

# **Impact of Neo- Urban Paraphernalia on Amritsar City: Of Transformations and Transgressions**

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## **Abstract**

The cities of the rapidly urbanizing world in the milieu of liberalization can be aptly summed up as arenas of contradictions where transformations and transgressions that are taking place on account of the ongoing growth and development dynamics. International aid organizations led by the World Bank have been vigorously pursuing the Neoliberal Agenda since the 1980s and the Global Urban and Local Government Strategy, 2000 of the World Bank unleashed a fresh wave of urban reforms reinstating and reinforcing the neo- urban pragmatic Neoliberal agenda. The research is an attempt to highlight and analyze the application of the neo-urban paraphernalia leading to transformations and transgressions in the Indian City. The study pertains to Amritsar City in the backdrop of the second generation of urban governance reform agendas pushed forward by the global aid institutions on whose dictates the developing economies generally base their development policies with the view of getting financial grants and aids.

**Keywords:** Paraphernalia, Transformation, Transgression, Reforms

## **Introduction**

The cities of the rapidly urbanizing developing countries display a scenario of anomalies. On one side, particularly under the impact of liberalization these are striving to become the driving forces and engines of economic growth providing opportunities to its inhabitants while on the other side the deterioration becomes more and more pronounced due to the city's inability to sustain the hyper growth manifesting itself into modern and contemporary spatial developments and the overspill of growth into the city hinterland. These neo-urbanization centres in the developing world are scenes of contradictions both in terms of transformations and transgressions that are taking place on account of the ongoing growth and development dynamics. It is a well know fact that international aid organizations led by the World Bank have been vigorously pursuing the Neoliberal Agenda since the 1980s. The Global Urban and Local Government Strategy, 2000 of the World Bank unleashed a fresh wave of urban reforms reinstating and reinforcing the neo-urban pragmatic Neoliberal agenda. In keeping with the subject matter of the new

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strategy, the Government of India in its Budget 2002-03, initiated reforms and sources of funds to promote Private Sector Participation (PSP) and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in urban/municipal infrastructure development. The much hyped launch of the JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission) was also a step guided by the aid institutions. At the local level, access to international capital markets and attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and corporate giants to the city is now topping the agenda of the Urban Local Governments. But in the midst of all this commotion and too much happening too rapidly, the fast paced developments are changing the face of the Indian city like never before. Given the context the current research is an attempt to highlight and analyze the transformations and transgressions related to the growth dynamics and development in Amritsar City in the backdrop of the second generation of urban governance reform agendas pushed forward by the global aid institutions as the World Bank on whose dictates the developing economies generally base their development policies with the view of getting financial grants and aids.

## **The Neo-Urban Paraphernalia**

The neo-urban paraphernalia coined and pushed forward by international aid institutions like the World Bank reaffirm the global agenda of the aid institutions towards creating cities as engines of economic growth in the developing world countries. While the National Government continues to accept the paraphernalia's as the conditions for aid, the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have joined the bandwagon to plan and implement various programmes in order to attract external funding. This trend of development assistance and the race amongst the ULBs to attract aid and FDI investments in pursuit of creating world class cities is said to have been accelerated by the Global Urban and Local Government Strategy 2000 of the World Bank, the aim of which was to promote sustainable cities and towns that fulfill the promise of development for their inhabitants- in particular by improving the lives of the poor and promoting equity-while contributing to the progress of the country as a whole. The strategy recognizes the ULB as the lowest tier and the key institution in allocating resources and promoting social equity at the local level. It thus envisages the ULB to be the chief actor in implementing the urban agenda which comprises of four requisites namely,

## **Competitiveness**

Inviting cities to compete in national and international markets, the strategy calls for cities to define a proactive agenda to enhance their prospects for economic growth and development in the global market wherein local economic development approaches should be explored that promote diverse rather than dualistic growth. The growth should serve domestic as well as international

markets and also nourish the potential of the small scale and informal sector leading to a creation of a resilient local economy.

