India’s capital is marked by different settlement types, defined by diverse degrees of formality, legality, and tenure. As part of a larger project on urban transformation in India, Cities of Delhi seeks to carefully document the degree to which access to basic services varies across these different types of settlement, and to better understand the nature of that variation. Undertaken by a team of researchers at the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), New Delhi, the project aims to examine how the residents of the city interact with their elected representatives, state agencies, and other agents in securing public services.

Through three sets of reports, the project provides a comprehensive picture of how the city is governed, and especially how this impacts the poor. The first is a set of carefully selected case studies of slums, known as jhuggi jhopri clusters (JJCs) in Delhi, unauthorised colonies, and resettlement colonies. The second set of studies, of which this is one, explores a range of different processes through which the governing institutions of Delhi engage with residents. The third focuses on selected agencies of governance in Delhi. All reports are made public as they are completed.

Suggested Citation: Shahana Sheikh and Subhadra Banda, ‘In-situ Upgradation of Jhuggi Jhopri Clusters: A Plan for Improvement without Relocation’. A report of the Cities of Delhi project, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi (December 2014).
In-situ upgradation is one of a range of three ‘in-situ’ approaches. These policies stand in contrast to the much more common practice of ‘slum relocation’, also called ‘slum resettlement’, in which settlements are razed and their residents displaced, either to distant resettlement colonies or into homelessness. Within the regime of ‘in-situ’ improvement, ‘in-situ upgradation’ and ‘in-situ rehabilitation’ are often used interchangeably. Each, however, is a clearly defined scheme with specific methods and goals.

Delhi’s state government (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, or GNCTD) articulates in-situ upgradation as the process of improving the existing buildings and rationalising the layout of a settlement. In practice, the process on the ground is the following:

1. Residents are surveyed to determine eligibility for the in-situ upgradation scheme.
2. Some jhuggis (or parts of jhuggis) are demolished and eligible residents are temporarily shifted to a nearby location.
3. Plots and lanes are cut on the site of the JJC.
4. Residents found eligible are allotted plots on which they can build new houses.
5. Basic services are provided.

In contrast to upgradation, in which residents are allotted plots without housing, ‘in-situ rehabilitation’ involves constructing flats for residents. The typical in-situ rehabilitation process follows these steps:

1. Residents are surveyed to determine eligibility for the in-situ upgradation scheme.
2. Jhuggis are razed to “clear” the land, and residents found eligible are temporarily moved to a nearby transit camp.
3. EWS (economically weaker sections) flats are constructed on the site and provided with basic services.
4. Eligible residents are allotted EWS flats.
5. These residents move into the flats.

In Delhi, in-situ rehabilitation has been implemented through public private partnership (PPP): in exchange for undertaking the project and building EWS flats, a private developer is given permission to construct and sell ‘premium’ housing or commercial space on the land. This is the process behind the first and only ‘in-situ rehabilitation’ project in Delhi, begun in 2009 at Kathputli Colony JJC by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA).

In addition to in-situ upgradation and in-situ rehabilitation, ‘environmental improvement’ is a third in-situ approach to improving JJCs. This is a ‘low-impact’ process through which JJCs are provided with improved basic services, such as better inner-lanes and roads, water, and drainage.
Genesis

The practice of in-situ upgrading in Delhi grew out of the broad strokes of the National Slum Improvement Policy articulated in the Government of India’s Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90), which emphasised improvement of slums on an “as is where is basis”—essentially in-situ improvement. In 1989, the Government of India formally asserted in-situ upgrading as its preferred method of slum improvement. In an oft-quoted justification for the scheme, the Ministry of Urban Development explained:

[The] general approach to JJ clusters should be for the environmental improvement of eligible clusters and their in-situ upgrading to the extent possible, rather than for their resettlement of alternative sites. Relocation of JJ Cluster to alternative sites should be restored to only on a case to case basis with specific reference to the urgency of requirement of the land owning agency for a priority public purpose project, and subject to the land owning agency undertaking to bear the entire cost of developed site in the new location.

