastructure development in larger cities. From Fig. 1.1, it is clear that Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG) has been allocated the lion's share of Government of India's (GoI) funding (42%). Even within UIG, 35% of the funds were allocated to the seven metro cities. Delhi and Kolkata received more than Rs. 2000 crores, while Mumbai, Pune and Chennai received more than Rs. 1000 crores each. Funding has thus mainly gone to larger cities that are financially better off¹.

FIGURE 1.1
GOI FUNDING RELEASED FOR THE VARIOUS SUBMISSIONS OF JNNURM



Source: JNNURM data 2014, www.jnnurm.nic.in

In the housing sub-missions - Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) (21%) and Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) (12%) together have received just 33% while the non-mission cities have received (from UIDSSMT and IHSDP) just over 37% of the GOI allocation². It is clear from the allocations that housing and slum development for urban poor and infrastructure development in non-mission cities have been a lower priority for JNNURM. Further, 69% of the total central assistance under BSUP and IHSDP was released to just six states (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) as stated by the Comptroller and Auditor General Report (2012). Kundu and Samanta (2011) have noted that the BSUP and IHSDP spending have no relation to the urban poverty level of the state, which raises serious questions regarding the efficacy of the policy for meeting the needs of the urban poor.

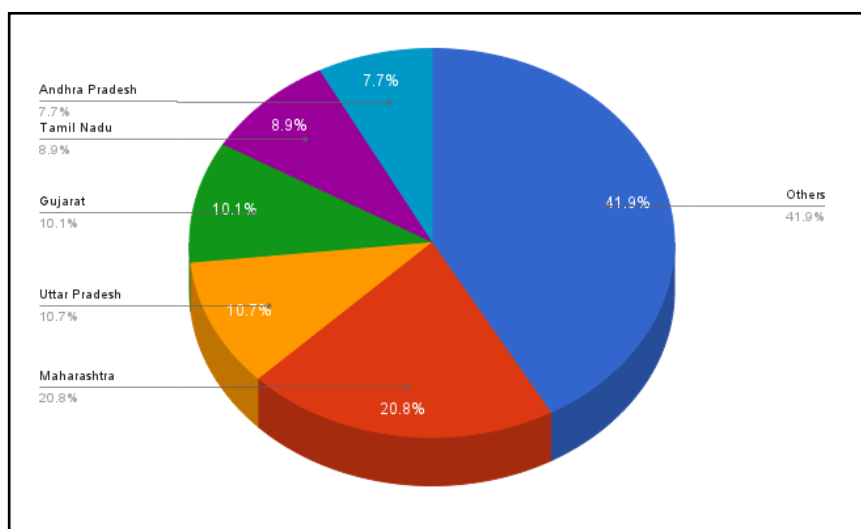
Allocations have also favoured larger states, as the basis for allocation was the urban population of the city or the state concerned and its proportion to the total population. As the pie charts (Fig 1.2 – Fig 1.5) reveal, the top five states that have received allocations, account for more than 50% of the funds for all components of the mission except for IHSDP, wherein it is 48%. Allocation on the basis of population is a highly simplistic approach ignoring the patterns of urbanization, pace of growth in different parts of the country, and the economic and development potential of different towns as advocated by the National Commission on Urbanisation (as cited in Sivaramakrishnan, 2011). The end result has been a reduced allocation for smaller states such as the North-Eastern states. Additionally,

- 1 Sivaramakrishnan (2011) argues that cities that have received investment grade credit rating (considered by investors to be safe for lending) have received 72 per cent of JNNURM funds.
- 2 The meager allocation to housing for the poor was pointed out by 'Half Time or Time Out' (Citizens Group 2009), a citizens' review report covering 29 cities, yet no course correction seems to have been done.

smaller towns in smaller states have faced greater disadvantage in accessing funds. There is clearly a need to explore other criteria for deciding funding for the next phase. These could include poverty levels, actual needs of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and their capacity to generate their own revenue.

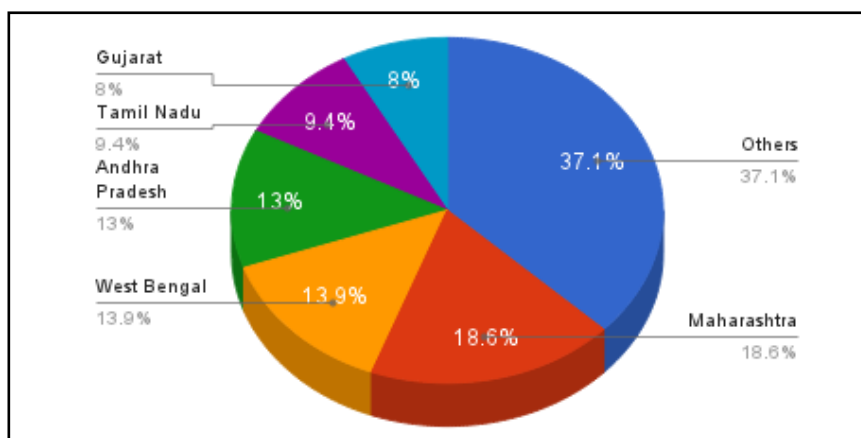
Where the urban agglomerations as a whole were funded, smaller ULBs within the agglomerations tended to lose out despite the fact that considerable growth was taking place in the smaller towns located on the fringes of the agglomerations' area (TISS, 2012). Thus overall, bias towards infrastructure development, large cities, and large states than the provision of housing and basic services for the urban poor and the development of small and medium towns can be noted.

FIGURE 1.2
TOP 5 STATES WITH MAXIMUM GOI ALLOCATION RELEASED UNDER
UIG COMPONENT OF JNNURM



Note: In UIG, the top 5 states account for nearly 58% of GoI Allocation with Maharashtra alone receiving more than 20% of the central assistance released till Aug 2014³

FIGURE 1.3
TOP 5 STATES WITH MAXIMUM GOI ALLOCATION UNDER BSUP
COMPONENT OF JNNURM

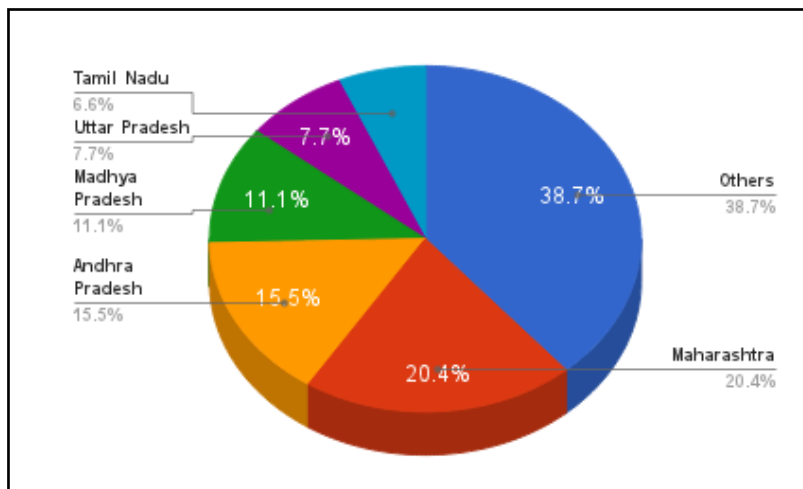


Note: In BSUP, more than 62% of GoI allocation was given to top 5 states with Maharashtra again receiving the largest share of more than 18% of the funds⁴.

³ State Wise Details Of Projects Sanctioned Under Jnnurm (UIG), Data as on 08-08-2014, www.jnnurm.nic.in

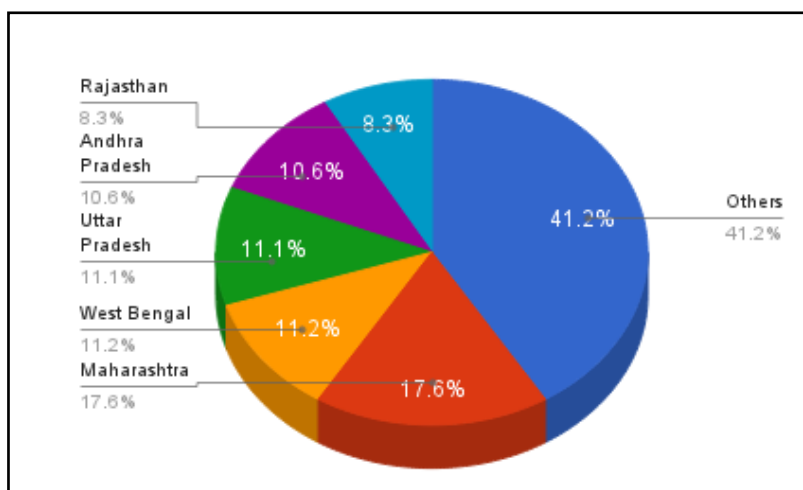
⁴ BSUP : Over All Progress (State Wise), Data as on 18-03-2014, www.jnnurm.nic.in

FIGURE 1.4
TOP 5 STATES WITH MAXIMUM GOI ALLOCATION UNDER
UIDSSMT COMPONENT OF JNNURM



Note: In UIDSSMT, the share of top 5 states in GoI allocation was more than 61% with Maharashtra again receiving more than 20% of the central assistance⁵.

FIGURE 1.5
TOP 5 STATES IN GOI ALLOCATION UNDER IHSDP COMPONENT OF JNNURM



Note: The top 5 states received more than 58% of GoI allocation in IHSDP. Again, Maharashtra has received more than 17%⁶.

1.3 Focus on financial and physical targets and ‘awards’ without adequate attention to performance evaluation

It is very difficult to analyse on-ground performance because the JNNURM has continued to follow the established practice of reviewing results and outcomes using expenditure and physical progress of work rather than benefits received by people (Sivaramakrishnan 2011) (See Table 1.1).

