

Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Urban India

Mrs. Reena G. Malali

Research scholar,

Department of Economics, Rani Channamma University, Belagavi, Karnataka, India

Abstract

This article aims to study the concept of housing for the poor in India and the housing schemes implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation for the slums dwellers in urban India. It tries to ascertain the reasons for failure of many housing schemes and a new initiative through Rajiv Awas Yojana to overcome the failures in implementation of previous housing schemes are looked into.

Key Words: Urban Housing Programmes, Urban Poverty, JNNURM

I. INTRODUCTION

Physical and social security in urban areas is the major concern in urban economic development. The availability of housing and basic amenities like water supply, toilets, electricity, etc is the major concern of the municipalities. However, due to resource constraints most of the local governments face problems in effective delivery of such services. The rapid growth of urban population and the low investment in urban development has created serious shelter problems and deficiencies in basic amenities in the towns and cities in India. Although, housing stock seems to have grown, the rate of capital formation in housing has been extremely low. The investment in basic services has been reported to be low. Housing is an important aspect of living of human beings. It is referred to as a composite of land and built structure.

The concept of housing schemes was seen during the year 1950s that too when a major situation had emerge as a result of the partition of the country and about 75 lakhs of displaced persons came to India from Pakistan and had to be provided with accommodation of some sort. It is in connection with the construction of houses for refugees from Pakistan that the Central Government first undertook a large-scale housing programme for persons other than their employees. The problem has been tackled to a great extent and well-planned colonies and town-ships in various parts of the country have been developed where not only reasonably comfortable accommodation but also local employment in industry and trades has been provided. Such industries and trades have also made provision of houses for their workers. However, those industries or trades did have a uniform record in providing

accommodation for their workers. Some of them were prevented from accommodating their workers nearby their work site because they could not obtain land at reasonable cost and municipal services could not be assured. On the whole, construction of houses by employers in post-war years has fallen short of expectation. The employers have generally taken the stand that not they but the State has the responsibility for providing houses for the working class and that apart from their other handicaps, they have not sufficient means for investing in house building. Such an effort was also made by co-operative housing societies which have attempted, to a limited extent, to provide accommodation for middle and low-income groups. The major difficulty which faced the Association was paucity of funds and the inability of the Government to provide substantial assistance. Similar difficulty about obtaining loans at low rates has been experienced by co-operative building societies.

II. URBANIZATION AND URBAN POVERTY IN INDIA

Urbanization in India took place as a consequence of socio economic changes and contributed to the growth process at large which is evident from the increasing contribution of this sector to the national income. The positive role of urbanization has often been overshadowed by the deterioration in the physical environment and quality of life in the urban areas caused by the widening gap between demand and supply of essential service and infrastructure. In the process of urbanization, poverty in urban areas can be described as corollary to rapid urbanization of the cities. Urban poverty is the poverty of the resident of urban areas who might be migrated from rural areas or born and brought up in the urban area living with lack of basic amenities for several decades. In India apart from the contemporaneous migration of the rural poor to urban areas, urban poverty has expanded in urban areas itself with the original migrant family remaining poor but becoming larger. One of the most remarkable features of urban poverty is the spectacular growth of urban population in India due to rapid urbanization. The urban poverty manifests in the form of inadequate provision of housing and shelter with all basic amenities, employment and food and lack of social security.

The Central Government of India towards meeting out the problems of housing and basic services to the urban poor has launched many housing schemes and the schemes for providing basic services to the urban poor. Hence in this article an effort is made to review some housing schemes sponsored by the central government in India.

III. OBJECTIVES

- 1 To look into the initiatives taken up by the Government of India in meeting out the housing problems to the urban poor.
- 2 To review the housing schemes launched by the Government of India under Urban Poverty alleviation Programs.

IV. SOURCES OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the secondary data gathered from Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India and also the five year plans from 1950s onwards published by the Planning Commission, Government of India.