In other words, said the Ministry, only in the most extenuating circumstances is relocation of a JJC preferable to improving it in-situ. Beginning in 1990, the Delhi government answered this guidance from the Centre, incorporating in-situ upgrading into its regime for slum improvement, although it did not give the approach precedence over other methods. Since then, the agencies that have managed JJ improvement in Delhi—first the Slum and JJ Department, now the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB)—have used one of three approaches to improve JJC’s in the city: relocation to a resettlement colony, in-situ upgrading, and environmental improvement.

Despite this flexibility, in-situ upgrading does have certain intended outcomes: residents of upgraded settlements should be given plots of between 10 and 12.5 square meters, laid out in an “orderly” manner and equipped with certain basic services. The policy explains norms for minimum service provision as part of in-situ upgrading (see box on following page).

The lead-up to in-situ upgrading in Delhi has generally followed these steps:

1. Identification of JJC’s in consultation with agencies that own the land on which they are situated
2. Selection of NGOs/voluntary organisations for community mobilisation work in each JJC
3. Finalisation of layout plans for in-situ upgrading
4. Finalisation of the list of households with identity and ration cards

Policy documents acknowledge the inherent complexity of in-situ upgrading, making allowance for site-specific adjustment to the process:

The development norms/shelter norms may require to be altered from site to site because any particular development site upgrading of slums is a very complex exercise and requires extensive innovation and on-site planning interventions where any standardized formulations cannot be strictly applied.

It is important to note that in-situ upgrading is limited to JJC’s where the land-owning agency (LOA) does not require the land in the near future. Before upgrading can begin, the LOA must issue an “NOC [No Objection Certificate] to the effect that such clusters may be upgraded”.

In-Situ Upgradation of JJC’s

Despite in-situ upgradation’s popularity in public and policy conversation, it has been implemented only four times in Delhi. The first in-situ upgradation took place in 1989 at Ekta Vihar in Sector 6 of South Delhi’s R K Puram neighbourhood. In the next five years, the scheme was implemented in two more JJC’s: Madrasi Camp in South Delhi’s Moti Bagh and Prayog Vihar in Hari Nagar, in West Delhi. The most recent in-situ upgradation began at Shahbad Daulatpur in North Delhi in the mid-1990s.

This report examines the first and last occurrences, documenting how the scheme has been implemented in settlements of dramatically different size: in-situ upgradation at Ekta Vihar affected fewer than 500 jhuggis; at Shahbad Daulatpur it involved nearly 5,000.17

Ekta Vihar JJC

In-situ upgradation at Ekta Vihar began at the behest of an NGO active in the area, which, together with the JJC’s pradhan,18 approached the commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). We spoke with the engineer who implemented the scheme at Ekta Vihar, who recalled that after the Land & Development Office (L&DO)19—which owned the land—certified that it had no plans for the site in the next fifteen years, the Slum and JJ Department decided that, “the cluster would be developed by re-plotting and providing essential services like drains, streets, [and] provision of water”.

The NGO helped residents to form a society, charging a membership fee of Rs 120 per household. Once the society was formed, the MCD’s Slum and JJ Department began a survey of the JJC’s population to determine eligibility for upgradation, a process that lasted five or six months. We were unable to determine the criteria used to determine eligibility in Ekta Vihar: while the engineer who managed the project explained that households had to submit ration cards issued prior to a set cut-off date to be eligible, the settlement’s current pradhan recalls that eligibility was determined by on-site verification. It is also possible that eligibility was determined through a combination of these two criteria.

In 1989 the Slum and JJ Department began the work of upgradation, ‘re-plotting’ the settlement at Ekta Vihar. This meant first relocating residents for a few days to vacant land across the road from the settlement, then demolishing the JJC’s jhuggis. After demolition, new plots were cut, measuring 3 by 4.17 meters. These plots, arranged in a ‘cluster-court’ layout around a common courtyard, were then allotted to eligible residents.