⁵ State wise details of sanctioned projects under UIDSSMT, Data as on 31-03-2014, www.jnnurm.nic.in

⁶ IHSDP : Over All Progress (State Wise), Data as on 18-03-2014, www.jnnurm.nic.in

Table 1.1 Completed projects in each component of the mission (All India)

Mission name	Completed projects	Completed dwelling units
UIG	38.8% (233 out of 599)	
BSUP		52.7% (2600 out of 997557)
IHSDP		46.5% (25789 out of 554347)
UIDSSMT	39.45% (453 out of 1148)	

Source: Computed from data on www.jnnurm.nic.in on March (BSUP and IHSDP) and August (UIG and UIDSSMT)

Completed projects' data is for UIG and UIDSSMT schemes only. Data on dwelling units is used for BSUP and IHSDP schemes as data for completion of projects is not available for these components.

The data for completed projects for UIG and UIDSSMT and completed dwelling units for BSUP and IHSDP shows that overall JNNURM implementation has been unsatisfactory. Despite a further 2 year extension to the original mission completion year of 2012, only BSUP has barely achieved 50% completion. The infrastructure component both in mission cities and small and medium towns has not even achieved 40% completion. Many of the completed dwelling units (30% under BSUP and 28% under IHSDP) have not been allotted to beneficiaries and remain unoccupied, which is a major cause for concern⁷. Further, data on basic services provided to these new housing units has not been published in the public domain, so an assessment of progress in this regard cannot be made.

Treating completion rate of projects as an adequate reflection of 'performance' is difficult especially considering that 64% of completed projects in JNNURMs' UIG escalated over the approved cost⁸ (see Table 1.2). While data on cost escalation exists, it is inadequate because it does not include explanations for why this happened. For insights on the reasons for cost escalations one needs to delve into specific cases at city/state level, which will be taken up in Section 3.

Table 1.2 JNNURM UIG – Cost Escalation in Completed Projects

States	No. of Projects with cost escalation	No of completed projects	% of projects with cost escalation (In %)	Upto 10% escalation	11%-50% escalation	50%-99% escalation	100% and above escalation
Andhra Pradesh	8	22	36.36	2	5		1
Delhi	3	8	37.5	1			2
Gujarat	39	47	82.97	14	22	3	
Karnataka	19	23	82.6	3	12	4	
Maharashtra	26	35	74.28	5	17	2	2
Madhya Pradesh	4	9	44.44		3		1
Odisha	1	1	100	1			
Punjab	1	2	50		1		
Rajasthan	3	4	75		3		
Tamil Nadu	14	18	77.77	5	6	3	
West Bengal	7	17	41.17	1	4	1002	
Total	125	186		32	73	14	6

Source: Computed from state level UIG data on www.jnnurm.nic.in, May 24, 2013

7 Over All Progress of JNNURM under BSUP and IHSDP- National Level, 18-03-2014, www.jnnurm.nic.in

8 Cost escalation data is available only for JNNURM UIG projects.



Note: Cost escalation has been estimated by examining financial utilisation of all completed projects in UIG. All completed projects with a financial utilisation of more than 100% are considered as projects where costs have escalated.

Overall, the implementation of projects and reforms has been monitored through a box-ticking mechanism that does not provide detailed information about substantive aspects of projects and reforms that have been implemented, issues faced by states, cities and towns in their implementation, and impact on city residents. The JNNURM and its sub-missions have also tended to focus on the creation and dissemination of glitzy “awards” without sufficient attention to defining the basis on which they have been given or whether these tell us something useful about mission outcomes. There have been cases where cities have got awards for certain projects which have not taken off. Kochi, for e.g., had received an award for the Brahmapuram solid waste plant built with JNNURM funds but the plant has been plagued with different issues and is not functioning at its optimal level. In some cases, awards have gone to cities that have done well even before the JNNURM, begging the question of what role, if any, JNNURM has played in enabling these cities to attain high levels of success (Sivaramakrishnan 2011).

It is hard to understand why the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA) have paid such tokenistic and half-hearted attention to the critical task of on-ground monitoring and evaluation in the JNNURM and its sub-missions. The Ministries have relied on State Level Nodal Agencies (SLNAs) to get state level data, which is ironic since SLNAs are also responsible for implementation of the mission. This raises doubts about whether SLNAs will be critical of their own performance. Further, while the mission mandates the use of Independent Review and Monitoring Agencies (IRMAs), MoUD has checked only compliance with guidelines of toolkits regarding appointment of IRMAs but has not been concerned with the activities and actual performance of IRMAs, or whether IRMA reviews are conducted with site visits or not (Comptroller and Auditor General 2012; Thornton 2011).

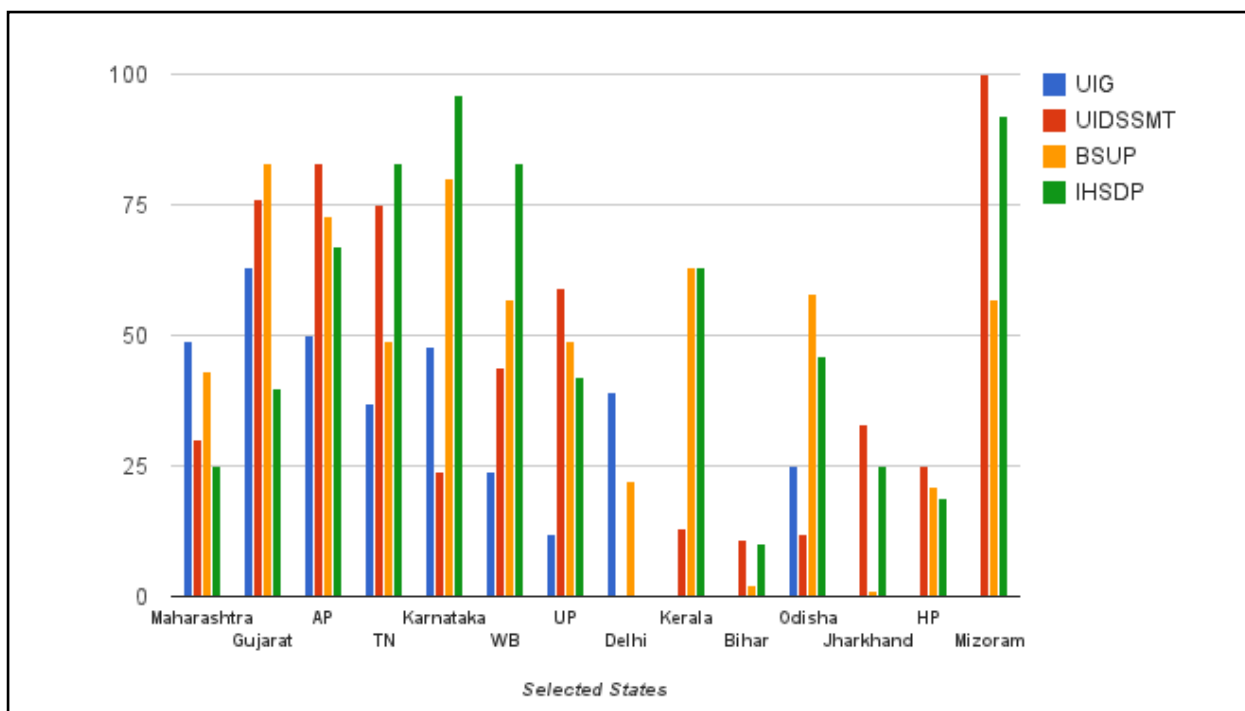
1.4 Insufficient focus on explaining variations in states’ performance across different sub-missions

A review of recent data on JNNURM across all sub-missions shows intra-state and inter-state variations in performance in terms of completion of infrastructure projects, completion of dwelling units and their allotment. The more urbanised and larger states show a better performance in the completion of infrastructure projects under UIG and UIDSSMT and dwelling units under BSUP and IHSDP. It is not surprising that states that received higher allocations and performed better are states with histories of urbanisation, stronger institutional frameworks and capacities for urban governance and higher economic development.

As seen in Fig 1.6, the more urbanised states such as Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have had reasonable success in the completion of projects. At the same time, Maharashtra which had received the highest central assistance under all JNNURM sub-missions has completion rate of below 50% in all sub-missions. The missing blue bars for smaller and less urbanised states show failure in the completion of any UIG projects in those states. However, this data is partial and further research is required to understand the reasons and factors that affected the performance at state and city level.

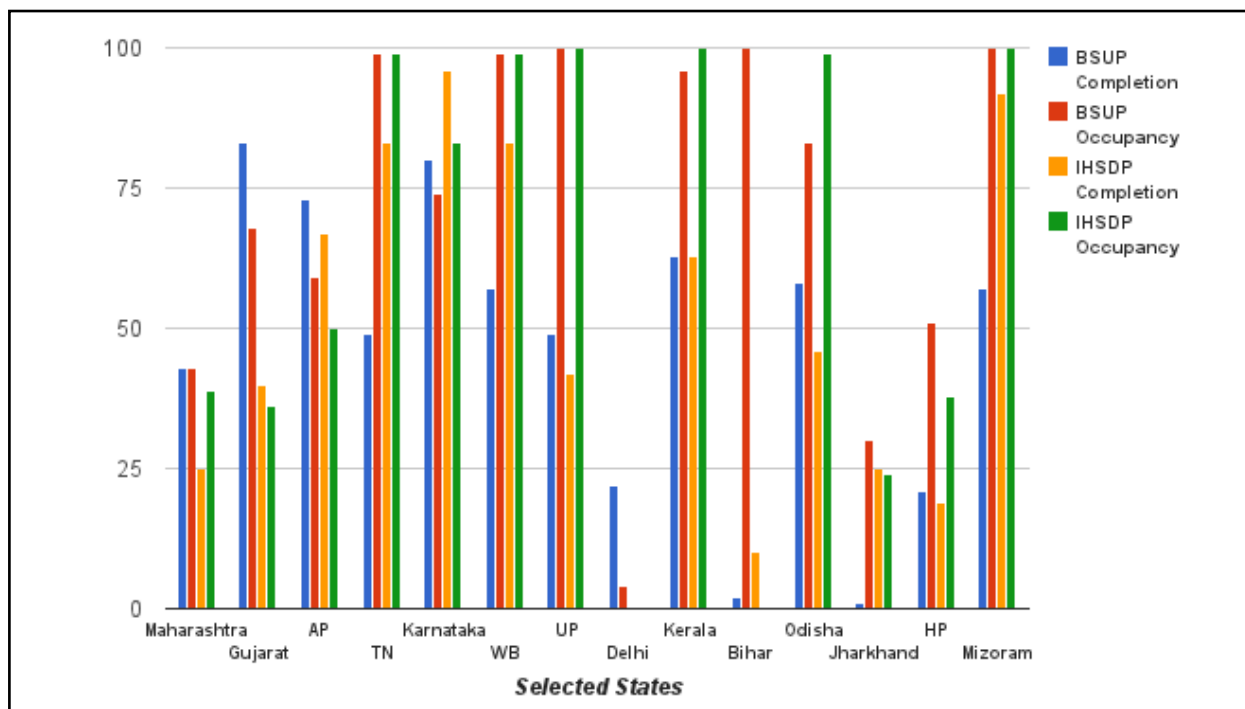
9 ‘This is what you call a total waste’, (2013 September 4), *Times of India*, Kochi

