Supplementary Information

Supplementary Notes:

COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in massive reverse migration of workers/ urban poor who come for seeking better employment opportunities in urban areas. To save rent, these migrants live in slums, informal/ unauthorized colonies or peri-urban areas. In response to the COVID-19 experience, the Government of India has launched a sub-scheme under its current *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* (PMAY-Urban) programme to develop Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) in urban areas. On 8 July 2020, it gave its approval to one of the largest rental housing schemes for urban migrants/ poor in the world, with the following provisions, (Press Information Bureau Delhi, 2020):

(1) Conversion of existing vacant government funded housing complexes in ARHCs through Concession Agreements for 25 years. Concessionaire will make the complexes livable by repair/retrofit and maintenance of rooms and filling up infrastructure gaps like water, sewer/ septage, sanitation, road etc.
(2) Special incentives like use permission, 50% additional FAR/FSI, concessional loan at priority sector lending rate, tax reliefs at par with affordable housing etc. will be offered to private/ public entities to develop ARHCs on their own available vacant land for 25 years.
(3) Target beneficiary: A large part of workforce in manufacturing industries, service providers in hospitality, health, domestic/commercial establishments, and construction or other sectors, labourers, students etc. who come from rural areas or small towns.
(4) An expenditure of Rs 600 Crore (USD 80 million) estimated in the form of Technology Innovation Grant for projects using identified innovative construction technologies. Approximately 300,000 beneficiaries will be covered initially under ARHCs.
(5) ARHC construction will create housing at affordable rent close to the place of work, cut down unnecessary travel, congestion and pollution as well as new job opportunities.

Supplementary Discussion:

The discussion presents a brief policy evaluation of the above scheme in view of the urban re-envisioning provisions discussed in this article:

The scheme shifts the focus from tenure-security housing under the prevailing PMAY-Urban to developing social rental housing at affordable rent close to the place of work for migrants/ urban poor. A greater degree of specificity in definitions, technical details and mandatory provisions are necessary to effectively implement the stated policy goals aimed at enhancing urban living conditions for the urban poor, as elaborated:

(1) The scheme should explicitly pledge that from now onwards, a significant financial outlay under PMAY-Urban (say 75-80%) would be used to develop social rental housing.
(2) The scheme should adopt a mandatory land policy to unlock existing developed lands, promoting *infill development* and mixed land-use.
(3) To avoid crowding and ensure better living conditions, the AHRCs should upgrade higher space norms of *dwelling space* (25 sqm) under the National Building Codes (NBC) norms to 35 sqm.

(4) To accommodate existing slum populations with adequate living space, the NBC norms for *housing density* (600 dwelling units/hectare) to be revised to 1000 dwelling units/hectare (in megacities) with relaxation in height regulations. An additional FAR/FSI (50%) in the scheme is highly insufficient and needs to be boosted by 150-200% in *megacities* (10,000,000 and above population) having greater intensity of slums and increased by 100% in *large cities* (population 1,000,000 to 9,999,999) on the condition of compulsory inclusion of Corona-resilient measures like larger dwelling space, social-distancing clearances in corridors, walkways and public areas, developing of health and other social facilities.

(5) The scheme should define additional social facilities (health centres, schools, shops, storages, workshops, meeting spaces and open public spaces) to be compulsorily included in AHRCs with an allowance of 18-20% on the ground to meet the outlined aims of creating new job opportunities, cutting down unnecessary travel, congestion and pollution. The concessionaire should be obliged to promote greater walkability, non-motorized transport and electrified transport to key work centres located outside the AHRCs.

(6) It is crucial to develop a discreet planning and management entity at the city level that directly includes people's trust and participation, academic/technical institutions and non-governmental organizations in AHRC projects. This would act as a real estate trust floating bonds, governing decisions, determining 'affordability', rents and lease conditions to ensure that social housing is integrated with the city goals, transparent and socially-inclusive.

(7) A national COVID-corpus is imperative to seed-funding or gap-funding for AHRCs in smaller cities that are not attractive for private investments. The active utilization of climate/ low-carbon infrastructure funds during planning and digital technologies in land & lease management can significantly improve the efficacy of the proposed AHRCs.