There is confusion about the exact number of plots that were subdivided and allotted on the site. The layout plan for an ‘upgraded’ Ekta Vihar shows 447 plots; the engineer who implemented the project told us that 464 plots were allotted; the basti’s20 current pradhan recalls that 472 plots were allotted, excluding some 25 jhuggis whose residents left the JJC after upgradation; and the 2006 City Development Plan for Delhi reports that 471 plots were developed at Ekta Vihar.21

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**Norms and Parameters for Service Provision**

1. Drinking water supplies through municipal water hydrants/handpumps/tubewells, with one water post per 30-35 people
2. Paved pathways and drainage facility up to out-fall
3. Street lighting, with one pole every 30 meters; JJ households may obtain individual electric connections for a fee
4. Pay and Use Jansuvidha Complexes containing toilets/bathrooms for community use or group toilets/baths; one toilet seat and one bath per 20-25 people
5. One dhalao (garbage collection location) for every 15 households within 55 meters of all dwelling units

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**On the Ground: Two Cases**

Despite in-situ upgradation’s popularity in public and policy conversation, it has been implemented only four times in Delhi. The first in-situ upgradation took place in 1989 at Ekta Vihar in Sector 6 of South Delhi’s R K Puram neighbourhood. In the next five years, the scheme was implemented in two more JJC’s: Madrasi Camp in South Delhi’s Moti Bagh and Prayog Vihar in Hari Nagar, in West Delhi. The most recent in-situ upgradation began at Shahbad Daulatpur in North Delhi in the mid-1990s.

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Residents recall that they made only two payments during the process of upgradation, one of Rs 15 and another of Rs 25. The Slum and JJ Department issued receipts for these fees, which listed each household’s name, address, and allotted plot number. The Slum and JJ Department assisted each household in securing a bank loan of Rs 5,000 to construct a jhuggi in the upgraded settlement.

The intention and perceived usefulness of the receipts (parchees) received by residents during upgradation is important to understand. Although the engineers and residents both understood that the receipts did not confer any tenure, residents recall that these conditions were not clearly stated on the receipts. This is in contrast to the very clear terms and conditions mentioned in the allotment letters given to residents found eligible at Shahbad Daulatpur JJC, a process discussed later in this report.

Provision of services began as soon as the re-plotting took place and included paved streets, storm water drains, between 25 and 30 hand pumps (one in each lane), a community toilet complex (CTC) with 30 latrine seats, a dispensary, a shishuvatika (crèche), and a vocational training centre. Through a series of field visits in summer 2014, we have attempted to document the evolution of Ekta Vihar over the 25 years since upgradation. 2011 government estimates showed little growth since 1990, counting 463 jhuggis at Ekta Vihar.22 The reliability of this data is questionable. First, it is not based on a household survey but relies on what a DUSIB official called “guesstimates”. Further, the most recent official data on JJCs, released in 2014, counts 1,856 jhuggies, a dramatic increase over three years.23 During a July 2014 field visit to Ekta Vihar, we found that the settlement’s boundaries and lanes were roughly congruent with those outlined in the layout plan prepared at the time of in-situ upgradation.

During this visit to the settlement, the pradhan reported a population of around 5,000, an average density of more than 10 people per plot and nearly one person per square meter. This density has put pressure on the original layout, which called for a regimented single-storey settlement. Today, many jhuggis are two storeys, and there are a significant number of four-storeyed structures, especially in the central parts of the settlement. In some cases, projections, or chajjas, stretch across the narrow inner lanes, and many of the common courtyards that were part of the original layout have been covered and enclosed to create additional shelter. Residents informed us that some of the original allottees have ‘sold’ or rented their plots and moved elsewhere.

More than two decades after upgradation, access to services in Ekta Vihar is average, better than some ‘unimproved’ JJCs and worse than others. There is a main water line, but no distribution network, and there is no sewer line. Only one of three Community Toilet Complexes (CTCs) was fully operational in July 2014, and though the inner streets were paved, drains running along these streets were overflowing with stagnant water. Residents still do not have secure tenure, although they do hold the receipts for their plots as well as V P Singh tokens in many cases.24 In this respect, residents of an upgraded JJC are similar to those of a resettlement colony: they have some documentary proof of residence, but their rights are heavily restricted.