### **Bankability**

The City must be able to effectively mobilize financial resources and assets. Therefore bankability implies creditworthiness of the city in gaining access to capital markets for which it must develop an equitable and sustainable local finance system. The strategy highlights lending operations that would encourage the transition to market based municipal credit systems.

### **Good Governance and Management**

As per the renewed strategy, good governance implies inclusion and representation of all groups in the urban society through the adoption of approaches by the ULB such as participatory planning, public oversight of expenditure and service delivery, facilitation of Public Private partnerships and flexible arrangements to involve the private sector in service delivery that can reach the poor as well.

### **Livability**

The renewed strategy calls for improving livability in the cities to ensure that the poor achieve a healthy and dignified standard of living that permits them to share the resources in the society in an equitable manner. The strategy suggests adoption of participatory market sensitive urban planning methods that would steer the real estate and public transport investments in a manner to make employment and housing accessible to all residents in more compact and mixed developments.

In order to achieve the objectives of the strategy the World Bank suggests four instruments that would earn its support i.e., National Urban Strategies which would aim to place the urban agenda within the macroeconomic and comprehensive development framework, City Development Strategies which are initiated by the ULBs and are a blueprint of the cities prospect for economic development, while identifying priorities for assistance (including investment from the World Bank) to implement the city development strategy, Scaling up of services for the poor including upgrading low income neighborhoods wherein the city poor would be the direct beneficiaries of the services for which the ULB can seek funding directly from the aid organizations to scale up and improve poor areas of the city and integrate them with city wide networks, expanding assistance for capacity building refers to the Banks emphasis on channelising support to intermediately networks for exchange of knowledge and expertise amongst the ULBs involved in urban management and service delivery.

The renewed strategy thus depicts a rather pragmatic approach wherein the aid organizations recommend activities that must also move to provide equitable benefits of the cities growth to its poor residents. It is assumed that the new avenues and opportunities would be created when cities become bankable and competitive, attracting global capital made possible through the channels of good governance and management. Based upon their experience and assumptions the aid institutions have succeeded in pushing in the neo urban paraphernalia. As such the state and local governments are in a tizzy to follow the lead and the race for world class urban centres has well begun.

### **Amritsar City: A Growth Profile**

The 400 year old journey of Amritsar city from a religious hamlet to a vibrant metropolis can indeed be termed as a distinctive transition marked by trials and tribulations manifesting its demographic and physical growth over this period. The morphological origin and growth of the city can be traced back to 1576 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Akbar when the execution of the holy tank was carried out under the aegis of Guru Ramdas and the building of the Harmandir Sahib in 1589 A.D. As shown in Table 1, Population witnessed a growth of 18.7% between decades 1891-1901 followed by a downward trend for decade 1901-1911 (-5.9.5 percent) primarily due to epidemics in the city. Thereafter till partition a rapid upward trend is observed with growth rate as high as 65.30 percent for 1921-31 and 47.64 percent for 1931-1941. Spatially the city grew from an area of 840 acres (walled city) in 1849 to about 13sq miles in the 1940s. The Improvement Trust established in 1949 framed about 59 schemes for the redevelopment of the walled city as also development schemes were framed for outer city, primarily of residential nature such as Model Town, Green Avenue, East Mohan Nagar and Ranjit Avenue.

**Table 1: Population growth of Amritsar City 1855-2001**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Decadal growth rate(%)</b>
1855	122181	-
1868	135813	11.15
1881	151896	11.84
1891	136766	-10.87
1901	162429	18.77
1911	152756	-5.96
1921	160218	4.88
1931	264840	65.30
1941	391211	47.64

1951	336114	-14.04
1961	390055	16.05
1971	454805	16.66
1981	594844	30.79
1991	708835	19.16
2001	1011327	42.67
2011(projected)	1442860	42.67

Source: Gauba.A, 1988, Census of India, Punjab Series

Meanwhile the Municipal Committee was upgraded to Corporation status in 1976 to cater to provision of civic amenities to the growing population. The city got its first master plan in 1975 to promote balanced and orderly growth in the city and subsequently this master plan has been revised twice, first time in 1987 and second time in 2001 basically to be attune to the changes occurring on ground.

