



FAQ on the JNNURM and the RAY: Why might this impact your lives?

1. What are the JNNURM and the JNNURM II?

Because cities are struggling to meet rising demands for basic infrastructure like water, roads, and drainage, the central government announced the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) in 2005. The program made available Rs. 50,000 crore of central government money with equal matching funds expected from cities and states for constructing urban infrastructure, a large and unprecedented amount of money for cities. Chennai had Rs. 4973.71 crore worth of total projects approved under the JNNURM (equal to almost 270% of Corporation spending for last year) **with significant amounts supposed to be spent for the urban poor**. In 2012, the government announced that they were planning a second phase for the program soon, JNNURM II, although few details have emerged about it so far.

2. What is the RAY?

The Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) was announced in June 2009 by the then-President of India Pratibha Patil, and is specifically aimed at creating “slum-free cities.” The scheme is aimed at providing support for basic services, slum redevelopment, and new construction to states that are willing to assign property rights to slum dwellers. While the scheme has many progressive goals for the poor, including formalizing unrecognized slums and providing property rights for the poor, it places a great deal of emphasis on private sector involvement in slum redevelopment. In Bombay, where such private sector involvement has been attempted, the outcomes have been extremely poor for slum-dwellers. Right now, the RAY appears to have renewed energy under the new Minister for Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Ajay Maken. In Chennai, mapping under the RAY has already been completed in one zone and has started in many others, and planning is expected to start in the coming months. News reports suggest that up to one lakh dwelling units are to be built throughout the state at a cost of Rs. 7,500 crore under the Rajiv Awas Yojana over the next five years.¹

3. Why is it important for you to understand these projects?

- a. Although the JNNURM’s component for the urban poor was called “Basic Services for the Urban Poor,” almost all of the money allotted for Chennai 77% went to building large-scale resettlement colonies like Kannagi Nagar far from the city center, where residents had houses but struggled without consistent access to basic services for many years. Now the government has already started construction on almost 30,000 units in Perumbakkam, with G + 7 height. Based on past experiences, there may be serious concerns about providing services here, which will be made more acute because of the building height.
- b. Large infrastructure projects, some of which are partly funded by the central government, have led to many more slum evictions in the city – which use

¹ “TNSCB move for better quality,” *The Hindu* 26 January 2012.

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resettlement colonies to house some (but not all) of the displaced residents. According to local groups, the existence of resettlement colonies actually seems to be enabling more slum evictions.

- c. Both the JNNURM and the RAY contain provisions that could greatly benefit the poor: both call for greater participation by the poor in planning, emphasize in-situ redevelopment (in the same place that the slum is located), and property rights for the poor. The RAY also emphasizes formalizing unrecognized slums, and provides opportunities for community-led mapping. However, these provisions are unlikely to be followed without significant pressure from citizens.

4. Under the JNNURM, how much money has been spent under the various components, and what kind of infrastructure has been built? What was the impact on the poor in particular?

The total of cost of all 35 approved projects under the Urban Infrastructure and Governance component for Chennai is Rs. 3,585.44 crore as of May 2012, 40% of which went for storm water drain projects, 31% for water supply, and 24% for sewerage, with small amounts for heritage, roads and flyovers, and solid waste management projects. Except one project of Rs. 21 crore, none of these projects mention connecting these new networks to slums and informal settlements, so it is unclear that these large investments helped poorer communities at all.

The total cost of all 24 approved projects under the Basic Services for the Urban Poor component is Rs. 1388.27 crore, 77% for resettlement colonies built by the TNSCB, and 23% for other housing and infrastructure projects. Resettlement housing did not have adequate services for residents, although the government has been working on addressing gaps in recent months. Although the program was supposed to provide property rights to the poor, the only way in which this was provided was through lease cum sale deeds for those who were moved to resettlement colonies, a very small percentage of the city's poor. Residents of unrecognized informal settlements, who make up an estimated 70% of the city's slum-dwellers, did not receive any projects for accessing water/sanitation.

5. Are there opportunities for residents to shape the RAY and JNNURM II?

There are supposed to be participatory planning processes for putting together the "Slum Free City Plan of Action" for the RAY and the "City Development Plan" for the JNNURM. However, past experience suggests that without an active push from citizens, participation may not take place as intended in these plans. There are also ways in which residents can proactively take action without waiting for invitation from the state and city government, and some of these actions have been successful in other cities in India. These include community mapping of slums, which has been successful in Cuttack and Pune, creating citizen-led 'Slum Free City Plans of Action,' and pushing for declaration of all slums in the city. There needs to be an urgent, concerted, and city-wide citizen intervention to ensure that these new programs benefit a large number of the city's poor.