

WEBINAR

“Putting Informality at the Centre of City Resilience”

Date: Saturday, 21 August 2021

Time: 11.00 am to 01.15 pm

Cities across India have been experiencing a rise in urban poor living in informal settlements, along with the increase in the extent of informality in urban employment which is as high as 70 per cent (Chen and Raveendran, 2012)¹. Most people living in the informal settlements face multiple vulnerabilities due to inadequate access to basic services (housing, roads, water, sanitation, etc.), frequent climate events, and many more. These vulnerabilities exacerbate for people living in settlements located in areas that are more prone to natural hazards, such as slopes and riverbanks, or near industries and dump sites. Studies have indicated the gendered impact of climate change, wherein women informal workers and women living in informal settlements are disproportionately affected during such unusual events.

City resilience is viewed as a step forward for protecting the urban poor from these challenges, along with improving the lives of the next generation of the urban inhabitants. A resilient city is defined as the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience (100 Resilient Cities). However, to make cities resilient, it is important to acknowledge the needs of those in the most vulnerable situations by integrating informality. The concept and ideology of informality has taken a spot back in the agenda of urban planning, where various policies and initiatives are being pursued to manage to manage informality. Roy (2009)² discusses informality in terms of the two-fold condition of what is legal and illegal, authorised and unauthorised, and legitimate and illegitimate. Whereas, in the urban context informality can be understood from multiple frames such as, spatial categorisation (slum), socio-economic groups (informalised labor), forms of organisation (rule-based/relation-based), and knowledge and practices.

The Indian government has carried forward several urban development schemes to promote infrastructural development and sustainability of urbanisation. Many of these schemes emphasise on top-down categorisation of community needs including public transportation, housing, street lights, roads and reducing pollution, rather than on social vulnerabilities of informal dwellers. In the context of understanding these vulnerabilities, its important to note the different layers of complexities according to geographic and socio-economic factors and experiences acquired through each climatic event. Due to the informal nature of these settlements, residents are less likely to access basic services such as sanitation, clean water and public transport. This negatively impacts their capacities to withstand climate change impacts as envisioned by policy makers. As a result, people survive disasters and crises by adapting through locally designed strategies, which form important starting points for any risk assessment.

The question that arises is how can government measures address the needs of informal settlements which are at the core of the climate resilience? It is becoming increasingly clear that giving voice to people living in informal settlements in relation to urban development and planning can contribute

¹ Urban Employment in India: Recent Trends and Patterns (2012):

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277743229_Urban_Employment_in_India_Recent_Trends_and_Patterns

² Urban Informality (2009): <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/Urban-Informality-Roy.pdf>

towards building collective, sustainable, and inclusive resilience. Understanding existing local coping strategies, their scale, and nature has been highlighted by different scholars to support initiatives that build resilience at grassroots levels to develop adaptation plans.

With the growing need to embed informality at the heart of city resilience and the urban discourse, various institutions including academic institutions can play an instrumental role in supporting this approach. Higher education institutions can develop research-based resilience building solutions to cities across India alongside, partnerships between community and institutions can be built to understand the informality from different disciplines and create robust community engagement interventions.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are increasingly being seen as important stakeholders to foster community-engaged approaches for building climate resilience locally, through incorporation of such approaches in teaching and research across field disciplines. To have deeper discussions about the role of higher education institutions in synergising urban planning and development for building climate and community resilience, as well as ways in which values of equity and social justice influence and shape climate strategies, **Manipal University Jaipur, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), and Building Resilient Urban Communities (BReUCom)** initiative will host a webinar on “**Putting Informality at the Centre of City Resilience**” on Saturday, 21 August 2021 (11.00 am to 01.15 pm).

The webinar aims at addressing the following questions:

- 1. How can urban informality be included in the resilience planning for cities?*
- 2. How can the partnerships among urban informal community, local governance and other stakeholders be enhanced for building resilience?*
- 3. What role can academic and higher education institutions play in integrating urban informality in city resilience planning?*

About BReCom

Building Resilient Urban Communities (BREUCOM) (<https://www.breucum.eu>) project was conceptualised and implemented by six Indian partners and two European partners to equip the Indian Higher Education Institutions to respond emerging resilience challenges. The project was supported by the European Union under its Erasmus+ Programme for Capacity Building in Higher Education. The project, started in January 2019, has contributed to developing several case studies and Professional Development Programmes (PDPs) by the academic partners. BREUCOM hence helped bridge gap between planning and architecture training to working environments to understand and react sensitively to community needs and partnerships.

