

# Echoes of Equity

A HANDBOOK FOR RE-CREATING THE **JAGA MISSION**






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# INTRODUCTION

The high population influx in urban and peri-urban spaces gives rise to informal settlements. These settlements, or slums, face numerous infrastructural and resource challenges. They are typically **uninhabitable, lack basic services, and are highly catalytic of health risks**. In addition, slum residents face further difficulties because they do not have certificates of property title, which are needed as **address proofs**, to open bank accounts, enroll in school, get credit from financial institutions, and access various government benefits.

People residing in slums play a fundamental role in keeping cities functional and making them comfortable for others to inhabit. The Jaga Mission strives to recognize their contribution. Jaga Mission or Odisha Livable Habitat Mission was launched by the Odisha Government's Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) in 2018 with the objective of **transforming existing slums into livable habitats**. It aims to do so by providing **i) land tenure security, ii) holistic habitat development, iii) improved housing, and iv) integrating the voices of the urban poor in policy planning and budgeting**.

The unique Mission has its roots in the landmark legislation undertaken by the Government of Odisha in August 2017. The **Odisha Land Rights to Slum Dwellers Act 2017** sought to assign land rights to slum dwellers in Municipalities and Notified Area Councils. The legislation marks a **landmark shift** by the government, from viewing the slum dwellers as **'encroachers'** to **settling them** on the land they currently reside in.

In May 2018, the project veered to **mission-mode** and was launched by the Chief Minister to transform **2919 identified slums into 'Biju Adarsh Colonies'**, i.e., aspirational, livable

habitat and even with the provision of basic services and infrastructure. The insight driving it was that land tenure without adequate safety and resources is pointless, and that the provisions should go beyond tenure to create livable habitats. The Mission was named Odisha Livable Habitat Mission, or Jaga Mission. It is one of the largest initiatives in India to **reduce the vulnerability of the urban poor**, covering over **1.7 million people** and all the **115 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** of Odisha. Creating facilities in slums which resemble those in the rest of the city is essential for creating inclusive and resilient cities.

Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy, given their extensive work around participatory governance, acts as a knowledge partner for community participation to the Housing and Urban Development Department of the Government of Odisha. The HUDD and Janaagraha, identified 6 key amenities (later expanding to 9) that an Adarsh Colonies consists of and detailed the actions to make the process participatory. With the additional goal of mainstreaming the voices of slum communities, the Slum Dweller Associations (SDAs) were developed to strengthen participatory planning and governance by slum dwellers in partnership with the city administration. Through rigorous community connections and capacity building exercises, SDAs stand as the **'voice of the people'** and, being involved in decision-making and slum improvement, act as the **4<sup>th</sup> tier of governance**.

The core principle of the Jaga Mission is "leaving no one behind," regardless of gender, caste, or economic status. The government is seeing through the current goal, along with various partners, of upgrading and delisting all slums in Odisha.

# JAGA'S OPERATING MODEL

## i. Creating Adarsh Colonies:

6 infrastructure verticals were identified for the transformation of a slum into an Adarsh Colonies.



**PIPED WATER SUPPLY**  
(LATER, HOUSE WATER SUPPLY)



**PAVERED ROAD**



**STREET LIGHTING**



**ACCESS TO TOILET FACILITY**  
(LATER, INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLD LATRINES (IHHL))



**PUCCA STROM WATER DRAINAGE**



**IN- HOUSE ELECTRICITY**



The SOP was revised to include 3 additional amenities, making it 9 verticals in total:



**CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA**



**OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT**



**PARICHAY**  
(COMMUNITY CENTRES)

The government's simple but visionary motivation was the realization that **nothing is stopping them** from providing these amenities that can bring a slum at par with the other areas in the city.

## ii. Participatory Planning and the Slum Dwellers' Association

At the center of the system for slum dwellers to participate in local governance is the Slum Dwellers' Association (SDA). The SDA is a revolutionary platform ensuring that slum dwellers' voices are heard and that they are the

**owners of change.** It helps build a bridge between the decision makers and the citizens by allowing the governing bodies to comprehensively understand the development issues that need to be addressed and potential solutions for them.