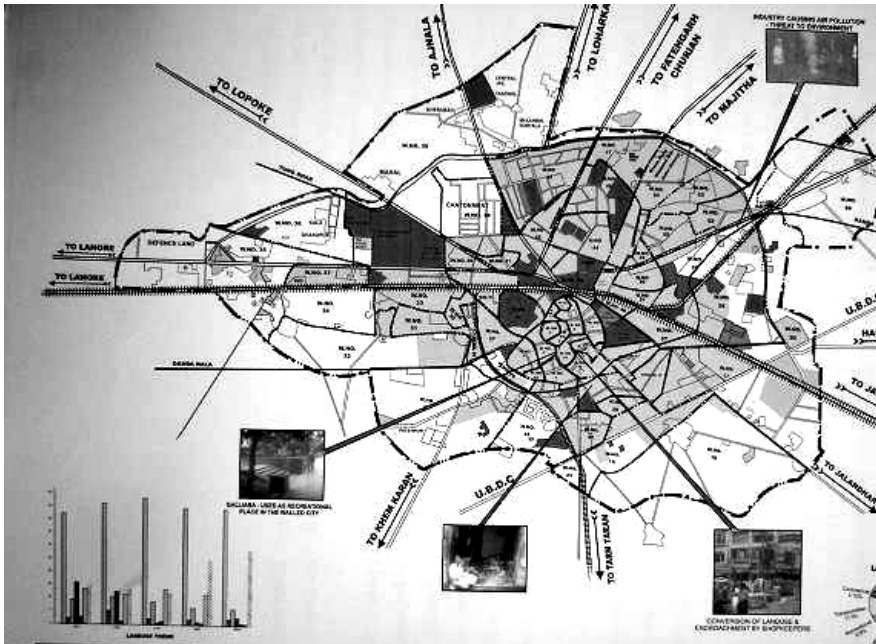
The period between 1983 and 1990 was marked by turmoil due to terrorism which can again be described as a dark chapter in the city's developmental history. Population growth rates fell viz a viz the previous decade and the negative impacts were acutely visible on the growth accelerating sectors such as industrial and commercial. However having emerged from the shadow of the gun, post 1990, the city has bounced back to make swift strides to become the second largest city of Punjab State after Ludhiana and achieving the fastest growth rate(42%) amongst all the class I centres of Punjab for the decade 1991-2001. Consequently Amritsar has risen to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> metropolis in Punjab, is ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> in the list of 35 metropolitan cities as per census 2001 and is 274<sup>th</sup> in the world's list of 1000 largest urban settlements for 2005. The population projection assuming a constant growth rate of 42.67% is expected to touch 1.4 million by 2011. Table 2 indicates that in terms of areal extent, from a mere 7648 acres in 1971 to 20553 acres in 2001, the physical expansion has increased by one and a half times.

### **Transformation of the City facades**

The remarkable pace of growth in the ongoing decade can be attributed to an extent to conditions of political stability and primarily to the wave of liberalization boon in the post 1990 period that is now changing the face of the city. As a result there is a mushrooming of multinational operations and spurt of FDI investments primarily due to the liberalized Government policies to attract international investment to the city. Moreover the declaration of SEZ (special economic zone)

status for the city and its consideration for the world heritage city status<sup>3</sup> and the inclusion of the city for urban renewal and integrated development under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission 2005<sup>4</sup> further stimulated the city's development potential and bolstered its move to being a global cosmopolitan city as well.

### Existing Land use Map Amritsar



Source: DTP Office, Amritsar

In fact most current developments in the city are representative of the transformations, with affluent shopping plazas, shopping malls and multiplexes bringing about a sea change into the city's growth profile and impacting its inhabitants as never before.