FIGURE 1.6
COMPLETED PROJECTS AND DWELLING UNITS FOR SELECTED STATES



Source: Computed from JNNURM 2014 data on www.jnnurm.nic.in

FIGURE 1.7
BSUP AND IHSDP COMPLETION AND OCCUPANCY RATES OF THE DWELLING UNITS IN SELECT STATES



Source: Computed from JNNURM 2014 data on www.jnnurm.nic.in

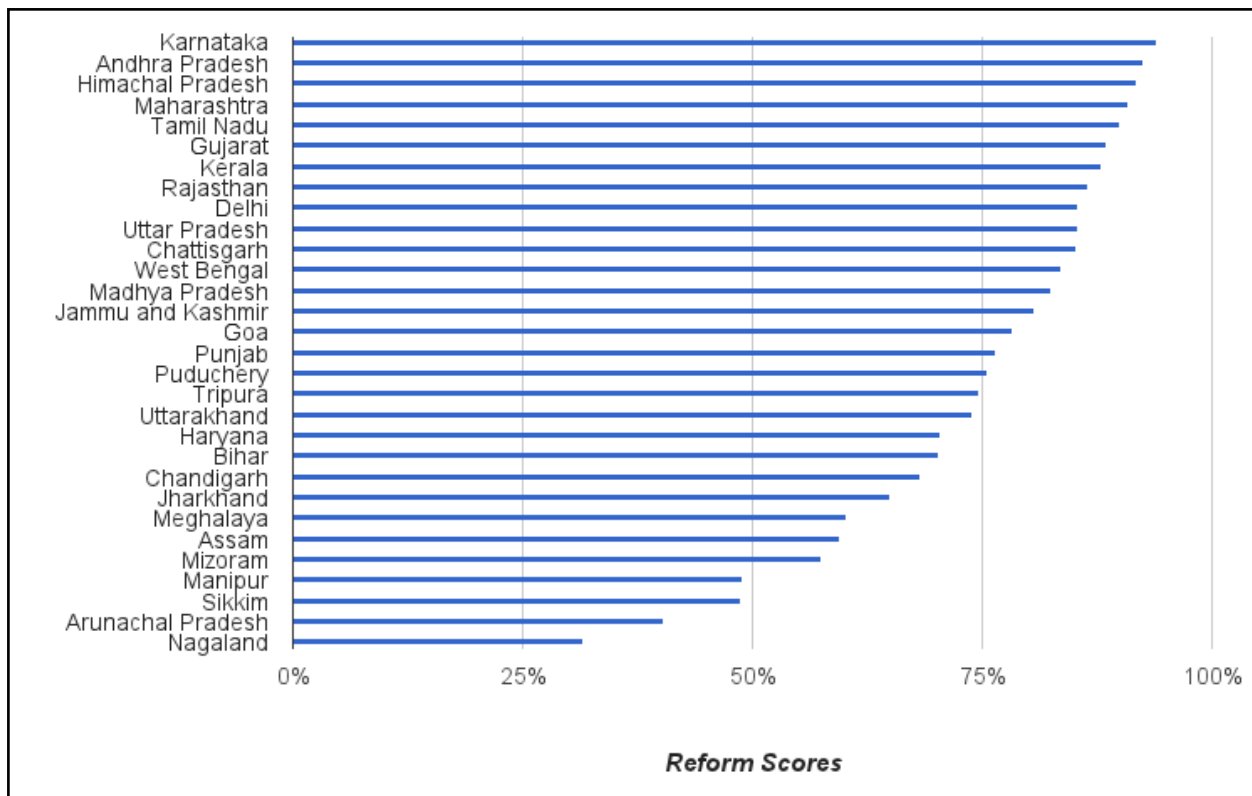
From Figure 1.7, we can see that the performance of the states is quite mixed in terms of completion and allotment of dwelling units under BSUP and IHSDP with smaller and less urbanised states do-

ing comparatively better in the allotment of completed dwelling units to beneficiaries. Among more urbanised states, Delhi has completed only 22 per cent of BSUP dwelling units with an abysmal 4 per cent allotment of completed dwelling units. Maharashtra and Gujarat have lower completion and allotment performance in IHSDP. However, some caution has to be exercised with this data, as there is no clear criteria for determination of completion and allotment of dwelling units. For example, Uttar Pradesh reports more dwelling units being occupied than it has actually completed for both BSUP and IHSDP. Again, we need more field based research to understand how these project and programmes of the mission have actually impacted the urban poor in improving housing and basic services. However, while the data is partial and difficult to interpret it still reveals the variable performance of states across the four sub-missions. This highlights the importance of understanding reasons for variation in performance across big and small cities/towns both within and across states. It also underlines the difficulty in treating the performance of states in this phase of JNNURM as a yardstick for developing an incentive based funding system for the next phase of JNNURM as suggested by the committee on JNNURM-II (Planning Commission 2012).

1.4 Little clarity on how or why reforms are to be implemented and how they are transforming ULBs' performance

A careful scrutiny of the methodology used to assign each state/city a reform score-card on the official JNNURM website reveals that each reform has been broken up into a series of tasks (or milestones as they are called) which have been given a calibrated score that totals to 10 points. There are several methodological challenges here. First is the difficulties involved in applying one uniform set of milestones (it is not known who designed them and what the rationale behind such a design is) to a large number of very diverse cities which have different starting points, capabilities and possibly governance priorities. A case in point is the low reform scores assigned to the North-Eastern states mainly because several of them do not have municipal councils formed under the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) as found in other parts of the country – ignoring their different governance, legal and institutional histories. A second challenge is whether one can treat reforms as comprising of a set of discrete (and fixed) tasks being of equal difficulty (i.e., all worth 10 points) rather than a dynamic process with multiple pathways for achieving outcomes. Most importantly, however, the score-cards do not provide us with substantive understanding of the actual implementation of reforms in different states nor do they reflect the real reform changes as a result of JNNURM. There is a vast gulf between reform scores of states – that are generally high with most states scoring over 50 percent (see Figure 1.8), and actual results on ground (Thornton 2011). For example, while score cards indicated that nearly all ULBs have achieved the three pro-poor reforms, CAG has asked how cities can report that they had achieved basic services to urban poor when many urban infrastructure and housing projects are yet to be completed (Comptroller and Auditor General 2012).

FIGURE 1.8
REFORMS SCORE CARD OF DIFFERENT STATES



Source: Computed from State Reform score cards on www.jnnurm.nic.in

A critical reason for poor performance with regard to reforms is that the rationale for JNNURM reforms and what they're expected to achieve has never been adequately debated with the states, ULBs and citizens at large. For instance, it is not known whether the repeal of Urban Land Ceiling and Regulation Act (ULCRA) was expected to increase the supply of land and whether this was based on any specific assessment in the context of the mission (Sivaramakrishnan 2011). The government's own appraisal of JNNURM agrees that states and ULBs found implementation of the reforms a major challenge (Thornton 2011) and that there was an overall lack of clarity on the processes for implementation of reforms at all levels – central, state and city/town. Preparation of reforms primers was initiated after the JNNURM and its sub-missions were launched and hence mission expectations of role and process changes were clarified to ULBs and states only after a considerable time lag. Being a federal polity, addressing reforms that are often contested implies negotiations with a wide variety of political systems in different states that have varying ideologies and development imperatives. The states which differed with the substance or ideology of the reform, ignored it or complied on paper without doing much on the ground. Therefore, we need to understand the states' lack of compliance as not necessarily constituting a failure (although the centre's somewhat rigid notions of evaluation construe it as such) but as quite likely representing resistance to reforms (TISS, 2012).

Implementation of reforms has also been halting because several reforms are beyond the mandate and purview of the ULB or State Urban Development Department and entails coordination with multiple agencies, departments, and legislations. Moreover, since no fund has been earmarked for implementation of the reforms, many ULBs have been struggling to implement reforms like accounting reforms and GIS based property taxation, which require massive investment in technology and training of human resources (Thornton 2011).

In its approach to reforms, the JNNURM appears to be following in the footsteps of earlier urban programs in India that also mandated reforms but did not clarify outcomes or learn from cities' per-

formance. Sivaramakrishnan (2011) questions whether analyses of the performance of previous urban schemes, such as the Mega City Project and the Urban Reform Incentive Fund (URIF), informed the JNNURM. No information is available on the implementation of the seven reforms under URIF, even though these reforms' became part of the larger reforms agenda of JNNURM. The next section aims to capture critique and suggestions on improving or substantially changing the JNNURM and its submissions based on ground level outcomes from a range of sources, including government, civil society, donors and private sector.