A **Participatory Needs Assessment (PNA)** is periodically undertaken by the ULB Ward Officer and the SDA to identify the status of primary infrastructure facilities in a slum. It details the communities' specific needs, such as where to locate the new developed spaces, which aspects of these services they get access to at a household level, and which need to be at a community level. The government independently may not be able to judge such needs on its own. In order to avoid an external party thrusting development decision upon the community, the community plans. The government simply assists. To execute at scale, the participatory process is carefully detailed by Janaagraha. There are 3 key pieces in enabling participatory governance that entrusts power to slum dwellers.

### 1. Creating the formal platform of the Slum Dwellers' Association

- The SDA is a formal platform which acts as a **bridge between the ULBs and slum dwellers**. ULBs are the tier after central and state government and govern cities. ULBs are responsible for issues relating to urban development, including water, sanitation, roads, parks, etc. Slums exist as part of ULBs. Representing slums in governance, the SDAs are a mechanism to politically empower residents of slums to lead dignified lives and have their issues sufficiently **represented** in the functioning of the ULBs.
- Each SDA has an Executive Committee (EC) consisting of 10 members, identified by the community by consensus to manage the SDA. Among the members, a President, Secretary, and Treasurer are nominated. During SDA meetings, members discuss, identify, and prioritize issues and draft their solutions or demands in a resolution. The resolution is submitted to the Municipal Corporation which helps them understand key issues and facilitate the proposed solutions with the Ward Officer acting as the nodal officer.
- In this way, **SDAs work in partnership with ULBs**, acting as the 4th tier of governance, as a subset of the ward committee which is focused on equity. An agreement is signed between every ULB and its SDAs mandating SDAs to hold meetings, keep records etc. The SDA was recently given **legal recognition** through the Odisha Municipal Corporation Act as operating under ward committees. This makes them officially stakeholders in city development.

- Treating the SDAs as partners, the government has provided the physical space of a Community Centre for SDA meetings and all official work.

### 2. Capacity Building to enable meaningful citizen participation

Any community-driven platform needs capacity building support and knowledge to become self-sustaining. Janaagraha's objective with the capacity building program is to impart the necessary skills and competencies to the SDA leaders to function as the 4<sup>th</sup>-tier of governance, capable of managing the assets from the online portal created during the upgradation program. The SDAs also need to be able to undertake annual planning and budgeting for their community.

- As knowledge partner to the HUDD, Janaagraha creates the processes, that is, how the SDA will work, what its mandate will be, and how it will execute its mandate.
- In this spirit and with the belief that in a democracy, **citizen participation is an end in itself**, Janaagraha also helps with capacity building: training the members on conflict resolution, drafting and passing resolutions, taking minutes of meeting, etc.
- Janaagraha and the HUDD also employ grassroot level NGOs to act as a bridge between the government functionaries and the people.

### 3. Empowerment with Finances

A successful participatory process entails the government **trusting the people along with consulting them**. The 3<sup>rd</sup> key piece for this is to empower them with finances. Allocating finances to the SDA is an important part of its functioning.

- 25% of Odisha's urban population lived in slums for the last 60 years, until the Jaga mission, and they were barely allocated 2-3% of the ULB's budget. Now the law mandates that 25% of the ULB's fund be allocated to slum development.
- The ULBs credit the SDA Savings Bank Accounts with money for different purposes, such as procurement of materials or payment of wages for labourers working on slum upgradation, which is then directly used by the SDA.





### iii. Delisting

Delisting a slum is the process of transforming the habitat to an extent that it is no longer categorized as a slum. Instead of demolishing a slum and removing the most vulnerable from urban spaces, this outcome is focused on integrating them into the urban space in a dignified manner. The Jaga Mission has standardized this process by creating an SoP for slum delisting, which occurs once adequate infrastructure as per the 9 verticals are provided