<sup>3</sup> Though marked by controversies with no concrete decision on this issue till now, yet the fallout is anticipated to be positive for the city's development particularly in terms of tourist infrastructure.

<sup>4</sup> The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, 2005 launched by the Central Government targets sixty four cities in all and three cities from Punjab, i.e. Ludhiana, Chandigarh and Amritsar and under the aegis of this programme, large-scale infrastructural upgradations and new provisions are to be made in the select cities.

**Table-2: Land Use Changes in Amritsar City, 1971-2001(Area in acres)**

Class	1971		1987		1991		2001		2010 (estimated)	
	Area	%	Area	%	Area	%	Area	%	Area	%
Residential	3235	42.32%	4472.18	(46.66%)	6602.31	(48.42%)	9042.67	(43.99%)	13023.23	(46%)
commercial	173	2.26%	485.77	(5.09%)	513.76	(3.77%)	622.44	(3.03%)	1415.56	(5%)
Industrial	758	9.91%	1098.01	(11.45%)	1222.65	(8.98%)	1356.03	(6.60%)	1698.68	(6%)
Transportation	1028	(13.44%)	1077.95	(11.25%)	1785.81	(13.11%)	2363.79	(11.50)	4246.70	(15%)
Public/semi	1209	(15.81%)	1117.55	(11.66%)	1192.31	(8.74%)	1384.18	(6.75%)	2831.13	(10%)
Recreational	155	(2.02%)	151.9	(1.58%)	151.9	(1.11%)	151.9	(0.74%)	1415.56	(5%)
Government land	1090	(14.25%)	1179.99	(12.31%)	2164.7	(15.87%)	5634.07	(27.41%)	3680.47	(13%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7648</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>9583.6</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>13634.4</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>20552.87</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>28311.38</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

**Source: Divisional Town Planner Office, Amritsar**

Residential development is by far witnessing the greatest impact of privatization with a large number of Punjab Urban Development Authority (PUDA)<sup>5</sup> approved residential colonies being developed by private licensed colonizers and also big construction giants such as the Ansal Group, Sahara group, Emaar-MGF<sup>6</sup>(a Dubai based company) and the Clarion Properties investing in large scale residential projects in the city. A Delhi-based real estate developer and asset management company, Alpha G Corp has designed and recently completed a mega commercial project comprising of retail, entertainment, luxury hotel and boutiques on a total space of 2 million sq.feet. The American Retail giant Walmart opened its wholesale outlet covering an area of 10,000 sq feet in Amritsar in May 2009. Retail chains and brand outlets now dot the commercial landscape of the city. Infact the city has proved its absorption capacity in terms of providing a threshold sustainable base to mega investments of this nature.

The City Improvement Trust continues to be a key player in the City's development having initiated significant projects in the recent times such as the Nehru Shopping Complex, New Amritsar Development Scheme, City Centre, District Centre, New Truck Stand, Shopping Plaza<sup>7</sup>, Rose Garden, Ranjit Avenue, D Block 97 acres residential cum commercial scheme to name a few. In addition, efforts have been on to make Amritsar a global city and a main tourist destination by upgradation of the Rajasansi Airport to international standards as also the provision of the new ultra modern bus stand.

More over ambitious plans such as the Galliara Scheme<sup>8</sup>, Sri Guru Ramdas Integrated Plan envisaged by Municipal Corporation for the areas adjoining the Harmandir Sahib, the Durgiana Temple Area Beautification Plan, the development of Approach road from Sherawala Gate to Jallianwala Bagh have been initiated to boost the tourist inflow to the city. With the purpose of upgrading accessibility and mobility links in the city, two ambitious projects have been ongoing. A four-lane elevated road under JNNURM is expected to complete by 2010 end. Nearly 60 per cent of the work has been completed. The elevated road, estimated to cost Rs 210 crore, will link Maqboolpura Chowk and Bhandari Bridge in Amritsar. It is 3.25 km long and 17.2 metres wide and shall rest on a single pier.

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<sup>5</sup> Now known as Amritsar Development Authority (ADA).