SECTION 2

2. ASSESSING THE LITERATURE ON JNNURM AND ITS SUB-MISSIONS: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY, STRENGTHENING OF ULBS AND PRO-POOR INCLUSIVENESS

A review of the literature on the JNNURM and its sub-missions reveals a clustering of responses along three broad areas, namely, making cities financially sustainable, empowering local governments and strengthening local governance, and making cities pro-poor and inclusive. These areas clearly reflect the stated objectives of the JNNURM. A key finding of this review is that there is partial (biased towards some aspects) and uneven coverage of certain aspects of the mission the literature. For instance, donor agency's and credit rating reports focus heavily on making cities financially sustainable with little attention paid to the JNNURM's impacts on strengthening decentralization or building pro-poor, inclusive cities. Civil society and grassroots groups' focus is heavily on the objective of making JNNURM pro-poor and inclusive and focus on the financial strengthening and empowering of local governments largely as they affect this objective. Government reports seem to rely on expenditure and physical progress data submitted by different state governments, supplemented by a few interviews of local/state officials discussing the reasons for faulty implementation. However, the on-ground impact of both projects and reforms and the views of citizens who are supposed to benefit from and use these services/systems have been completely ignored¹⁰.

2.1 Making cities financially sustainable

A core objective of the JNNURM and its sub-missions that are promoted by private and donor agencies was to financially strengthen ULBs so that they would become less dependent on state transfers, approach capital markets by raising their financial profile through improved tax revenues and user charges thereby facilitating the growth of capital markets (Fitch 2012). Both, the inability to make any progress with regard to this objective as well as the premise of the objective itself have come under attack from different quarters: the former from policymakers, donors and private agencies and the latter from academic and activist groups. Policymakers, donors and private agencies argue that the JNNURM has placed new finance-related demands on ULBs that are ill equipped to perform these and recommend technocratic fixes like improving ULB's own-resources and capacities. The academics and activists however move away from a technocratic stance to directly confront political questions of who benefits from a more financialized city, especially focusing on the often negative effects for ULBs and poor groups.

2.1.1 Low ULB resources and capacities to financially manage JNNURM projects

Programs like the JNNURM pose both an opportunity and a threat for smaller cities. In smaller cities, JNNURM provides the funds with which hitherto cash-starved smaller cities can provide services. However, these funds also make up a substantial amount of municipal budgets, as much as 60-65% of the total capital investment for small and medium ULBs unlike the 10-15% in large ULBs¹¹. Experts have argued that when the ability to spend and the capacities of ULBs to manage finances and related decision-making are not assessed, then implementation of projects suffers, that is what happened in the case of many smaller cities under the JNNURM (TISS, 2012). Nanded, for example, had an annual budget of Rs 20 crores but received Rs 300 crores for spending in one year.


¹⁰ We must note here that this remains a partial assessment of the literature on the JNNURM as a comprehensive review is beyond the scope of this paper

¹¹ This figure was obtained through conversations with experts studying the impact of JNNURM on municipal finances. They further clarified that although larger ULBs typically received comparatively more financial assistance through JNNURM than smaller ones, they had less effect in the larger cities, mainly because their proportional addition to the budget was lower.

A city's ability to absorb JNNURM funds is also constrained by its own and its state government's capacity to match central government funds. Those cities (typically a few larger cities) that had sufficient internal sources of revenue could not only contribute their share of funds to projects but could also support cost escalations that inevitably occurred and complete their projects. Most cities, however, depend substantially on capital grants from their state governments for infrastructure financing, and in the event of delays in receipt of grants and cost escalations they witnessed stoppage of projects. Small and medium towns were hit hardest as they had low capacity to generate and manage finances coupled with low capacity to develop realistic Detailed Projected Reports (DPRs) and implement the projects. The rigid funding structure of the JNNURM with its focus on competitive, first-come-first-serve resource allocations and consultant driven process also served to increase costs since projects were prepared hurriedly in order to secure approval instead of focusing on their content (TISS, 2012).

While the JNNURM and its sub-missions represent a large injection of funds into ULBs for infrastructure projects, they also represent increased burden in the form of operation and maintenance (O&M) costs of resultant infrastructure (CASUMM 2007). Given the fact that most cities' already have weak financial position, this is an issue that cannot be ignored. It is particularly important because the full burden of O&M costs is not yet apparent as many projects are yet to be complete and will likely pose significant financial strain on ULBs over the next few years. Unless cities improve their own resources or obtain sufficient capital grants/loans, their financial difficulties would lead to cutting human resources and expenditure on social sectors, privatizing or sale of public assets, and increased pressure to impose higher user charges and tax rates on citizens.

2.1.3 Large political challenges faced in building own-source revenues

To enhance ULBs' low financial resources, the JNNURM has exclusively focused on cities raising own-source revenues through tax hikes and user fees. Yet few cities have reported reaching property tax coverage targets or efficiency. There is considerable caution about increasing tariffs and taxes due to the political fall out of such ions and the gains that have been achieved have been mainly through wider coverage rather than charging higher rates¹². It is a similar story with regard to levying user charges. Few cities have achieved full cost recovery of water supply through user charges, although several cities have embarked on doing GIS mapping and household surveys to increase coverage and collection levels. Raising tariffs and user charges have also been linked with involving the private sector in service provision, especially in the water sector and this has been deeply opposed by anti-privatization campaigns across the country. As Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) are promoted as the favoured mode for implementing urban infrastructure projects, political resistance is likely to increase.

2.1.4 Weakening financial position of ULBs after JNNURM

In many cities there has been inadequate release of state and central funds for JNNURM projects. The case of Vijayawada Municipal Corporation is a case in point where the ULB has had to bear the short-fall. Here with delays in the release of funds and rise in project costs, the corporation found itself in a financially difficult situation; and most of its projects remain incomplete (Maringanti 2012).

While a shift to debt financing in ULBs without ensuring adequate revenue inflows has been a major consequence of the JNNURM, the mission has also been indicted because its financial reforms do not address the larger issue of fiscal relations between the three tiers of government. Notably, there has been no devolution of new resources to ULBs or even a focus on realizing expected devolution under the 74th Amendment over the period of the mission¹³. The reluctance to transfer funds and fund sources to ULBs urgently needs to be addressed. Without fiscal devolution, ULBs especially in small and medium towns are going to face difficulties in ensuring financial sustainability in view of increasing costs of operation and maintenance of infrastructure, staffing and technology.

¹² This insight was gained from informal interviews with experts in municipal finance.

¹³ Maringanti (2012) analyzes how the Andhra Pradesh State Finance Commission recommended that 39.24% of the state's revenue earnings from any city be transferred back to that ULB but the actual allocation over 2005-2011 has not exceeded 17%.

The vision for generating local revenues needs to go beyond the shorter term emphasis on expanding ULB revenues through enhanced property tax collection, monetization of land assets and user charges and fees to one that foregrounds economic activities of the town since that is after all the base on which the ULB is able to generate higher revenues. Most of the City Development Plans (CDPs) studied allude to a shift in employment from the primary and secondary sectors to the tertiary sector (Narayanan and Bhatia 2007). However, the documents do not specify how this economic transition will be made, what the revenue generating potential implications are or how the ULBs were gearing up for this transition.


Overall, concerns of increasing fiscal devolutions are rooted in directing funds to flow to democratically elected ULBs with the goal of strengthening them. This has led to discussion on whether to solely rely on Finance Commissions to devolve funds rather than a centrally sponsored scheme like the JNNURM, so that cities and states can decide how they wish to spend to achieve needed outcomes (TISS, 2012). This leads us to the second broad thematic area of strengthening decentralization and empowering urban local bodies.

2.2 Strengthening decentralized governance: empowering ULBs

While the JNNURM and its sub-missions seemingly promote decentralized governance, the literature highlights how in practice this mandate has been vitiated. There is also a near-universal consensus on the need to critically examine the role played by consultants and reclaim the role and importance of ULBs in longer-term planning as well as everyday service delivery. Writings by academics and a few activists, and government reports largely dominate the literature on this theme and dwell on issues of political capacity and autonomy of ULBs.

2.2.1 Low political autonomy and capacity of ULBs

While the JNNURM claimed that achieving the 74th Amendment and making ULBs central to the planning of JNNURM projects was a core part of its reform agenda, in practice, JNNURM guidelines equated parastatal organisations with an elected ULB, and these were given JNNURM funds. This only continued the long tradition of state governments diverting municipal functions and funds to parastatals, thus undermining the functional domain and capacity of ULBs (Sivaramakrishnan 2011). Even though ULBs were not always the recipients of JNNURM funds, they were held accountable for achievement of reforms. Many civil society and academic groups are very critical of this bypassing of ULBs with the Thornton Report (2011) calling for an alternative mechanism where authority of ULBs is not compromised, without affecting the efficient implementation of projects¹⁴.

While the JNNURM has clearly done little to change the fact that state governments are reluctant to devolve any real power to ULBs and build their capacity to take over mandated functions¹⁵, an additional lacuna has been the failure to involve the political state in its design and functioning, and to account for different political interests when instituting governance structures at the regional and local levels (TISS, 2012). Civil society consultations have argued that all policy decisions related to the JNNURM must be tabled and discussed in the parliament, state legislative assemblies and ULBs as these have serious implications at each of these scales (Hazards Centre, 2007). The City Development Plan (CDP) guidelines, for instance, do not provide clarity about the role of the elected councils of ULBs in developing and taking ownership  their city's development plan (Thornton, 2011).

14 Under the JNNURM, ULBs were supposed to head an accountability platform that would oversee parastatals and other service providers, but this has not been constituted in any city (Sivaramakrishnan, 2011).