Despite these clear limits, the pradhan believes that the JJC is on its way to becoming pucca (permanent). He cites electricity bills as evidence: “Earlier our electricity bills would say jhuggi number so and so, but now they say house number so and so.” The pradhan reveals an important shift in the JJC since upgradation, a perception of new legitimacy in the eyes of the state. In addition, some marginal service improvements have also taken place in the JJC, which the pradhan attributes to its elected representatives. Although this change is meaningful and represents some improvement in the settlement’s status, the pradhan’s sense of security must be seen in contrast to the fact that the settlement remains classified as a JJC. The engineer who managed the scheme’s implementation at Ekta Vihar gave a more mixed assessment. He said that although the project had been a success on the ground—“issues of suffocation and building safety were dealt with”—residents’ ‘resale’ of their plots has made the government reluctant to implement in-situ upgradation in additional JJC's.
Shahbad Daulatpur JJC

Planning for Delhi’s latest in-situ upgradation (also referred to as ‘on-site’ in this case), at Shahbad Daulatpur, began in the early 1990s; the project has not been completed. A layout plan was prepared and submitted on 29 July 1994 and approved by the MCD on 5 December 1995. The project was designed in two phases. Phase I was completed by 2005 and Phase II has not begun.

The project began with a household survey to assess residents’ eligibility for upgradation based on a cut-off date. Once eligibility had been determined, the process of demolition and re-plotting was initiated in phases, with demolition slips issued to eligible households, members of which were temporarily moved to a vacant site near the settlement. Each demolition slip included a receipt for Rs 1,680, including Rs. 1,500 as security and Rs 180 (at the rate of Rs 15 per month for a year) as a license fee. In addition to these charges, a household had the option to pay the Slum and JJ Department Rs 5,000 to lay a foundation at its allotted plot.

During re-plotting, the settlement was divided into six blocks, labelled A through F. The layout plan prepared for the scheme envisioned a grid with a hierarchy of roads whose widths ranged from 3 to 15 meters. According to this plan, the main 15 meter-wide roads would run parallel and perpendicular to the site and divide it roughly into four, with blocks A, B, F, and C to the north and blocks E and D to the south.

Phase I of the project saw most of these six blocks divided into 115 sub-blocks, each of which has, on average, 42 12.5 square meter plots. These plots are arranged in a cluster-court manner with four plots around an aangan (central courtyard). According to the DUSIB, 4,935 plots were cut and 4,600 families were allotted plots.

Each eligible household received an allotment letter designating a plot and setting terms and conditions. The first few are routine: the allottee should be a citizen of India; neither the allottee nor his/her spouse nor any family member should already have a plot or flat in the National Capital Territory of Delhi; the plot should be used only for residential purposes. The letter then asserts in bold text that no ownership rights have been conferred upon the allottee. Therefore allottee has no right either to sell or to let out/transfer this plot to the other persons at any stage. The allotment would be cancelled, without show cause notice on transfer of plot and the possession of the plot taken back by the Deptt.

The letter also mandated that the allottee “undertake constructions of liveable structure on the plot within six months from the date of possession, otherwise the allotment of the plot would be cancelled”. These conditions are very similar to those set out in the allotment letters given to residents of JJCs who were moved to resettlement colonies during the 2000s. In-situ upgradation at Shahbad Daulatpur saw the provision of some basic services, including water standposts (totees) in the inner lanes, DJB water tanker service, paved lanes, and storm water drains. The layout plan also demarcated nearly four hectares for public facilities, many of which have been built, although some remain incomplete.