<sup>6</sup> The Emaar-MGF, a Dubai based company is scheduled to invest Rs 1000 crore in building infrastructure and modern township projects in Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Mohali. This is claimed to be the largest FDI investment in any real estate project in India so far.

<sup>7</sup> Known as Scheme Number 62, the proposed shopping plaza boasting of international brands and labels is proposed to be developed on court road adjacent to Aanam theatre.

<sup>8</sup> The Galliara Scheme framed in 1985 to develop the 300 metre radius around the Harmandir Sahib is now relaunched by the Improvement Trust and in addition to other components, it shall comprise of a Helipad and a 450 metre subway from fountain chowk to the temple premises.



Another two-lane elevated road from Ram Talai Chowk to Golden Temple (0.9 km length and 8.50-12.5 metres width) is also under construction. The Central Government has approved Rs 149.49 crore for these elevated road projects. While the Central Government is providing Rs 74.74 crore, the balance is to be borne by the state, Rs 29.89 crores and Amritsar Municipal Corporation to a tune of Rs 105.35 crore. The ambitious Verka-Amritsar-Wagah four lane road projects is under construction with an investment of 205.88 crores and is likely to be completed by the end of 2010.

It is anticipated that once these projects are completed the tourist inflow will increase manifold from its current figure of 6 lakh/ annum approximately. In the light of the above developments, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Amritsar has grown to be a metropolis with a multi faceted character reflected through an interface with its past and current growth dynamics. The nebulous star shape the city had acquired due to the linear development along the major roads is fast moving to assume a more compact form with the gaps filling up rapidly to accommodate the spillovers. However peripheral growth is still very much linear along the major access ways and the urban sprawl continues well into the city hinterland indicative of the development patterns that are likely to follow if the trend is not reversed through policy and plan interventions. Given the current growth and development profile, an attempt is now made to analyse the situation under the four paraphernalia proposed by the World Bank as mentioned earlier.

### **Competitiveness**

The last decade and the last 5-6 years in particular especially after the launch of the JNNURM have seen the city gearing up to create grounds for national and international investors to bring capital and development inflows to the city. The local government has come up with a proactive agenda to attract investments in residential, infrastructure and commercial sector primarily. Single window systems have been introduced to speed up the administrative processes and ensure smooth running for the corporate giants. This bid to attract capital to the city has resulted in a real estate boom and sky rocketing of land prices both in the centre and the periphery. The creation of dry port and the developments to make the airport into a world class one have further boosted the prospects of trade and commercial developments. A lot of capital investments particularly in the residential and commercial sector is flowing into the city. Commercial shopping malls are now on way to dominate the cityscape and the big brand luxuries are now available in the city.

However on the other extreme, the informal sector continues to operate without any kind of a support from the ULBs contrary to the dictates of the renewed strategy. In the absence of any support in form of infrastructure and space, this sector has encroached all prominent roads. However with the coming of the malls and the encroachment of parking is proving to be a threat even to the commercial informal sector. As far as the poor are concerned then these plush mall developments are not for them, they are only for a handful of the city upper class who can afford to shop there. So while the city is competing and attracting capital investments the local government has failed to capitalize these developments to benefit the poor in any manner. As a result none of the development both in the public or the private sector can be termed as pro-poor development.

### **Bankability**

As per the renewed strategy the city must be able to effectively mobilize financial resources and assets and display creditworthiness. The main ULB discharging city management functions i.e., the Amritsar Municipal Corporation is trying to establish itself in this context. The ULB has been able to increase its income substantially as the following table reveals.

The city creditability can also be judged from the fact that it is making loan repayments averaging Rs 620 lakhs annually to the banks and other organizations from which it had borrowed and in addition it has been successful in getting external funding to the tune of Rs 462 crores from Japan National Bank aimed at providing civic amenities in poor and underdeveloped colonies. Besides it has also been successful in getting aid amounting to Rs 360 crores for upgradation of sewerage system under the JNNURM.