15 Sivaramakrishnan (2011) argues that the need to control urban land is a major reason why urban planning functions continue to be controlled by the state government rather than municipalities.

2.2.2 Against one size fits all

Over the course of the mission, there has been much debate on whether we should follow such a centralized route to decentralization, one that is largely directed by the Centre (TISS, 2012). All reforms, for instance, were to be undertaken by all states and ULBs irrespective of their size, willingness, preparedness, applicability or capacity. No need benefit analysis was undertaken to assess whether a reform recommended for metropolitan cities would be suitable for small towns (Thornton, 2011; Planning Commission, 2012). What therefore happened in JNNURM is that the state governments responded to reforms based on their priorities and interests. Meghalaya, for instance, has argued that the 74th CAA, one of the reform conditions of the JNNURM, does not apply to it, as it is a Schedule VI area. A majority of states claimed that they are not in a position to transfer functions to ULBs due to reasons such as lack of capacity as well as political and administrative will to undertake such functions. In general, reforms that required tendering, like e-governance, happened while those that called for reconfiguring structures never happened (TISS, 2012). This has precipitated the demand for a reform plan that is voluntary for cities and states, essentially a bottom up approach for implementation through bilateral discussions with the states, on reforms that they can implement within an acceptable timeframe (TISS, 2012; Thornton 2011). Officials within the government have argued that some ULBs are aware of what needs to be done and need a platform to push the same; the Centre does not need to drive this process. Such an approach requires acknowledgement of the political nature of reform issues (Sivaramakrishnan, 2011).

When it comes to service delivery, the central government, in keeping with its extremely centralized imagination of urban infrastructure, has instituted service level benchmarks and the central finance commission has recognised these for performance-based grants to ULBs. However, cities start from very different positions, face different problems in service delivery, and service agencies do not have much operational autonomy (Mehta & Mehta, 2010). It is therefore suggested that norms and standards be set depending on local baselines and capacities. At a national consultation (Arghyam & Water Aid, 2011) on water and sanitation for instance, it was proposed that every city conduct a detailed, comprehensive assessment of its water and sanitation situation on the basis of which strategic action must be taken. The broad opinion being that decentralized systems are particularly suited for sewage treatment and solid waste management. There are already several examples from BSUP housing, where different types of models have been provided to slum dwellers by ULBs so they have some options – however, cities need freedom to do this (TISS, 2012).

2.2.3 Need for building in-house capacities of ULBs for long-term planning and day to day service delivery

Arguing that ULBs do not have the requisite capacity to carry out project preparation and implementation especially for projects of the scale of JNNURM, the JNNURM guidelines conceptualized Project Implementation Units (PIUs) and Project Management Units (PMUs) to support ULBs' shortfall in capacity. Rather than focusing on building the needed capacities of ULBs in-house, many states have farmed this task out to consultants (Thornton, 2011). This has led to municipal engineers losing pride in their posts (TISS, 2012). Additionally, both PMUs and PIUs have come under fire for performing the critical functions poorly, without ensuring inter-linkages and accountability to ULBs (Comptroller and Auditor General, 2012). The official mid-term appraisal report of the JNNURM has pointed out an urgent need for direct in-house participation of ULB staff in the entire process from CDP and DPR preparation to project execution. It has also called for lower level officials of ULBs to be included in capacity building programmes and stability of tenure for key staff (Thornton, 2011). Yet there seems considerable confusion on how this is to be achieved or in what domains capacity building is required.

Many experts with firsthand knowledge of JNNURM training programs argue that short, standardized training models do not work and that the intervention needs to be at the cultural level of cities, which implies a customized approach for each city given that problems faced, the context and needs are different (TISS, 2012). State governments need to review their capacity building programmes to account

for city and town level diversities. Overall, there seems to be some agreement that the litmus test for capacity building programmes should be whether it ultimately strengthens the role and functioning of the ULB.

A key capacity which needs to be built is the ability to collect and use data and maps for informing participatory development plans to ensure feasibility and sustainability (Arghyam & Water Aid 2011; Transparent Chennai, 2012). Importantly, civil society and academic groups are strongly of the belief that the responsibility for such planning must rest with ULBs and cannot be assigned to Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) or consultants who can, at best, facilitate the process (Hazards Centre, 2010). But the JNNURM did not fund data collection in the preparatory stage (Mukhopadhyay, 2006) and assumed that existing staff was sufficient for undertaking new projects and reform responsibilities. Central and state governments need to focus on building these capabilities within ULBs.

One cannot talk about building in-house capacities of ULBs without addressing the issues of staffing shortages, and hiring freezes in these institutions. This is particularly because structural and administrative reforms of the JNNURM have been interpreted as mandates to reduce ULB staff and outsource the work of ULBs to private companies. SLNAs have been designated without any dedicated staff for the mission. In several cases, parastatal agencies are responsible for the implementation of projects or forming PIUs without additional staff, thereby increasing the workload of the existing staff (Thornton, 2011). While the Thornton report (2011) has mentioned that the intention of these reforms was to better plan human resources and ensure their availability in ULBs, it seems doubtful that ULBs have interpreted these reforms in this way as it runs counter to the sustained pressure over the last few years from central and state governments to reduce government staff (Bhide and Waingankar, 2011). Unless the issue of staffing is addressed, and ULBs are enabled to hire permanent staff with required expertise and skills, building in-house capabilities will be difficult for institutions already grappling with serious staff shortages. Experience has shown that where cities themselves prepared CDPs and DPRs, their implementation is better (TISS, 2012). Where city governments have a central role in the mission they have been interested to maintain the City Technical Advisory Group (CTAG) and City Volunteer Technical Corps (CVTC) systems; where they have peripheral roles, there is no enthusiasm for these systems (Sivaramakrishnan, 2011).

2.2.4 Municipalise or privatize?

The JNNURM and its sub-missions reveal a significant push to privatize services through PPPs as can be seen by making 'encouragement of PPPs' part of the reform agenda. More urbanized/developed states like Maharashtra and Gujarat have formulated pro-PPP policy/administrative frameworks directing their cities to comply. Many CDPs favoured the participation of the private sector in municipal service provision and the enforcement of charges for municipal services (Narayanan & Bhatia, 2007). The experience on ground however suggests that very little commercial/private financing has come to the urban infrastructure sector and only a few PPPs in service provision were successful¹⁶. Importantly, definitions of 'success' are keenly contested by a number of civil society and academic groups who construe this reform as anti-poor. Criticisms include that there has been no assessment of the capability of private players to address the problems faced by the poor in the recommended PPP model and that private parties operating with profit motive have increased costs while quality, access and employment have taken a backseat (Delhi Peoples' Alliance, 2012). The Nagpur 24x7 water supply project implemented through PPP under JNNURM is of such case. Newspaper reports from the city have consistently pointed out its inefficient functioning.

16 Mehta & Mehta (2010) argue that there are three possible reasons for this: 1) availability of JNNURM funds to ULBs with highest credit rating may have crowded out commercial borrowing 2) weak regulatory framework implies poor ability of ULBs to recover operating costs and 3) provision of services is fragmented and ULBs lack capacity for developing/implementing PPPs that can manage the entire activity cycle (2013, August 24).

17 '4 months to deadline, only 8.73% houses linked to 24x7 water project', *Times of India*, Nagpur,

What these contestations highlight is the need for review of the larger question of whether service delivery within the JNNURM rubric is really geared towards being pro-poor. Kundu & Samanta (2011) argue that projects launched under UIG, focus on increasing total capacity of urban services and there is no explicit provision to improve the delivery of facilities in deficient areas within the cities or improve the access of the poor to services. Most ULBs lack an overarching policy initiative for providing basic services to the poor across the city and indicators reflecting the pro-poor character of CDPs or provision of basic amenities and land to slum dwellers are quite complicated to measure (Kundu and Samanta, 2011). In such a situation, the emphasis on financial efficiency, cost recovery and promotion of PPP could well enable those who can afford it to corner much of the benefits from the augmented system leading to further increasing spatial disparities within cities.

Overall, the JNNURM has not empowered ULBs or provided them any freedom from the control of state governments. Politically, financially and human resourcewise, ULBs continue to be weak without significant authority within their already limited domain of responsibilities. In the next subsection, we examine how far JNNURM has been able to achieve the goal of making cities inclusive and pro-poor.

2.3 Making cities pro-poor and inclusive

This thematic area has received a rich array of critique and recommendations from a variety of scholars, practitioners and citizens reporting from cities across the country. Three major strands of critique can be discerned. The first is that the JNNURM and its sub-missions do not address the most pressing issue facing the poor today - the increasing informalization of work, nor do most CDPs cater to the large number of informal work and living spaces. Second, the JNNURM has contributed to weakening of the financial position of ULBs and pushed them to generate greater revenues by privatizing and sale of public land assets. This has awakened fears of evictions of slums on public lands and led to calls for prioritizing land rights and security of tenure for the poor. The third strand addresses lack of participation of citizens, especially urban poor groups, in the mission planning and delivery process.

2.3.1 Re-orienting JNNURM to address infrastructure and services for the urban poor in conjunction with their livelihoods

Liberalization and globalization have led to the informalisation of work, resulting in depression of wages, insecurity of work and other social problems. The growing informal sector is closely linked to poverty and the pattern of economic growth in cities and towns (Hazards Centre 2006). Most of the CDPs studied refer to a shift in employment from the primary and secondary sectors to the tertiary sector. While some CDPs acknowledge that this transition is usually associated with increasingly unorganised and informalised systems of employment, there is no attempt to address these issues in plans (Narayanan and Bhatia 2007). Therefore, there is a call for supporting both informal and formal economic activity through planning and infrastructure development in order to achieve the objectives of building pro-poor and inclusive cities. There is also demand for taking into account the need for linkages between livelihoods, housing and infrastructure, which the JNNURM does not do currently (Citizens Groups, 2009).