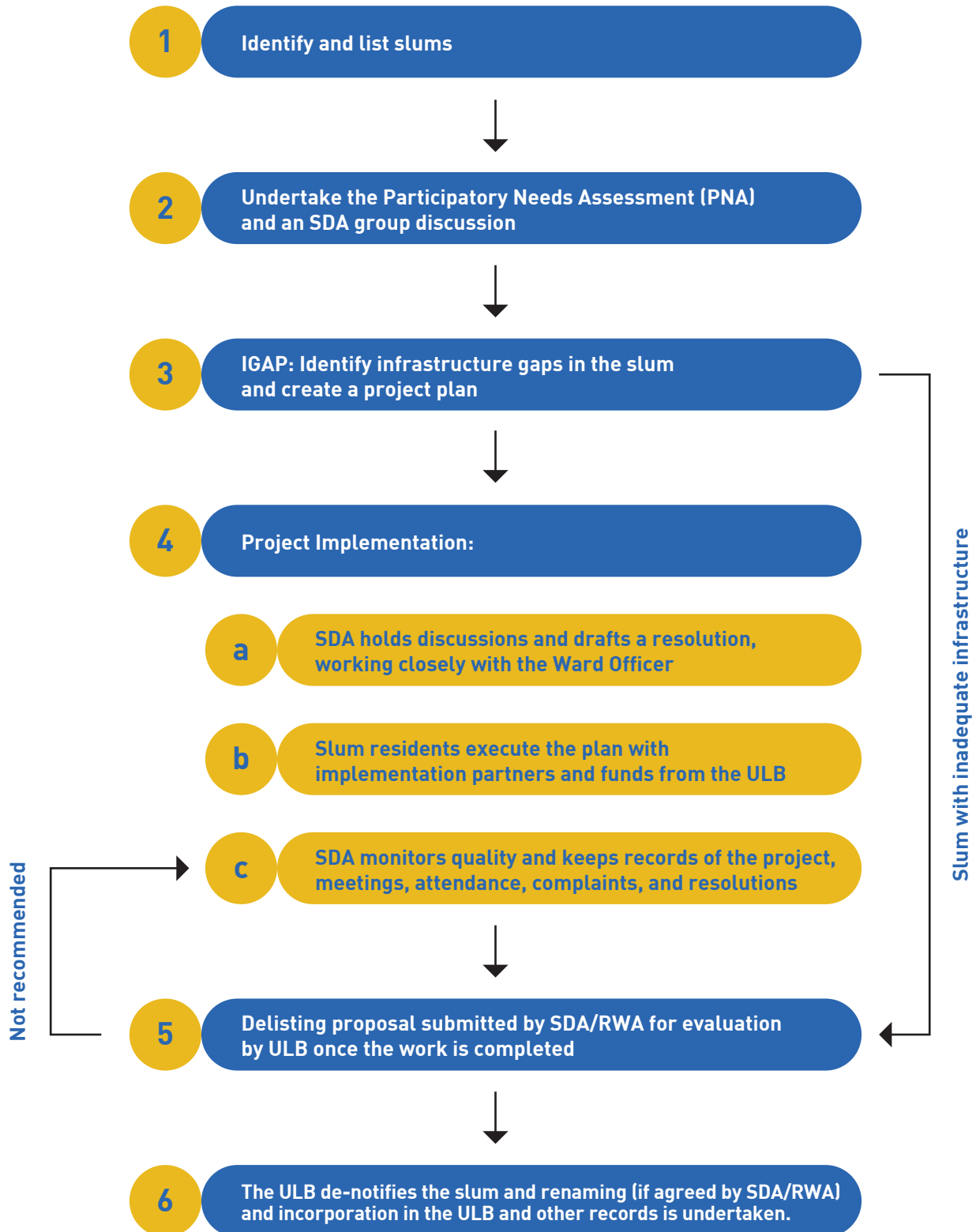
for. Through the ward officer, the SDA or Resident Welfare Association (RWA) submits the slum delisting proposal to the ULB which evaluates the upgradation in the slum and forwards the slum delisting proposal for final approval by a district level committee. Removing an area from government records as a “slum” **destigmatizes** that area and ensures further development activity. More than 1500 slums have been delisted in Odisha as of January 2024.

### iv. Slum Proofing

The Jaga Mission aims to go a step beyond, considering not just how to alleviate areas from slum-status, but also asking how to **prevent areas from becoming slums**. The Mission hopes to consider not just upgradation but minimizing the future need for such targeted upgradation programs. For this, the Jaga Mission is **piloting slum-proofing programmes**. Generally, it is new

urban settlements which are transitioning from being rural that are under the threat of becoming slums. In designing such programmes, Jaga aims to bring into scrutiny the rural to urban transition policies and is devising policy solutions so that rural areas do not become slums when incorporated in the urban areas.

# PROCESS FLOW TOWARDS CREATING A BIJU ADARSH COLONY



# BEST PRACTICES OF JAGA

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## OWNERS OF CHANGE

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People become owners of the changes made to their livelihoods. Not only are they entrusted with funds, but they own assets beyond capital assets, with the capacity to undertake operation and maintenance of infrastructure and sustenance of the intervention needed.