**Table 3: Income Generation Trends of Amritsar Municipal Corporation**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>% increase</b>
2001-02	4299.64	--
2004-05	4966.83	15.51
2006-07	10849.29	118.43
2007-08	21272.18	96.06

**Sour: Annual Reports, Municipal Corporation, Amritsar**

Recently the Municipal Corporation had also prepared a report for seeking external aid (from the Asian Development Bank) for water supply network in the city. It can be said that the ULB has demonstrated the capability of being creditworthy and has been thus successful in gaining access to national and international capital

markets. Besides, the city has also attracted special grants from the central government the tune of Rs 100 crores in 2007-08 and Rs 65 crores for 2008-09 respectively for various development projects in the city.

### **Good Governance and Urban Management**

As mentioned in the renewed strategy, while every provision and reforms are being undertaken to facilitate private sector participation in the city development no thought has been given to adopt participatory approaches in urban planning or service delivery in the city by the concerned ULBs. In the absence of a long term well conceived urbanization policy as well as adhocism in master plan formulation and implementation, planned development and expansion of the city did not really taken place till date. Whatever has developed is isolated and piecemeal in approach with hardly any visual or physical integration and resultantly the city can aptly described as a 'confused concrete jargon' symbolizing pandemonium in all aspects of physical development. After 1975 no comprehensive development plan was prepared for the city and a makeshift approach was adopted with the revision of the 1975 master plan in 1987 and 2001.

However one of the landmark influences of the renewed strategy of the World Bank has been to prepare city development plans and Master plans reinforced by the JNNURM requirements in the Indian context. As such the City Development Plan initiated by the Municipal Corporation Amritsar in consultancy with CEPT<sup>9</sup> Ahmadabad has been completed and approved for implementation. The Master plan formulation for Amritsar was initiated in the year 2008 by hiring a private consultant company i.e., SAI Consulting Engineers Pvt Ltd. The deliberations for the finalization of the same are underway. However it is important for implementation bodies to ensure that the Master plan does not remain a mere paper copy but is imbibed in true spirit for its successful implementation.

Till date the profiteering tendencies of the development authorities capped with political and bureaucratic jargons can be held responsible for the negative physical growth though one might also say that these authorities are also ill equipped to deal with issues emerging from hyper growth. The ULB has certainly created avenues and opportunities for private sector participation in the city growth and development but have abetted transgressions in a big way at the cost of livability wherein the zoning regulations and building byelaws have been relaxed to enable the private players to produce developments of their liking. As such Land use

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<sup>9</sup> Centre for Environment Planning and Technology

changes<sup>10</sup> have been allowed without giving a thought to the impact that would follow. Lung spaces have disappeared in the city and ironically the city which boasted of numerous gardens in the pre independence times has hardly any green space<sup>11</sup> left with most of the parks having been converted to other land uses, primarily the commercial uses.

Away from the inner city, the periphery presents an equally dismal scene with the agricultural land being fast converted to residential plots by both licensed and unlicensed private colonizers. The absence of appropriate periphery controls and regulations has resulted in this outcome. As such informal and chaotic development continues unabated on the fringe primarily in the area falling in the planning area boundary limits leaving little scope for planned and orderly expansion in the future. Coming back to the renewed strategy which seeks to provide good governance to the inhabitants particularly the poor, in case of Amritsar City what is happening is precisely the opposite as far as land is concerned. The ULB is enabling provision of land and services to the private players. As land turns more expensive in the city as well as the periphery, the poor are completely alienated from the development process and tend to inhabit isolated patches and nooks and corners in the city. It is anticipated that with more and more commercial oriented developments in the city even the land under slums will be passed on to the private players for use. High rate of corruption haunts the key development agencies and is also one of the biggest hindrances in good governance. No wonder the poor thus stand totally vindicated under the current scene of urban development and management in the city.

## **Livability**

A very grave challenge the city faces is the massive growth of slum and squatter settlements. With almost 30 percent of its population living in such sub standard settlements, Amritsar stands only next to Ludhiana City in Punjab in terms of the slum population.