2.3.2 Lack of public participation in the process and implementation of JNNURM

Overall the opportunities for public participation in the JNNURM are critiqued as being inadequate and narrowly defined (Hazards Centre, 2008) with infrastructure plans not reflecting the needs and aspirations of the local community. Citizens' reviews suggest that there is very little information on and accountability of the Mission, and that the role of citizens is selective consultation instead of participatory democracy (Citizens Groups, 2009). Further, international actors like the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank have greatly influenced JNNURM policies without considering local needs and available resources. There is an urgent need to enhance public engagement and to create a politics and culture of inclusiveness in urban management (Arghyam & WaterAid, 2011).

Both civil society and government reports have referred to failures in a host of issues relating to public participation. The Comptroller and Auditor General's Report (2012) noted that the National Technical Advisory Group (NTAG), a national level body established to facilitate greater public participation in the JNNURM, did not hold the required number of meetings and failed in mobilising civil society in urban governance through the constitution of CVTC and CTAG in cities. CDPs and DPRs prepared by private consultants were usually not based on need assessment studies and did not reflect the concerns of citizens (Hazards Centre, 2007, 2008). Particularly on issues concerning the urban poor many CDPs held no consultations (Narayanan and Bhatia 2007). The Grant Thornton Report (2011) criticized the process of CDP and DPR preparation along several dimensions. First, although CDPs were supposed to be developed with stakeholder consultation, many CDPs did not document the proceedings of these consultations in detail leading to doubts as to whether these were ever held or if held were taken seriously. Second, consultations while preparing DPRs were limited and restricted to line departments and parastatal agencies. Further, most DPRs were not backed by Initial Environmental Studies (IES) and Social Impact Assessments (SIA) (Thornton, 2011).

The implementation of the 74th CAA is an important reform for enhancing public participation in governance but here too performance has been uneven. Ward Committees (WCs) are supposed to be constituted under the 74th CAA, and be given the right to formulate local development plans which should be integrated to make the CDP (Hazards Centre, 2007). In a diverse country like India, it is natural that the legal processes, composition and administrative arrangements of WCs would vary significantly but what is important to note is that the principle of proximity to citizens has not been followed with some states creating WCs from groups of wards (Sivaramakrishnan, 2011). This defeats the objective of decentralized participatory planning. Additionally, the enactment of a Community Participation Law (CPL) is one of the mandatory reforms of the Mission. However, it is not clear how a "community" should be defined and also how this law will differ from the 74th CAA. Ten states have implemented CPL – Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal¹⁸.

2.3.3 Land rights for the poor, and security of tenure for informal settlements are not the focus of JNNURM land reforms

Civil society groups and academicians interpret JNNURM reforms that broadly fall within the umbrella of land management as aiding real estate developers and governments to purchase, develop and sell large tracts of land, often the land on which poor groups were originally settled, at high prices. The shift of emphasis from the provision of basic amenities for the poor to integrated multi-storied housing projects inevitably brings in real estate developers and enables them to corner a large part of slum land that is used for commercial purposes (Kundu & Samanta, 2011). In a rush to give entry to private developers and consultants in the provision of affordable housing, granting land rights to urban poor and security of tenure for informal settlements has taken a back seat at the state level despite repeated arguments by citizens' groups and associations of urban poor that land is the major issue in urban areas rather than housing (Mahadevia, 2006; Hazards Centre, 2007, 2008; Kamath, 2012).

Additionally, the Thornton Report (2011) calls for monetisation of land through Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) and granting incentive Floor Space Index (FSI) so that ULBs are able to raise revenues for infrastructure projects. Citizens' groups have pointed out that land monetisation has always led to displacement of slum dwellers from city centres as city governments will most likely make the land available by evicting slums for infrastructure or commercial development (Mahadevia, 2006; Citizen Groups, 2009). Cost of land acquisition for projects must be provided separately. For instance, in both Rajasthan and Gujarat, slum dwellers have been evicted from city centres for UIG projects

18 These 10 states scored 10/10 for Community Participation Law in the reform score cards published in JNNURM website <http://jnnurm.nic.in/scoring.html> accessed on Dec 20, 2013

and then BSUP housing has been used for resettling them on the outskirts of the city. The approach of monetisation of urban land as a feasible measure to mobilise funds needed for urban infrastructure runs counter to the proposal in Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) that in city planning, land should be earmarked for housing the urban poor and *in situ* development is preferable (Sivaramakrishnan, 2011). Overall, citizens' groups have strongly pressed for *in situ* development of slums and for providing security of tenure to unauthorized settlements.

2.3.4 Exclusion of some citizen groups from the JNNURM

Under the JNNURM and its sub-missions, the poor are as treated a homogenous group of people who live in slums. However, many scholars and activists have countered this view arguing for inclusion of groups like homeless people and pavement dwellers, for instance, that are currently not covered under the mission (Hazards Centre, 2010). This not only highlights a lack of reliable data and understanding of who constitute the urban poor but also indicates that the BSUP and Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) do not start from a position of inclusiveness by focusing on Right to Shelter, but talk about “Slum free cities” and only address slums . Further more the establishment of cut off dates reduces eligibility and inclusiveness (Delhi Peoples' Alliance, 2012). In response, many community groups call for delinking service delivery from land tenure status so that some minimum service levels may be achieved for all poor groups regardless of how they are defined (NLSIU, 2013).

This section is aimed at assessing the overall outcomes of the JNNURM along its three major objectives, based on a range of literature and official reports. While the insight from such an assessment was patchy and incomplete because the analysis had to depend on existing empirical data in different cities and states for explanations of how reforms and projects were playing out on the ground and reasons for the same, they did indicate some key overall patterns. In a federal polity where highly diverse state governments play a critical developmental role, there is a need to understand the impact at a more disaggregated level, that of the state and the ULB. Focusing on the city located within a state enables an understanding of the crucial role that local/regional political economic factors play in shaping the JNNURM and its sub-missions impact at the city level. Accordingly in the next section case studies of two cities – Surat in Gujarat and Kochi in Kerala, with somewhat contrasting histories and development imperatives are presented:

SECTION 3

3. JNNURM CITY CASE STUDIES – SURAT AND KOCHI

Kochi was chosen because in this case many state level initiatives have strengthened decentralisation and local participatory planning, and the presence of active local groups seem to give it an edge on the objectives of strengthening ULBs and pro-poor inclusive cities. Surat in Gujarat was selected for its financial strength and its reputation for efficiency, exemplified by its receipt of a plethora of JNNURM awards¹⁹. However, a weak elected local government and the relative absence of an active civil society temper its reputation for efficiency. Both cities thus present contrasting positions with respect to the three themes i.e. making cities financially sustainable, empowering local governments and strengthening local governance, and making cities pro-poor and inclusive - elaborated on in the previous section and one would expect these to be reflected in JNNURM outcomes as well.

3.1 JNNURM in Surat – Trail blazing in infrastructure development and financial reforms but less successful in strengthening local government and pro-poor initiatives

The implementation of JNNURM in Surat has been impressive if one goes by official data (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). Surat has completed 18 out of 24 projects that were sanctioned and accounts for 38 percent of the completed projects in Gujarat. It has received one-third of the state's UIG projects and nearly one-half of the state's BSUP projects. It has completed 77 percent of the sanctioned dwelling units under BSUP (Surat Municipal Corporation 2013) and accounts for half of Gujarat's completed BSUP units.

Table 3.1: UIG in Gujarat and Surat

	No. of Projects	Approved Project Cost (in Rs. Crores)	GoI Allocation (in Rs. Crores)	State Allocation Released (in Rs. Crores)	Physical Progress	Financial Progress	No. of Completed Projects
Gujarat	76	5844.85	2590.08	1997.49	61%	84%	47
Surat	26 (34.2%)	1910.38 (32.7%)	955.19 (36.9%)	781.51 (39.1%)	86%	82%	18 (38%)

Source: Computed from data on www.jnnurm.nic.in

Note: The figures in brackets show the share of Surat within Gujarat under each of the indicators for UIG

Table 3.2: BSUP in Gujarat and Surat

	No. of Projects	Approved Project Cost (in Rs. Crores)	GoI Allocation (in Rs. Crores)	State Allocation Released (in Rs. Crores)	Sanctioned Dwelling Units	Completed Dwelling Units
Gujarat	27	2067.09	1015.47	746.02	88850	60168
Surat	12 (44.4%)	699.29 (33.8%)	332.48 (32.7%)	292.83 (39.2%)	40282 (45.3%)	31173 (50.1%)

Source: Computed from data on www.jnnurm.nic.in, BSUP data on Surat from Slum Policy 2013 (Surat Municipal Corporation)

Note: The figures in brackets show the share of Surat within Gujarat under each of the indicators for BSUP

¹⁹ These include Best performing city for the implementation of reforms in 2007-08, National urban water award (2008 and 2009), Most inclusive approach (2009), Implementation of 7-point charter, Best city for financial management (2008-09) and Best performing city (2008-09).

Surat has also been at the forefront of the implementation of certain reforms mandated by the JN-NURM, such as financial accounting, that was completed as far back as 1992 within the state. In fact the state claims that all reforms except property titling have been completed. Yet what is striking about the city's achievement is that it is motivated by a vision of economic growth that valorizes large infrastructure projects and investor friendly reforms more than it does empowering the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) or building a pro-poor and inclusive city.

Large infrastructure projects in sewerage, water supply, roads and flyovers, bus rapid transit and solid waste management have been undertaken in the older parts of the city as well as the newly added areas in the north and east to improve city-wide service delivery systems. While efficiency of project implementation is high, there have been cost escalations in 17 of the 18 completed projects²⁰. Despite this, the ULB has managed to complete the projects and experts credit its robust financial position for providing the necessary buffer to complete the projects. Successive limit expansions have meant that industrial areas are situated within municipal limits and contribute to its revenues as well as land for resettlement of slum dwellers is made available in newly added villages within the SMC. Not only does the SMC have a strong industrial base, but it also has a high property tax collection rate having achieved nearly 95 percent of the property tax collection target of Rs.355 crores in 2013²¹. The tax collection of Surat has increased by Rs. 186 crores over the last two years pushing the recovery ratio to beyond 90 percent, the requirement of the JNNURM reform. The SMC also announced a massive hike of 30-40 per cent in user charges for all property owners in 2013.