Today most plots in the JJC contain two-storey houses, and in many cases the common courtyards included in the original layout plan have been built upon. The settlement now has water pipelines running along some inner lanes, laid ‘privately’ by households to connect their houses directly to the main water pipeline. Eight planned community toilet complexes (CTCs) have been built, although the settlement has no sewer lines. The site for a ‘convenience shopping centre’ remains vacant, although a sign still marks it for this purpose. Three community centres, referred to as Basti Vikas Kendras by the site engineers, stand in the settlement. One of these, still under construction in July 2014 and intended to serve as a health centre, has been built on land previously marked as a park. Parks and green spaces are evenly distributed throughout the site but are not well maintained. The DUSIB engineers on site attribute this to staff and resource shortages.
2011 government estimates counted 5,000 *jhuggis* at Shahbad Daulatpur. This number should be read with the same caution as all 2011 data on JJC's, based as it is on “guesstimates”. More reliable data released by the DUSIB in 2014 showed 5,984 *jhuggis* in Blocks A, E, and F alone, about half of the settlement. The DUSIB also reports that 353 plot allotments at Shahbad Daulatpur have been cancelled. Engineers at the site explained that the cancellations happened in cases where residents did not abide by the conditions set out in the allotment letter.

It has been nearly two and a half decades since the in-situ upgradation scheme was completed at Ekta Vihar and about a decade since the first phase of the project was finished at Shahbad Daulatpur. During field visits to these sites, we observed that the housing constructed incrementally by residents has come to resemble a built-up resettlement colony such as Bawana, although the inner lanes are narrower.

In 2014, DUSIB released its latest data on JJC's, classifying both Ekta Vihar and Shahbad Daulatpur JJC's as “non-tenable”. This new classification means that residents could be evicted and the settlement demolished, which would effectively undo the process and logic of in-situ upgradation.

### Looking Ahead

In 2002, the Planning Commission of the Government of India convened a committee to study “the problem of slums” in Delhi. The committee called for a “sane land policy” and coordinated action by government agencies in the city’s unplanned settlements. It also suggested that, “the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) should actively participate in helping slum-dwellers get land for housing if resettled, or allow them to upgrade their homes where they already are”. Further, it asserted that government “bodies should together plan a comprehensive schedule for upgrading slums”. Widespread in-situ upgradation in Delhi would be an obvious response to these recommendations, yet none has been initiated since the turn of the century. The Delhi government has blamed this on the land-owning agencies, which have not granted the No Objection Certificates (NOCs) necessary to begin the process.

Current policy in Delhi is not an impediment to implementation: it reflects these national-level recommendations, broadly supporting in-situ upgradation. The current Master Plan of Delhi-2021 (MPD-2021), notified in 2007, clearly positions in-situ upgradation at the top of the hierarchy of common approaches to improvement in settlements on land that is not required for some public use. The plan holds that, “In-situ upgradation of the land pockets of slum and JJ clusters, which are not required for public/priority use is the first option for provision of affordable housing for rehabilitation of squatters.” The DUSIB Act also acknowledges in-situ upgradation as a method included within the ambit of the term “redevelopment”.

At the national level, starting with Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS) scheme in 1972, the Government of India attempted to pursue a scheme of extension of basic services to slums. Since the advent of the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) in 2013, that mandate has expanded to include in-situ upgradation. The RAY, hailed as a flagship scheme of the erstwhile Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation (now a part of the Ministry of Urban Development), calls for creating a ‘slum-free India’ through in-situ upgradation or redevelopment in slums deemed “tenable”. Tenable slums are those that do not violate a range of regulations, including environmental safety and land use.

A reading of the various current policy documents suggests that for a JJC, in-situ upgradation, and more broadly, in-situ redevelopment, are preferred policy routes across the levels of government. These policies suggest recourse to resettlement only when it is not possible to carry out in-situ modes of slum improvement. Despite this policy foundation, since 1990, four JJC's have been upgraded in-situ; as of 2007, the residents of at least 217 JJC's have been relocated for the period.
Conclusion

The Slum and JJ Department (now, DUSIB) had identified 180 JJCs for in-situ upgradation by the early 1990s, but the scheme has only been implemented at four JJCs. Even where the scheme was enacted, its implementation has been spotty and inconsistent. Our analysis of the projects undertaken at Ekta Vihar JJC and Shahbad Daulatpur JJC reveal marked divergence from the stated policy.