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<sup>10</sup> Existing building byelaws provide for change in landuse from residential to commercial with conversion charges of Rs 1000/sqft. Obviously residents/ developers are willing to exploit this option for lucrative gains.

<sup>11</sup> One such exception being the Rambagh gardens but the same historic garden has been eclipsed by developments of clubs for the city elite within its boundary. Large chunks of land in Rambagh gardens have been leased by the Municipal Corporation to three clubs. In addition to noise during functions, they dispose waste in open within the garden area. In this context, a City NGO, Amritsar Vikas Manch had filed a case in High Court for removal of the clubs, which is still going on.

**Table 4: Total Slum Population to City Population**

Year	City population	Slum population	% slum to city
1981	589299	32632	5.53
1991	708835	123000	17.35
2001	1011327	307109	30.00

**Source: Compiled from Census of India and Municipal Corporation records**

At present there are 63 notified slum areas and 148 unauthorized colonies in the City. The total area under notified slums is 1309 acres which is about 14% of the total residential area of the city. The poor living conditions are also evident from the fact that a majority of the units are single room tenements of the size 100-200 sq ft and the room occupancy ratio is as high as 1:5(5 persons per room)<sup>12</sup>. In addition to this, these settlements are also characterized by poor access to basic facilities. Safe drinking water is a serious problem. A large number of inhabitants (30 percent) depend upon shallow hand pumps the water from which in most cases is contaminated. 10 percent of the residents do not have water supply upto 300 meters. Access to safe sanitation is equally alarming as 46 percent of the city households do not have a sewerage connection and 36 percent of the city is still not covered by sewerage lines. As such the road sides, rail reservation area and other vacant plots are used for open defecation by poor segments of the city. These are also the sites for disposal of solid waste as the waste collection system in the city is highly inadequate.

One of the key objectives cited as a mandatory reform in the JNNURM is to provide security of tenure at affordable prices to the urban poor<sup>13</sup>. An assessment of the slum improvement programmes launched in the city indicates that the BSUP (Basic Services for the Urban Poor) has been launched in the City under the aegis of the JNNURM. However the implementation and coverage of the BSUP is extremely limited. Only 3 slums have been identified for execution of BSUP projects at a cost of 5.59 crores. In terms of shelter provision only 320 units are to be constructed for the urban poor. This means that the coverage of the BSUP shall be extremely limited and as contrary to the provisions of the JNNURM regarding land and shelter provision for the urban poor the JNNURM. The JNNURM Report on Physical Targets and achievements up to 31/07/2008 mentions the BSUP

<sup>12</sup> Data quoted from Sandhu, et.al, 2001 which is based upon the study of three slum localities.

<sup>13</sup> Mentioned under the Urban Local Body Reforms under the heading of Mandatory Reforms in the NURM document, reading as follows, "Provision of basic services to urban poor including security of tenure at affordable prices, improved housing, water supply, sanitation and ensuring delivery of other already existing universal services of the government for education, health and social security".

performance in Amritsar as non encouraging and the scarcity of land as one of the prime reasons for the neglect of the shelter provision component under BSUP.

However a component to this effect has been made in the provision of formal sector operations to cater to the existing and future residential needs of the poor. As per the Improvement trust regulations for developing residential areas, 5-10% of the residential site must be designated for the EWS<sup>14</sup> category.

Through a survey<sup>15</sup> it was found that the though land had indeed been reserved for the EWS sections, the actual beneficiaries were not really the EWS as both the fixed plot sizes and the price were beyond the EWS capacity and moreover the Improvement Trust does not have any mechanism in place to check that the designated plots are actually being disposed of to the households that can really be categorized as EWS. As far as the Private (formal) developers are concerned, The Punjab Apartment and Property Regulation Act 1995 (section 143) states that the promoter (developer) shall when the area of the colony is 40 hectares or more, reserve upto 10% of the area under residential flats and plots for being sold /leased to such persons belonging to the EWS sections of the society.