Indian Partners: Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE), Delhi, India; Kamla Raheja Vidyaniidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies (KRVIA), Mumbai; National Institute of Technology (NITH), Hamirpur, India; School of Planning and Architecture (SPAB), Bhopal, India; School of Planning and Architecture (SPAV), Vijayawada, India; Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), Mumbai, India.

European Partners: Danube University Krems (DUK), Austria, Coordinator; University of Twente (UTWENTE), Enschede, The Netherlands.

About Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)

Established in 1982, Participatory Research in Asia – PRIA (www.pria.org) is a global centre for participatory research and training based in India, New Delhi. PRIA's work is focused on empowerment of the excluded through capacity building, knowledge building and policy advocacy. PRIA's professional expertise and practical insights are utilised by other civil society groups, NGOs, governments, donors, trade unions, private businesses and academic institutions around the world. Associations with academia focus on community-based research and policy advocacy to support social responsibility of higher education institutions. PRIA works to promote the teaching and learning of participatory research among students and the next generation of development professionals. PRIA's Founder-President Dr Rajesh Tandon was awarded UNESCO Chair on Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.

About Manipal University Jaipur

Manipal University Jaipur (MUJ) has carved a niche in the field of academia since its inception in 2011. MUJ is a multi-faculty, multidisciplinary University, offering an amalgamation of courses at all levels of UG, PG & Doctoral studies across diverse streams, including Engineering, Architecture, Design, Science, Management, Law, Commerce and Humanities etc. Carrying forward the legacy of the Manipal Group, the University is dedicated to expanding the frontiers of knowledge through rich teaching- learning process and quality research. The University has earned many golden feathers in the form of prestigious awards and accolades.

The University has set a benchmark, offering a conducive learning environment with committed teaching faculty and state-of-the-art-infrastructure. Here, in Manipal University Jaipur, we hone the competencies of the students, inculcate, and foster lifelong learning skills during their professional education. We believe in the holistic development of students, harnessing the young innovative minds and making them responsible citizens of the country. As a stellar institution in the field of professional education and research, this multidisciplinary university, takes pride in its diversity and opens its portals to young aspirants who want to build a future replete with opportunities and possibilities.

Programme Agenda

11.00 am -11.05 am: **Welcome, introduction and background**

- **Prof. (Dr.) Madhura Yadav, Director**, School of Architecture and Design, Manipal University Jaipur

11.05 am - 11.50 am: **Panel Discussion- Putting Informality at the Centre of City Resilience**

Chair: Prof Madhura Yadav

Panellists (6 minutes each):

- Dr. Barsha Poricha, Technical Head, Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence, New Delhi
- Prof. Chetan Vaidya, Former Director, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi
- Dr. Manish Shrama, Asistant Professor, School of Architecture and Design, Manipal University Jaipur

Open Discussion (20 minutes)

Participants will be encouraged to write their comments and questions using Q&A feature in Zoom.

Consolidation by the Chair (7 minutes)

11.50 am - 11.55 am: **Screen Break**

11.55 am – 01.00 pm: **Roundtable Conversation - Remodelling Urban Planning and Management Education for Inclusive Urban Resilience**

Chair and Moderator: Dr. Rajesh Tandon, President, PRIA & UNESCO Chair

Panellists (6 minutes)

- Ms. Sheela Patel, Executive Director, SPARC
- Ar. Bibhu K. Nayak, Assistant Professor, School of Architecture and Design, Manipal University Jaipur
- Prof. (Dr.) Madhura Yadav, Director, School of Architecture and Design, Manipal University Jaipur
- Dr. Anshu Sharma, Co-Founder, SEEDS

Future Urbanists-Urban Experts Praxis (15 minutes) [engagement with students]

Closing Remarks by Disccusants (10 mintues)

Consolidation and Closing Remarks by Chair and Moderator (10 minutes)

01.00 pm - 01.15 pm: **Vote of Thanks**

- Ms. Minali Banerjee, School of Humanities & Social sciences, Manipal University Jaipur