

Workshop on *Making Patna a Better City*

(Patna, August 9, 2015)

A Workshop on “**Making Patna a Better City : Improving Urban Planning, Livelihoods, Inclusiveness ad Public Safety**” was organized in the Conference hall of the Nalanda Open University on 9th August 2015 by the Institute for Human Development (IHD), New Delhi, in collaboration with Nalanda Open University (NOU), Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI) and Department of Sociology, Patna University. The one day intensive Workshop, organised into four academic and one Panel Discussion sessions evoked lively response and discussion from the eminent persons from all walks of life.

Altogether Six Presentations around four themes; viz. Urban Planning and Access to Basic Services (Dr Bhim Reddy & Anjor Bhaskar, IHD), Ward Level Inequality in Social Development in Patna (Jesse Anderson, University of Florida, US-IHD), Poverty and Livelihoods (Dr Abhinav Alakshendra, University of Florida, US-IHD) and Public Safety and Security (Dr Indu B Sinha, Senior Fellow, ICSSR-IHD & Manoj B Balsamanta, IHD) generated lively discussions. Introductory note was presented by Prof. Alakh N Sharma, Director IHD and Welcome address by Prof. R B P Singh, Vice-chancellor, Nalanda Open University.

Some Important Findings of the study about poverty and livelihood are: There exist a close association in habitation pattern b/w caste and localities; upper and middle strata are dominated by general category; poor strata areas have about one third SC/ST's residents and 61 percent OBC residents. According to the Hashim Committee recommendations about 28 percent Patnaites are poor; 38 percent of the SC/ST population is poor as compared to the general category; and 43 percent of the population in poor localities is extremely poor. Unemployment among graduates is extremely high at 47 percent in Patna. Female labour force participation is extremely low. About 18 percent households have at least one member migrated in last ten years. About 40 percent migrate in search of employment / better employment and about 47 percent for higher and better education. Patna is characterized by huge lack of employment; high rate of migration and high incidence of poverty. Study about Crime Situation in Patna based on exhaustive data compiled on the basis of the print media reporting for ten year period (between 2005-2014) highlights that body crime constitutes the highest percentage while crime against women (gendered and gender-neutral both) constitutes the second highest crime in Patna. Economic crimes constitute the third highest, with some variations over the years. Politician-criminal nexus, laxity in law and order situation and social-cultural milieu are located as the prime perpetrators of the crime, while changing value system have also contributed to phenomenal increase in certain types of crime the perpetrators of which are affluent and educated youth from the neo-rich class of the society.

Chairing the First Session Amrit Lal Meena, Principal Secretary, Department of Urban Development, government of Bihar spoke at length about pro-active decisions of the government on urban development and waste management issues. He said that Patnaites do not need to be in despair as many good things such as eco-Park, flyovers and museum etc. have come up to improve the urban life. He expressed specific concern about how all stake-holders in development process could and should participate in development process and take it up with collective spirit.

Second Session was Chaired by Anil Sinha IAS, retired Vice-chairman of State Disaster Management Authority, government of Bihar. Mr. Sinha explained that better Patna meant safer Patna and safer Patna could be ensured only if strict and efficient measures were devised to fight back disasters before they could lead to destruction. He emphasized that Patna and the state of Bihar were prone to natural disasters like earthquake & flood etc. and best kind of pre-emptive measures were needed to ensure safety of life and property.

Third Session Chaired by Prof. R B P Singh concluded with his remarks that urban poverty and urban livelihoods were major challenges for the urban planning and rural to urban migration was phenomenal in the city that offers informal employment to seasonal swelling rural population.

Fourth Session Chaired by D N Gautam, former DGP, Bihar concluded with his brief comment that highlighted the need for complete restructuring of the police system. He said that society was still in a 'barbaric' stage so far as crime situation was concerned and it required to 'be civilized' in real sense of the term. He also highlighted that society was in a transition stage from 'manual' to 'technological' and studies about crime needed to incorporate cyber crime as well. His response was addressed to study about crime situation in urban Patna.

Rajyavardhan Sharma, ex- ADGP, Bihar, the lead discussant in this session stated that the Police have to live and work in very inhuman condition and this was one of the reasons why police was insensitive to the issues it has to tackle. He emphasized need for planning for the police force in order to improve their working environment. Lead discussants included Ms. Sugandha, Kapileshwar Ram, Rakesh Tripathi, Sudha Verghese, K.C. Biswas, Prof. R N Sharma, Vishwaranjan and others.

Panel Discussion was participated by Dr Shaibal Gupta (ADRI), Prof. Alakh N Sharma (IHD), Prof. N K Chaudhary (ex-Principal Patna College), Prof. L N Ram (ex-HoD, Geography, Patna University), Ms. Kanchanbala (Social Activist) and others.

*