Upon assessing the infrastructural provisions in the slum, the slum dwellers themselves, being the beneficiaries, execute the work, with those who are unemployed attaining work. Instead of sourcing contractors to execute the development processes, for instance, self-help groups are provided with this livelihood opportunity that helps them earn a

steady income and become a part of the formal workforce. The SDAs monitor the projects and, in this way, implement development programs --- starting from the conception of an idea, deciding upon the solutions, to delivering the project.

The SDA has 3 goals – social, economic, and political empowerment of the vulnerable. Citizens are able to claim their rights fearlessly. Building their confidence through processes of training and sensitizing (undertaken by Janaagraha) and imbuing them with a sense of faith enables them to become the owners of change and mainstreams the voices of the urban poor.

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## INCLUSION – WOMEN AT THE HELM

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Community participation under Jaga is being spearheaded by women. There was a short qualitative assessment study conducted across 5 cities in Odisha and 52% of its respondents were women. Women bear a higher brunt of the lack of services and infrastructure as compared with men and raise the relevant concerns when asked. Marginalized communities are best equipped to identify issues they are faced with, and so they must be included in decision

making. Demonstrating this practice, women are the forefront of the Jaga mission.

It is mandated that 50% of the SDA members are women, and in practice we see it being an even larger proportion. Not only is there a generally high participation of women in SDA meetings, but such measures serve as institutional mechanisms through which women feel encouraged to participate.

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## LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

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Involving technology ensures that roadblocks and areas of progress can be efficiently identified. The BAC portal is an online GIS mapping-based portal which is a technology that shows details of every slum, how many slums there are, and in how many wards. For each slum, one can view the status of the 9 services which is updated through backend project management.

Jaga mission's office team monitors the status of every project by tracking ULBs, weekly meetings, etc. and escalating needs where required. With such efficient process, projects that need higher levels of support are identified so that the HUDD and Janaagraha can step in for support.





# CHALLENGES IN EARLY STAGES OF THE MODEL AND LEARNINGS

## Challenge 1

### Land and rehabilitation

The Mission is faced with the challenge of developing new spaces. Land that is to be developed may belong to private parties or to defense or railway units, or it may be uninhabitable (such as next to riverbeds). In such cases, people's consensus is taken to move out of the habitat.

## Challenge 2

### Constructing individual toilets

This has been a major challenge due to lack of space in tightly packed living spaces. Not only do toilets have to be built, but they also need to be accessible, which requires creative solutions. There are additional constraints relating to limited funds from Swachh Bharat Abhyaan (₹8000 for toilet construction). The HUDD is augmenting funding by adding ₹8000 more per toilet, which has cleared the path for completing the 80,000 toilets which were pending and holding back delisting. This is an example of the government not only taking feedback coming from the ground up but responding to it actively and quickly.

## Challenge 3

### How to make this a sustainable practice?

The SDAs have become the 4th tier of governance and have authority to manage their area. The focus is now on devolving funds to the SDAs so that they can take further ownership of their areas. The challenge relates to the question of how to capacitate SDAs to make sure funds are utilized properly? Potentially, the SDAs can be subject to audits to ensure there are no wrong entries in the records and no other leakages in their functioning.

## JAGA'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPACT

**2,919** slums

Aerially surveyed by Jaga Mission using GIS technology to generate a data base of 0.40 million slum households in Odisha within a short span of one year.

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**250,000**  
families

Granted Land Rights Certificates and Land Entitlement Certificates following GIS mapping, door -to- door survey and an eligibility evaluation process.

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**7500** trained

Training completed for over 7500 SDA leaders, which include 52% women leaders. There are 400 plus trainers who are assigned batches of SDA for capacity building in all the ULBs.

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**672** parichaya

672 Multipurpose Community Centers named 'Parichaya' and 300 open spaces were constructed within the slums to be accessed by every household. These spaces served to conduct meetings, social functions, income generating activities, and other community activities. Open spaces were constructed as play areas for children and recreational spaces for everyone.

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“ The Jaga Mission has one central principle: **Leaving No One Behind.** Development must encompass and serve all the residents of a city equally and equitably. Every citizen should be involved in livelihood upliftment. ”

