

Transformation Or Transgression? Impact Of Neo- Urbanism Paraphernalia On An Infant Metropolis In The Developing World

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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 of urban planning and design wherein the livability is under threat by the pace and nature of transformations occurring in these cities. 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 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 recent much hyped launch of the JNNURM(Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission) is also a step guided by the aid institutions. At the local level, access to international capital markets and attracting FDI investments 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 fast, Urban Planning has taken a complete backseat instead the fast paced developments are changing the face of the Indian city like never before. The cities are now showcasing the two extremes, one of opulence and wealth and the other of poverty and deprivation, the divide was never deeper and this is apparent in the recent spatial manifestations.

Given the context the current research is an attempt to analyze the growth dynamics and complexities of urban management taking the case of Amritsar, one of the youngest metropolitan cities of India. It is argued that the ground realities are a stark contrast to the assumptions of the aid institutions particularly when it comes to pro-poor developments and the 'over liberalized' free market mechanisms are in no way working to the advantage of the weaker sections. In conjunction with the argument the study aims to examine the spatial growth and development of Amritsar city as affected by the post reform urban planning and management scenario in the city and how these alienate the weaker and marginalized groups.

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 Governments continue 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 of the World Bank, the aim of which is "to promote sustainable cities and Towns that fulfil 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 neighbourhoods 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 intermediary 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 and the nations in the developing world are in a tizzy to follow the lead and the rat race for world class urban centres has well begun.

Amritsar City; Growth Dynamics

The case of Amritsar city with focus on its growth dynamics post urban reforms brings out the irony of current development particularly when it comes to the poor. The 400 year old journey of the 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 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.

Table 1: Population growth of Amritsar city 1855-2001

Year	Total Population	Decadal growth rate(%)
1855	122181	11.20
1868	135813	11.20
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

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

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 redevelopment¹ 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. 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

Table-II: Landuse changes in Amritsar city, 1971-2001

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

Area in acres.

Source: Divisional Town Planner Office, Amritsar

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 2nd metropolis in Punjab, is ranked 33rd in the list of 35 metropolitan cities as per census 2001 and is 274th in the world's list of 1000 largest urban settlements for 2005. 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.

The remarkable pace of growth in the ongoing decade can be attributed to an extent to conditions of political stability, softening of the Indo-Pak border and fundamentally to the wave of liberalization boon in the post 1990 period that is now changing the visage 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)² status for the city and its consideration for the world heritage

¹ The entire walled city was declared as damaged area under Punjab Development of Damaged areas Act,1951 for the purpose of redeveloping the area and restoring it to its former glory.

² The Punjab Government has recently shortlisted the DLF construction company for the SEZ project worth Rs 100 crores.

city status³ and the most recent inclusion of the city for urban renewal and integrated development under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission 2005⁴ is bound to further stimulate the city's development potential and bolster its move to being a global cosmopolitan city as well.

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. Residential development is by far witnessing the greatest impact of privatization with a large number of Punjab Urban Development Authority (PUDA) approved residential colonies being developed by private licensed colonizers and also big construction giants such as the Ansal Group, Sahara group, Emaar-MGF⁵ (a Dubai based company) and the Clarion Properties investing in large scale residential projects in the city. Simultaneously the 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 plaza⁶, etc. In addition, efforts are on to make Amritsar a global city and a main tourist destination by upgradation of the Rajasansi Airport to international standards and the city along with the new ultra modern bus stand. A proposal for a Tourist park and the four laning of N.H.1 is in the pipeline and it is anticipated that once these projects are completed the tourist inflow will increase manifold from its current figure of 8 lakh/annum approximately. More over ambitious plans such as the Galliarra Scheme⁷, Sri Guru Ramdas Integrated Plan envisaged by Municipal Corporation for the areas adjoining the Harmandir Sahib, The Durgiana Temple area Beautification Plan, Development of Approach road from Sherawala Gate to Jallianwala Bagh have been initiated to further boost the tourist inflow to the city.

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 fuzzy 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. In context of population, given the current growth rate (42.67 percent) as

³ 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.

⁴ 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, largescale infrastructural upgradations and new provisions are to be made in the select cities.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ The Galliarra 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.

assuming it to remain constant, Amritsar would be a megapolis by the year 2071 that is six decades from now.

Given the current growth dynamics an attempt is now made to analyse the situation under the four paraphernalia proposed by the World Bank as mentioned earlier.

Competitiveness

The last five years have seen the city gearing up to create grounds for national and international investors to bring capital 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 under most of the subheads as the table reveals.