It is important to note that the SMC has not been plagued by problems of land acquisition in JN-NURM projects²² as in other cities largely because of implementation of town planning schemes in Gujarat's cities that earmark land for infrastructure amenities at the neighborhood level. Town planning schemes form part of the Gujarat government's overall approach to accessing land for infrastructure that largely relies on land pooling/plot reconstitution for which land is not forcibly acquired but voluntarily surrendered in exchange for higher values after development²³. The state government's innovative approach to accessing land post independence has created an enabling environment for infrastructure development programmes like the JNNURM in Surat.



features have helped the SMC to successfully implement politically and administratively difficult tasks like tariff hikes and city-wide JNNURM projects. The first is sustained investment over a number of years in increased human resources, creation of technical and administrative capacity and institutional mechanisms to undertake various municipal services²⁴. While the JN-NURM has been awarded to Surat for its efficiency in the implementation of projects and reforms, the JNNURM alone cannot claim to have led to this transformation. The second is a weak elected council, and a governance structure at the state level that encourages local level depoliticisation and freedom from political 'interference' for bureaucracy in return for 'efficient' functioning and governance. This model has the support of the middle-class and the media. Such a model has no place for dissenting views or an active civil society. It is not a surprise that SMC, despite constituting a monitoring panel for JNNURM consisting of various stakeholders did not operationalise it²⁵.

20 Project Implementation Status: Gujarat, May 2013, www.jnnurm.nic.in

21 'Property Tax in Gujarat: Surat Cheapest in the State', (2013 March 4) *Times of India*, Surat Municipal Corporation set to collect more than 95% of property tax' (2013 March 29), *Times of India, Surat*

22 This is with the exception of the BRTS project, which has been mired in issues related to land and slow pace of progress therefore has got delayed. 'Work on Surat BRTS going at slow pace', (2011 October 31) *Daily News and Analysis*, Ahmedabad

23 For more information see Ballaney (2008).

24 As a part of post-plague recovery, various institutional and administrative measures were undertaken, such as motivating officers, pushing officers to do first hand observation in the field, delegation of financial and administrative powers to zones, providing staff with vehicles and communication equipment, daily meetings of officials, coordination committee between administration and elected body, collective decision making within administration and providing support to decisions taken by lower level officials (Shah, 1997).

25 Interview with Prof. Kiran Desai, Centre for Social Studies, Surat, 24th May 2013

When it comes to BSUP projects and the objective of pro-poor inclusive cities, Surat fares less well. Out of 12 BSUP projects, 3 are yet to start and these are all *in situ* redevelopment projects. More than 50% of its affordable housing dwelling units have been completed and allotted to beneficiaries but these are all the houses build for resettlement on the outskirts of the city. What is striking about Surat's BSUP projects is that they have been used to provide housing to slum dwellers that have been evicted from central city lands and those who had settled on river banks, in order to make space for UIG projects. According to newspaper reports by 2011, SMC had cleared almost 2 lakh sq. m of encroachments for undertaking public works and that SMC's strategy is to provide housing for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in the peripheries while removing all encroachments or slums in the city.²⁶ In January 2012, SMC decided to outsource operation, maintenance and distribution of water to EWS locations like Kosad, claiming greater efficiency in service provision (from 3 hours to 24 hours of water provision)²⁷. Without a detailed field analysis, it is difficult to discuss whether and how issues of service distribution, quality and affordability which have huge implications for the urban poor, have been addressed by the ULB.

The overall strategy of the SMC towards slum rehabilitation seems to privilege land monetization but not *in situ* housing for the urban poor. The SMC's well articulated Slum Policy (2013), based on a slum survey conducted in 2005, typifies its approach to BSUP projects. The overall objective of the policy is to make Surat a zero slum city by 2020. The policy outlines the three strategies for redevelopment of slums based on the value of land occupied by slums. The first is slum relocation/rehabilitation that will be done for slums that are located on lands considered hazardous due to flooding (such as the riverbank, canalbank and creeks) and on lands earmarked for roads or important reserved amenities. Slum dwellers in these cases will be shifted to multistorey flats. The second strategy is slum redevelopment *in situ* for slums located on SMC and privately owned lands of less value. These slums will be developed through reorganization and densification, with additional FSI used as an incentive for commercial use via PPPs. The third strategy is slum upgradation for lands that are not considered valuable by providing basic infrastructure facilities on-site. As already noted, the SMC has concentrated on implementing the relocation projects while the *in situ* projects are yet to start.

A field visit to one of the EWS redevelopment locations at Kosad reveals that Kosad town is not well-connected to Surat city. Livelihoods seem worst hit by this displacement to the outskirts with hawkers and domestic workers now unwilling to travel so far to sell or do work in the residential areas of the main city. Shared auto rickshaws remain the main mode of transportation. A BRTS route is being constructed but progress has been extremely slow and the higher fares of air-conditioned buses are likely to make it unaffordable for the residents of the BSUP dwelling units. There was also little participation of dwellers in the design or decision-making regarding their EWS housing. Local activists say that it required a lot of pressure, including filing a public interest litigation (PIL), for the SMC to open new schools and anganwadis in Kosad. Nobody knows how the buildings will be maintained and residents have so far not been given any information on this²⁸. Shopping centres in Kosad remain closed despite being inaugurated; the allotment of shops is yet to be finalised. The resettled dwellers have not been provided spaces in the apartments or housing areas for rearing livestock or parking their *laaris* (carts for hawking). Some residents have converted one room of an already small tenement into a small provision shop to enhance livelihoods that have been adversely affected by the displacement. The case of Kosad illustrates that despite a coherent slum policy, the outcomes for the urban poor are not in their favour. The BSUP in Surat has resulted in displacement of slum dwellers from central areas of the city to peripheries, reduction in their livelihood opportunities and rupture of their cultural and social ties to the city. There seem to be no active detractors of this approach, with the middle classes and media seeming to support these moves.

26 Slum relocation frees 2L sq.m land in city, (2011 March 2), *Times of India*, Surat ; Over 1,850 illegal structures demolished, (2010 April 26), *Times of India*, Surat

27 Water Distribution in north zone to be outsourced, (2012 Jan 11) *Times of India*, Surat

28 Interview with Bharatbhai Kantharia, a social activist working on rights of children in slums of Surat, 23 May 2013

The experience of the JNNURM in Surat shows that the goals of financial strengthening and bureaucratic efficiency have been privileged over democratic decision-making and pro-poor inclusive governance, an outcome of the state government's priorities over several decades. This has enabled raising of taxes and monetizing of land, while the weak elected council is unable to protest. The financially and technically strong SMC clearly has larger resources and capacities to manage JNNURM projects but does this without involving civil society or taking into account real needs of the urban poor. Thus, the SMC has completed building a large number of BSUP housing units revealing its efficiency and robust financial reserves, but on the outskirts of the city in violation of BSUP guidelines for *in-situ* development, and have not added additional affordable housing stock to the city as they mainly cater to those whose hutments were demolished. This large-scale displacement has resulted in excluding poor groups from access to productive locations in the city and reveals that land rights and security of tenure for the poor are not a priority in Surat.

3.2 JNNURM in Kochi – Poor performance in infrastructure development, non-compliance with reforms misaligned with state welfare priorities, and active participation of civil society and elected ULBs

Progress of UIG projects in Kochi has been slow with none of the seven UIG projects being completed till date although BSUP has fared better with just over 50 percent completion of dwelling units (see Tables 3.3 and 3.4).

Table 3.3 JNNURM UIG in Kochi

Project	Approved Cost (In Rs. Crores)	Physical Progress (In Rs. Crores)	Financial Progress (In Rs. Crores)
Water Supply	201.17	60%	55%
Solid Waste Management	88.12	25%	25%
Drainage	9.78	50%	50%
Sewerage	78.41	0%	0%
Road Improvement and Bridges	109.64	25%	24%
Broadway Urban Renewal Project	22.10	0%	0%
Total	509.22	26.6%	35%

Source: UIG Project Implementation Status- Kerala, May 2013, www.jnnurm.nic.in,

Table 3.4 JNNURM BSUP in Kochi

	Sanctioned Dwelling Units	Completed Dwelling Units	Dwelling Units in Progress	Dwelling Units Not Started
BSUP Kochi	10390	5430 (52.2%)	1967 (18.9%)	2993 (28.9%)

Source: Retrieved from <http://www.kudumbashree.org/?q=presentbsup> (30 Nov 2011)



There has been little interest in implementing mandated financial reforms with the state government claiming that several are against current state policies and there is tremendous political resistance²⁹. This can be seen with respect to reforms such as increase in coverage and collection of property tax, user charges and PPPs – that have not seen much progress because of the resistance from political parties and many citizens. On the other hand, the state government has argued that reforms pertaining to strengthening ULBs and pro-poor policies have already been implemented and in more appropriate ways. For example, while institutionalising participatory planning through its ULBs as part of the Peo-

29 JNNURM Memorandum of Association, Kochi Municipal Corporation, retrieved from http://jnnurm.nic.in/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Kochhi_MoA.pdf

ple's Planning Campaign, Kerala argued that it has created municipal laws and rules that have already incorporated substantive elements of governance reforms such as the 74th CAA, the Community Participation Law (CPL), and the Public Disclosure Law. Further, the state government has clearly stated that it is against the area sabhas as it would be divisive and harmful for local governance³⁰

UIG projects in Kochi have faced many problems. The sewerage project has been a non-starter mainly because the Kochi Municipal Corporation (KMC) could not afford to purchase land³¹. Road projects have been delayed because of issues related to land acquisition and differences over providing special FSI as compensation to those owners who lose their land. The design of the Brahmapuram solid waste plant was flawed which resulted in great financial and social costs³². The role of the project consultants was sharply criticized. The State government has now decided to build an additional plant with a more sound design, capable of processing more waste, through a PPP model.³³

JNNURM bus services have shown the institutional conflicts between the ULB and the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), the state parastatal that manages the services. Initially, there was a conflict over alignment of bus routes, with KSRTC emphasizing economic viability of the routes and the KMC focusing on building new routes. Subsequently, KSRTC began operating inter-city services using JNNURM buses leading to protests by councillors in Kochi who argued that these services should target commuters only within the city. KSRTC said this was to make up the Rs 1 crore loss incurred in operating the fleet only in the city when commuters typically travelled across and between Kochi and panchayats or towns within the larger region³⁴. The Kerala High Court heard a petition against KSRTC for operating Kochi JNNURM buses on inter-district services and directed it to stop plying JNNURM buses outside city limit³⁵.