We encountered two frequent explanations for the challenges facing implementation of the scheme: “non-tenability” and the difficulty of obtaining NOCs. We believe, therefore, that in-situ upgradation can be easily implemented in JJCs that meet two conditions: those that have been classified as “tenable” and are located on land owned by the DUSIB. In “tenable” settlements, neither land use violations nor safety hazards should force relocation of residents. In settlements that sit on land owned by the DUSIB, the DUSIB does not need to contend with another land-owning agency refusing to issue an NOC. If the 2014 data on tenability and land ownership are considered together, 47 JJCs are both tenable and on DUSIB land, prime candidates for unimpeded in-situ upgradation.

Notes


2. DUSIB’s 2011 List of 685 JJCs in Delhi

3. Calculated based on an average household size of five and the population of Delhi’s Urban Agglomeration from 2011 census data.


5. Across the three waves of resettlement undertaken in Delhi in the 1960s, 1970s, and 2000s, resettlement colonies have been located increasingly far from the centre of the city. However, given the criteria which had to be met by JJC residents to be eligible for resettlement meant that those who were found ineligible were left homeless upon eviction, to scout for alternatives on their own.


7. See “Kathputli Colony: Delhi’s First In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation”, another report of the Cities of Delhi project.

8. Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) website, “Present Policies & Strategies”.


11. Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) website, “Present Policies & Strategies”.


13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) website, “Present Policies & Strategies”.


17. We are thankful to Saneera Dev, a Bachelor in Planning student at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, who interned at CPR during the summer of 2014, for helping us to analyse the planning documents related to in-situ upgradation projects at Ekta Vihar JJC and Shahbad Daulatpur JJC.
18. The pradhan is an unelected, widely recognised, informal representative of a significant number of residents in a community. In this case, he also heads a recently registered NGO and was well known by residents.

19. The L&D is a central government agency under the Ministry of Urban Development, which manages land belonging to the Government of India.

20. Basti, hindi for ‘settlement,’ is used colloquially to refer to informal settlements, most often JJC.

21. Page 6-10, City Development Plan, Delhi, GNCTD 2006

22. DUSIB’s list of 685 JJC’s in Delhi, 2011 (the JJC is also referred to as the Sardar Patel Ekta Camp in official records).

23. Excel spreadsheet titled “jj-cluster-672-list”, downloaded from the DUSIB website on 21 October 2014.

24. These tokens were issued to JJC residents across Delhi during V P Singh’s tenure as prime minister, in the early 1990s, as formal proof of residence. The tokens were the result of a four-month long survey by the Delhi Administration—the governing body that preceded the GNCTD in Delhi—that aimed to enumerate every slum household in the city. (Source: D. Asher Ghertner, ‘Calculating without numbers: aesthetic governmental- ity in Delhi’s slums’, Economy and Society, 39/2 (2010).)

25. A Brief Note – in respect of In-situ Upgradation of JJ Cluster at Shahbad Daulatpur (as on 15.02.97), No. WK/ 7249/ EE (S) CPD/ 97/ D-112, Office of the Executive Engineer(s) C.P.D., Slum and JJ Department, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, dated 18 February 1997.

26. These are roughly congruent with the conditions mentioned on allotment letters given at the Savda Ghevra JJ Resettlement Colony. For details, see: Shahana Sheikh, Subhadra Banda, and Ben Mandelkern, ‘Planning the Slum: JJC Resettlement in Delhi and the Case of Savda Ghevra’. A report of the Cities of Delhi project, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi (August 2014).

27. DUSIB’s list of 685 JJC’s in Delhi, 2011


29. Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) website, “List of Cancelled Plots at Shahbad Daulatpur”.


33. Section 3.3.1.3, Master Plan of Delhi (MPD) 2021, notified by the Union Government of India on 7th February, 2007.

34. Section 12(1), DUSIB Act 2010.


38. Excel spreadsheet titled “jj-cluster-672-list”, downloaded from the DUSIB website on 21 October 2014.