V. EVOLUTION OF HOUSING SCHEMES FOR URBAN POOR IN INDIA

The policies of urban development and housing in India have come a long way since 1950's. The pressure of urban population and lack of housing and basic services were very much evident in the early 1950's. The First Five Year Plan (1951-56) emphasized on institution building and on construction of houses for government employees and weaker sections. The scope of housing programme for the poor was extended in the Second Plan (1956-61) also. The housing programme which had its beginning in the First Five Year Plan was directed mainly towards housing for industrial workers and low income groups. The programme was considerably expanded during the Second Five Year Plan with the introduction of schemes of slum clearance and slum improvement, plantation labour housing, village housing and land acquisition and development. The housing schemes, which had been operating namely, those relating to subsidized industrial housing, low income group housing, slum clearance, plantation labour housing, land acquisition and development and village housing were continued and expanded in the Third Plan. There was special emphasis on land acquisition and development as that was basic to the success of all housing programmes. New programmes for housing economically weaker sections of the community, dock labour and pavement dwellers were also proposed to be taken up. Three general considerations in relation to the directions in which housing programmes should have to be developed during the Third and subsequent Five Year Plans were suggested. Firstly, housing policies found

needed to be set in the larger context of economic development and industrialization, both large-scale and the problems likely to emerge over the next decade or two. Proposals relating to location and dispersal of industries were therefore of increasing importance in the solution of the housing problem. In the second place, it was necessary to coordinate more closely the efforts of all the agencies concerned, whether public, cooperative or private. It was need to undertake the preparation of master plans for urban areas become all the greater, for without these plans there was no means of bringing together and maximising the contribution of different agencies towards well-defined common objectives pursued systematically over a long period. In the third place, conditions were to be created in which the entire programme of housing construction, both public and private, must be so oriented that it serves specially the requirements of the low income groups within the community.

The successful implementation of the housing programme was based on availability of building sites in sufficient numbers and at reasonable rates. During the Third Plan, therefore, a fair share of the resources available for housing was being devoted to land acquisition and development. A scheme was introduced in 1959 for giving financial assistance to State Governments in the shape of loans repayable over a period of 10 years for acquiring and developing lands in selected places. The land acquired was proposed to utilise for house building under different schemes and for the provision of related community facilities like parks, playgrounds, schools, hospitals, shops, post offices etc. The said aims and objects of all three five year plans towards housing were reiterated in subsequent fourth, fifth and sixth five year plans.

The Seventh Plan (1985-90) stressed on the need to entrust major responsibility of housing construction on the private sector. The Plan explicitly recognized the problems of the urban poor and for the first time an Urban Poverty Alleviation Scheme known as Urban Basic Services for Poor (UBS) was launched as a follow up of the Global Shelter Strategy, National Housing Policy announced in 1988. The policy envisaged to eradicate noiselessness, improve the housing conditions of inadequately housed and provide a minimum level of basic services and amenities to all. A Centrally Sponsored Scheme known as Urban Basic Services for Poor was introduced in 1986, with the primary objective of enhancing the survival and development of women and children of urban low income families. During 1990-91, the scheme was revised to bring about functional integration with EIUS and came to be known as Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP) with 100% central funding.

The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) witnessed the launch of Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana and the National Slum Development Programme with a view to ameliorating the conditions of urban slum dwellers living below poverty line that do not possess adequate shelter. The scheme had the primary objective to facilitate the construction and upgradation of the dwelling units for the slum dwellers and to provide health and enabling environment through community toilets under Nirmal Bharat Ahiyan, a component of the scheme. Under the scheme, 50 per cent subsidy was provided by central government while the balance was to be borne by the State Government with ceiling costs of dwelling units and toilet. With the launch of JNNURM in mission mode, the VAMBAY scheme has been discontinued and came to be merged in JNNURM with its submission Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP). The JNNURM has two submissions i.e. Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) and The Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) which address the consensus of urban poor people and urban slum dwellers.