The water supply project faced significant delay because the residents in the neighbouring panchayats opposed the cutting of the major road going past their villages for laying pipelines. Additionally, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) delayed permission for cutting the highway to lay pipelines with the matter being referred to the Prime Minister after NHAI refused the request for permission from the Chief Minister³⁶. The Broadway and Ernakulam heritage project has been stalled because of opposition from councillors and members of Ernakulam Merchants Union who said they were not consulted on the project.

This litany of problems highlights several issues. First, the weak financial and technical capacity of the KMC has contributed to non-completion of the projects. While considered a model in the implementation of the 74th CAA, Kerala has not empowered its ULBs to augment their financial base and enhance technical capacity. KMC continues to depend on state level grants³⁷ and the state govern-

30 Ibid,pg.83

31 Sewerage projects of Corporation in limbo,(2012 July 20), *The Hindu*, Kochi

32 Waste Plant resumes operations ,(2010 April 14), *The Hindu*, Kochi

Centre for Environment and Development (CED), a Ministry of Urban Development Centre of Excellence for Solid Waste Management, pointed out that the plant was installed at the site in violation of principles of engineering, as soil tests had revealed that the whole area beneath the floor of the plant was waterlogged which caused its sinking (The Hindu 2010).

Brahmapuram leachate polluting Kadambayur, (2008 Nov 23) *The Hindu*, Kochi; Vilappilshala, a lesson for the Kochi Corporation,(2011 December 2), *The Hindu*, Kochi

The Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KPCB) stated that the flaws in design and construction of the waste plant had led to leakage of leachate from the waste which was contaminating Kadambayur river (The Hindu 2008). In 2011, The KPCB admitted that the site of the waste plant was selected without mandatory assessment as per Central Pollution Control Board guidelines according to which sites with high water table and nearby freshwater sources were not acceptable (The Hindu 2011).

33 Waste-to-energy technology for new Brahmapuram Plant (2013 July 9), *The Hindu*, Kochi

34 This pattern of mobility across an urban agglomeration is found in several other states including Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

35 Court puts the break on KSRTC, (2013 Sept 25) *The Hindu*, Kochi

36 National Highway Authority of India stands firm, opposes digging up of highways, (30 December 2013), *Times of India*, Kochi

37 Through the People's Plan Campaign from 1996-2001, the state developed a methodology for integrated participatory planning for local development. While in the initial year after the campaign began, the devolution of funds was 35 percent of plan funds, average devolution of funds in the following years has been 20-25 per cent of the plan funds. ULBs have not been able to spend their plan funds in a structured and effective manner. Most of the funds are spent in the last quarter of the financial year, often at significant deviation from the participatory planning process (Government of Kerala 2009).

ment largely controls staffing. Requests from the KMC to the state government to create the post of an environmental engineer to run the Rs. 100 crore Brahmapuram waste plant have gone unheeded³⁸. Despite being the state's commercial capital, Kochi has not seen a significant boost in collections from property taxes and professional taxes³⁹. Unlike Surat, it has not expanded its municipal boundaries to include industries on the peripheries; its area has remained the same (at 95 sq. km) since its formation in 1967. Thus revenues from industries bolster the coffers of panchayats and municipalities in which they're located and not the KMC.

The second point related to the first one is the particular diffused nature of urbanization in the state where economic and political power is not strongly concentrated in cities like Kochi but spread across a number of panchayats and ULBs that form the urban agglomeration of Kochi. The local government system created by decentralisation has led to panchayats and smaller municipalities that are as powerful as ULBs. These bodies cannot be bulldozed into accepting demands of the latter, which is seen with smaller ULBs threatening to quit Kochi agglomeration and apply for UIDSSMT separately due to discrimination against their projects in JNNURM⁴⁰. This highlights the need for services that cater to the particular pattern of urbanization and mobility beyond just the city of Kochi. It also increases the need for coordination between numerous urban and rural local governments and parastatals. Lack of coordination is a huge problem in the Kochi region (as evidenced by delays in JNNURM projects), which already suffers from high institutional fragmentation in service delivery⁴¹. Third, there is an active and highly politicized citizenry that effectively resist projects perceived to be against their interests, often led by rural and urban local bodies.

Kochi has fared better in projects catering to the urban poor. KMC has taken three approaches to BSUP projects with each providing differing levels of autonomy to its urban poor. The first is resettlement through construction of apartments, the second is *in situ* improvement programmes by giving financial support for individual housing units, and the third is provision of Rs. 1,20,000 as housing subsidy to those poor households who owned 1.25 cents (450 sq.ft) of land to build a house. The second and third approaches that provide housing subsidies and benefit 7560 out of a total of 8135 families have shown progress, whereas resettlement apartments have shown slower progress in completion. This reveals that the urban poor prefer to have small houses made according to their own needs with security of tenure, than tenements in high-rise apartments (Chandran 2013). Beneficiaries have been more enthusiastic about completing their own houses, while the completion of apartments was delayed due to cost escalation and lack of enthusiasm among beneficiaries for such units (Chandran 2013). In BSUP, we argue that the state government's decision to cede a significant degree of control to poor families over the upgrading/building process can be largely attributed to a highly vocal and politicized civil society and elected council and a strong commitment to maintaining a welfare state across party lines over many years.

Overall, Kochi's performance in the JNNURM reflects some of the concerns outlined in Section 2 regarding weak financial and technical capacity of the KMC and high levels of institutional fragmentation in service delivery. However, it illustrates the positive outcomes resulting from a welfare-oriented state government shaped by historical political-economic processes and politically active local governments and civil society spread across panchayats and towns of the Kochi urban agglomeration. This helps to explain the uneven performance of Kochi: low efficiency in project implementation and high cost escalations of projects, and yet greater pro-poor outcomes and inclusion of a range of different voices from the local governments and civil society in city and regional governance.

38 An interview with Former Chairperson, Public Works Committee, Kochi MC, 24 June 2011.

39 The Comptroller and Auditor General(2012) has criticised the KMC for not collecting property taxes from many major commercial buildings.

40 Local bodies revolt against the Corporation, (2013 July 18) *Times of India*, Kochi

41 The coalition system of governance in the state makes coordination more challenging as different departments are headed by political leaders from different parties, who may not share similar views on policy issues.

SECTION 4

4.1 CONCLUSION

This paper assesses the question of how the JNNURM and its sub-missions have affected infrastructure and governance outcomes in cities across the country based on a review of existing data and literature. The first section highlights that overall data sources are inadequate and that we cannot rely on ministry data as it reveals little about what is happening on the ground, why it is happening and how conflicted a process this is. The review of literature on the impacts of the JNNURM and its sub-missions in the second section is drawn from a variety of perspectives. Although these are partial and uneven they give some sense of contestations between groups facing JNNURM transformations on the ground. The section dealing with case studies of Surat and Kochi comes to some tentative conclusions on the choices made between goals of financial strengthening, empowerment of ULBs and democratic inclusion, usually made at the level of the state government but having considerable bearing on outcomes at the city level.

So going forward, what can we draw from this, albeit partial, assessment? Two major suggestions are made keeping in mind the future phases of the JNNURM. The first emphasizes that the experience of the JNNURM so far gives us a better sense of what role the central government should play in cities when it is trying to push them towards particular outcomes. The role the central government has predominantly played so far has been over-deterministic, standardized and authoritarian in the scope and imagination of its centralized, apolitical decision-making. The role that it could rather play to help cities move towards more humane inclusive outcomes needs to be more flexible, differentiated, and supportive of local strategies, needs and priorities.

The second has to do with assessing and rewarding performance. JNNURM policy makers seem convinced of the need to reward performance with performance-linked finance payments in the proposed JNNURM- 2. This should be resisted on two basic grounds. First, cities are located in specific historicities and have different baseline capabilities, resources and amenities – this affected their performance in the JNNURM. They cannot be rewarded through the JNNURM-2 for historically accumulated capital and abilities. Second, cities' performance in the JNNURM is shaped by the state territories/governments they are located in; these state governments have different historical, political and ideological development paths. Cities, particularly smaller towns have little autonomy to influence these.. They therefore cannot be judged for their performance in the JNNURM independently. If the above two factors are not taken into consideration, we argue that JNNURM failures will continue and disparities between better performing and less well performing cities will widen. Perhaps a better approach is one of assessing a city's performance across all three broad objectives (financial strengthening, empowering ULBs, and pro-poor and inclusive cities) with a view to strengthening its performance in the areas it is weak, rather than comparing it with other cities. This is to avoid one city performing well on one objective but failing miserably on others. This implies that all the objectives are needed and are indeed inter-connected. For truly liveable cities we need financially strong cities that have empowered governments and treat pro-poor and inclusive policies seriously.

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