Income sources	2001-02	2004-05
Octroi	3307.04	4905.66
House Tax	451.49	633.41
Building Fee	464.78	445.61
Rent on Property	162.25	199.41
Sale of Property	227.84	793.86
Water and sewerage charges	802.88	1442.27
Excise Duty	0.00	171.41
Establishment	110.85	214.17
Other Heads	4299.64	4966.83

Source; Annual Report 2004-2005, Municipal Corporation, Amritsar

The city creditability can also be judged from the fact that it is making loan repayments to the tune of 620 lakhs (for the year 2004-05) 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 colonies⁸. Very recently the Municipal Corporation has 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.

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 masterplan formulation and implementation, planned development and expansion of the city has not really taken place. What has developed is isolated and piecemeal approach with hardly any visual or physical integration and resultantly the city can aptly be described as a 'confused concrete jargon' symbolizing pandemonium in all aspects of physical development. After 1975 no comprehensive development plan has been prepared for the city and a makeshift approach has been adopted with the revision of the 1975 master plan in 1987 and 2001. 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 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 changes⁹ 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 space¹⁰ 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

⁸ The Japanese Bank would provide 60 per cent of the funds in shape of soft loans. The loan would be payable over the next 40 years at a nominal rate of interest. Whether or not this benefits the poor given the past trends and the high levels of corruption is a different issue altogether.

⁹ Existing building byelaws provide for change in land use from residential to commercial with conversion charges of Rs 1000/sqft. Obviously residents/ developers are willing to exploit this option for lucrative gains.

¹⁰ 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 has 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.

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 exactly the opposite. 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 management in the city.

Livability

A very grave challenge the city faces is the massive growth of slum and squatter settlements. With almost 33 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. 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)¹¹. 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 metres. 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 poor¹². An analysis of the slum improvement programmes launched in the city so far indicates that a combination of the UBSP(urban basic services programme) and the EIUSS(environment improvement and upgradation of slums scheme) has been applied in a few notified slum locations. However these programmes do not include land /shelter consolidation programmes but focus on provision of basic services ,i.e, water supply and sewerage. However a component to this effect has been made in the provision of formal sector operations to

¹¹ Data quoted from Sandhu, et.al, 2001 which is based upon the study of three slum localities.

¹² 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”.

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 EWS¹³ category. Through a survey¹⁴ 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 unless an accountability is maintained and a regulatory role is strongly played by the authorities in charge.

Since the city has grown and expanded organically, the circulation system is haphazard and in many instances the road planning and geometrics are faulty. The city vehicles are growing at the rate of 25% per annum leading to a flood of vehicles on the roads and the roads becoming death traps with the increasing rate of accidents. The city roads are not in a position to accommodate ever increasing traffic volumes. Besides the function of carrying traffic, the roads in the city also perform another function of waste disposal sites, highlighting the inadequacy of waste management operations in the city.

The biggest polluter of air in the City is dust, the whole City is affected by it. This is because of many unpaved areas in the city particularly road sides. Air is also polluted because of the emissions from obnoxious industries and vehicles. The water in many parts of the City is also polluted particularly the surface drain into which the industries located along it discharge their effluents directly into it. Even the Municipal Corporation has been discharging sewage into the drain without treating it.¹⁵ Because of the pollution

¹³ Abbreviated form of Economically Weaker Sections.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ In 2001, PSHRC(Punjab State Human Rights Commission) had indicted the Municipal Corporation of causing pollution of the drain. The commission has also asked Punjab Government to take stern steps against Government agencies causing pollution.

of the drain, potable drinking water is a matter of concern in the surrounding poor localities. In such conditions, livability in the city is indeed under grave threat. Contrary to the suggestion mentioned in the renewed strategy, livability is moving from bad to worse particularly for the poor inhabitants. There is nothing such as planned interventions for social equity, if at all, planning can actually termed as non-planning interventions governed solely by market driven profiteering tendencies both on the part of the ULBs as well as the private players rather than any kind of a social objective.

Conclusions

The holy city of Amritsar has been through a number of trying situations through the course of its history but rebounded back strongly each time. But perhaps of all the challenges faced so far, the challenge to face and sustain the fast paced urbanization post reforms and its impact is by far the gravest. 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 who are becoming more and more isolated. 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. The outdated modes of revising master plans and preparing adhoc development schemes or city development strategies just for attracting capital investments without seeking to integrate them at the city scale and with city wide networks need to be discarded.

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 negative implications that adversely affect its poorer inhabitants. As such if the ULB surrenders completely to the free market mechanisms (as is happening), infrastructure would indeed be upgraded, basic services would be developed but the big question is whether they would be accessible 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 poor. The current developments in Amritsar City are indicative of this perception and fear. Infact one can very confidently conclude that not a single development carried out by the private sector so far in the city has been poor friendly in any way. Therefore if urban deprivation is to be treated the government authorities will certainly have to play a pro active role and ensure that the benefit from the implementation of the city development strategy is not accrued by a small affluent section but filters down to all the inhabitants particularly the poor. The aid agencies should not assume that the development in the free market arena would be pro poor 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 must be achieved at the grassroot levels.

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