The IHSDP is administered by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty alleviation, aimed at holistic slum development, applicable to all cities and towns as per 2001 Census except cities/towns covered under UIG and BSUP. This scheme combined the existing schemes of Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana (VAMBAY) and National Slum Development Programme (NSDP) for an integrated approach in ameliorating the conditions of the urban slum dwellers who do not possess adequate shelter and reside in dilapidated conditions. The basic objective of the Scheme is providing adequate shelter and basic infrastructure facilities to the slum dwellers of the identified urban areas.

VI. HOUSING SCHEMES AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

The VAMBAY scheme is introduced with a view to ameliorating the conditions of urban slum dwellers living below poverty line that do not possess adequate shelter and also with the primary objective to facilitate the construction and upgradation of the dwelling units for the slum dwellers and to provide health and enabling environment through community toilets under Nirmal Bharat Ahiyan, a component of the scheme. This scheme was implemented during the period from 2001 to 2005 and its achievement has been observed in a report prepared for 11th five year plan and was appreciated for having constructed 4,42,369 dwelling units and 65,286 toilet in India under this scheme. Since this scheme came to be

merged with IHSDP, the central government implementing IHSDP scheme in India approved in all 1032 projects in 881 cities. Thus the implementation of above schemes was to provide a wide range of services to the urban poor including slum dwellers, but these housing schemes suffered from narrowly sectoral and fragmented approach.

Thus in order to overcome the above said failures in implementation of housing programmes, the central government introduced Rajeev Awas Yojana (RAY) with a concept of “whole city, all slums” rather than a piecemeal, isolated approach, to ensure that all slums within a city, whether notified or non-notified, in small clusters or large, whether on lands belonging to State/Central Government, Urban Local Bodies, public undertakings of State/Central Government, any other public agency and private land shall be covered. The RAY being in Mission mode it encourages States/Union Territories (UTs) to tackle slums in a definitive manner, by focusing on 1) Bringing all existing slums, notified or non-notified (including recognized and identified) within the formal system and enabling them to avail the basic amenities that is available for the rest of the city/UA and 2) Redressing the failures of the formal system that lie behind the creation of slums by planning for affordable housing stock for the urban poor and initiating crucial policy changes required for facilitating the same.

The community participation is found to be an important aspect in achieving the concept of slum free city. The program having concept of Slum Free City the concerned community of the city is expected to be involved at every stage, from planning through implementation to post-project sustenance stages. The scheme is desirous to attempt design for people and that would be done with the people. The existing scheme of Affordable Housing in Partnership is dovetailed with this RAY programme. As a means of Credit Enablement, the Interest Subsidy Scheme for Housing the Urban Poor (ISHUP), is also dovetailed with RAY, with the existing ceiling of the subsidized loan of 1 lakh, so as to give the option to the State/ULB to release a part of the subsidy for housing as per the guidelines of ISHUP to reduce the cost of the loan taken by the beneficiary to build or purchase his/her house. This RAY programme is implemented from 2012 and its duration is upto 2017 under which 162 projects have been sanctioned in 119 cities of India. Since the existing BSUP and IHSDP are dovetailed with this RAY programme, the said projects include infrastructural development in the selected cities.

VII. CONCLUSION

Many of the housing schemes find difficult themselves in effective implementation due to lack of adequate land for the construction of housing for the urban poor. There has been sudden increase in

the land property prices during the reform period. Land being a major and critical resource for infrastructure projects, reforms in land use planning is imperative. Availability of building sites in sufficient numbers and at reasonable rates is essential for the successful implementation of the housing schemes. The housing schemes are dependent upon the ULBs which provide basic services guaranteed in other reformative schemes. Therefore, the scheme Rajeev Awas Yojana (RAY) is introduced which is designed to achieve the goal of Slum Free City in India.

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