Therefore as far as the state level regulations are concerned, the above mentioned legislation provides a legal support and mechanism to cater to land for housing the EWS. But on ground this is actually not happening and what is happening is not realistic as it ignores the affordability profile of the target groups. For instance incase of one such privately developed colony, the S& G enclave (size 70 acres) it was found that there was no reservation for the poor, the smallest plot size being fixed at 150 sq yard and priced at Rs 3200/sq yard which is way beyond the reach of even most of the middle income households what to talk of the EWS households. Therefore it is evident from this example that despite the reservations being in place, the ground operations are quite in contrary and perhaps reinforcing of the same issue of reserving land for the poor or provision of basic services might not take place despite the seemingly honest intentions of the JNNURM

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<sup>14</sup> Abbreviated form of Economically Weaker Sections.

<sup>15</sup> Sandhu.K, research paper on Access to land by the urban poor in Amritsar City, India; Grim Realities and Blurred Hopes. Detailed surveys were conducted to analyse the formal and informal land market operations and conclusions drawn indicated the further alienation of the poor primarily from the formal (public and private) land markets.

unless an accountability is maintained and a regulatory role is strongly played by the authorities in charge.

As far as the provision of urban basic services is concerned, concerted efforts are on under the JNNURM initiatives and a series of projects targeting water and sanitation have been launched. One of the biggest problems the city faced was regarding to municipal solid waste management. Under the JNNURM initiatives, the first phase of the Municipal Solid Waste Management programme for the city was launched in Jan 2009 wherein a private company has been contracted to manage the waste. A DPR related to the second phase of the programme involving the setting up of a waste to energy plant at the cost of Rs 84 crores has been submitted by the Amritsar Municipal Corporation.

The water supply projects under JNNURM are being initiated by the PWSSB at the cost of Rs 1902 Lakhs that shall benefit seventeen residential locations in the city. The sewerage project under JNNURM have been initiated at the cost of Rs 360 crores and shall benefit twenty nine residential locations, providing about 54300 sewer connections to low income households. If these projects are implemented in true spirit, it is anticipated that livability and quality of life improvement of the residents is likely to take place. However a rethoric cannot be created on account of the projects that are in the pipeline or in process of being implemented. A complete livability analysis post implementation of the projects shall need to be undertaken to arrive at a realistic judgment between a positive transformation o a transgression in this context.

## **Conclusions**

The city of Amritsar is on its way in attaining the status of a global city primarily due to its being a major tourist destination and having emerged as one of the youngest metropolitan cities of India. What the city needs is the capability to provide for all its inhabitants particularly the poor and in this context the JNNURM does seem to provide a base for social interventions to upgrade the lives of all the residents and the poor in particular. This type of a responsibility can only be fulfilled if a city is provided with a well conceived action plan that seeks to integrate the multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral aspects of the city regulating yet providing for balanced growth opportunities, pragmatic and in tune with the realities of the economic growth paradigms.

Given the current global macro-economic conditions and their impacts on the city's morphology and livability, it is essential to frame appropriate measures to

ensure that the growth is not accompanied by undesirable transformations and transgressions that adversely affect the city and its inhabitants. As such if the ULB surrenders completely to the free market mechanisms, infrastructure would indeed be upgraded, basic services would be developed but the big question is whether they would be accessible and equitable to all especially to the poor. In a profit oriented setup where the private providers will try and maximize on profits, the answer does appear to be negative. Rather unregulated privatized urban development with the government agencies playing the role of dormant partners or weak facilitators will in no way benefit the city residents. The current developments in Amritsar City are indicative of this perception and fear. The aid agencies should not assume that the development in the free market arena would be equitable and that effects and benefits would filter down automatically to the poor, rather it has to be ensured by the ULBs and the aid agencies that the social objectives spelled out so vehemently in their development strategy documents as in case of the JNNURM must be achieved at the grassroots levels to benefit the lesser fortunate inhabitants of the city in particular.

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