



O.P. JINDAL GLOBAL
INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE DEEMED TO BE
UNIVERSITY
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I.D.E.A.S.
OFFICE of
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

GRASSROOTS ACTION PROGRAM

VOLUME 3

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STRENGTHENING
PARTNERSHIPS



AMPLIFYING VOICES



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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Respected Advisors, Colleagues, and Friends

As we bring out the third edition of the GAP initiative's research newsletter, we feel a quiet sense of fulfillment of something long envisioned taking deeper root while establishing its presence at a grassroots, community level.

My own journey into academia as in-practice scholar began through the absorption of ethnographic fieldwork, where inter-subjective observations in research were acquired through listening, silently observing, more listening, and then writing about the lived experiences of communities as they navigate through the challenges and possibilities of everyday life, often in the most precarious of neighborhoods and living conditions. In the same vein, we have committed at GAP with a spirit of engaging with all from the ground up. The experiences gathered from the grassroots action program has shaped our belief that a university must also be more than an institution of instructional learning; it must be curated and nurtured as an interactive space that builds long-term, bottom-up relationships with local communities while closely understanding and engaging with the realities of those often left at the margins, without an agency or institutional voice to advocate their views. This initiative now in its third cycle represents not just an academic exercise but a living, evolving

conversation between students, researchers, practitioners, and communities. It is deeply encouraging to see a cohort of young minds and collaborators who are willing to take the slower, more careful route: one that prioritizes depth over speed, presence over performance and accountability over abstraction.

When we first began shaping this initiative, I imagined the university as a site not only of intellectual rigor but of ethical responsibility a space equipped with material and cognitive resources that could be offered in service of collective reflection and social change.

This is not about the university taking an upper hand. It is about learning to take a responsive, responsible position to listen before we speak, and to think with those whose lives are too often spoken for.

I am especially glad that the first round of engagement in Bawana JJ Colony has reached this important milestone. I have closely followed the process from the design of the baseline survey to the field-level interactions, and the reflections that followed. At every stage, I saw not just data collection, but the quiet labour of relationship-building, humility, and learning.

The long-term vision has always been to nurture a research environment that does more than publish findings it must give back to the community, sharpen our ethical imagination, and equip our students to carry that forward. We may be at the early stages of this path, but I believe we're moving in the right direction.

This edition is a testament to the possibilities of that vision and the many hands and minds that are bringing it to life.

DEEPANSHU MOHAN

DEAN, IDEAS

O P JINDAL GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

From the Editorial Desk

This edition marks more than just a documentation of activities it represents a season of dialogue, layered learning, and deep reflection. From report presentations and study circles to immersive engagements within the community, these past few months have stretched our understanding of what it means to build knowledge with, rather than simply about, the social world.

While data collection was a significant part of this journey with all its logistical, ethical, and emotional challenges it was only the beginning. The labor of cleaning the data, working through inconsistencies, sitting with gaps, and reflecting on what was missed or misrepresented, brought us to a space of humility and learning. We were reminded that research is not a linear exercise, but a recursive and ethical process one that demands care, accountability, and empathy.

We continue to acknowledge that research carried out in partnership with communities especially those historically marginalized is a responsibility, not merely a method. It is shaped by how we build relationships, listen closely, and remain open to the unexpected. It is also deeply influenced by who we are, where we come from, and how our own social locations shape what we notice, prioritize, or miss.

As Harold Garfinkel reminded us, “Sociological descriptions must begin from within the world they describe.” This insistence on understanding situated realities challenges the tendency to collapse lived experience into abstract categories or overly structural narratives. In our own process, we have been moved by the realization that ‘the self’ is never fully outside the conditions it studies we are participants as much as observers.

We are learning to sit with contradictions, to hear diverse voices, and to accept that no knowledge is ever complete. This is not a limitation it is strength. For us, this has been a meaningful learning process, and we remain committed to remaining reflexive, responsive, and open to multiple ways of seeing and knowing.

We thank all collaborators, student associates, volunteers, and most importantly, the community members of Bawana JJ Colony, for their generosity, insights, and trust. Your voices guide our work.



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Report Launch: Learning from Bawana JJ Colony

April 5 | O.P. Jindal Global University



PROGRAMME	
10:00 am	HIGH TEA
10:10 am - 10:20 am	WELCOME ADDRESS Prof. Deepanshu Mohan, Dean IDEAS, Professor, Jindal School of Liberal Arts & Humanities, Director, CNES
10:20 am - 10:30 am	INTRODUCTION TO GRASSROOTS ACTION PROGRAM - Prof. Divya Gupta, Associate Professor, Jindal Global Law School, Assistant Director, IDEAS - Prof. Manika Bora, Assistant Professor, Jindal Global Law School, Research Fellow, IDEAS - Prof. Tahiba Banu, Lecturer, IDEAS
10:30 am - 11:00 am	GRASSROOTS ACTION PROGRAM PHASE 1 REPORT PRESENTATION
11:00 am - 11:10 am	Q&A
11:10 am - 11:20 am	VIDEO ON PHASE 1 OF GAP'S ENGAGEMENT
11:20 am - 11:50 am	REFLECTIONS ON THE REPORT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS Kiran Bhatti, Senior Policy Advisor, Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP)
11:50 am - 12:00 pm	TEA BREAK
12:00 pm - 01:30 pm	PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT - Prof. Anandini Dar, Associate Professor, School of Liberal Studies, BML Munjal University - Prof. Namesh Killemsetty, Associate Professor, Jindal School of Government and Public Policy, Associate Director, IDEAS - Ms. Neetu Sharma, Director - Urban Programs, Navjyoti India Foundation - Prof. Smriti Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, IIIT Delhi, Member Associate, IDEAS
1:30 pm - 1:50 pm	FELICITATION CEREMONY
2:00 pm	LUNCH

GAP hosted a significant event to launch the Phase 1 Report's findings titled "Climbing the Educational Ladder: Youth Mobilities in an Urban Resettled Community in Delhi" on 5th April, 2025. The study is based on the baseline household level survey to explore and describe the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the entire community and its inhabitants, with a specific focus on their education profiles. The data was collected in collaboration with Navjyoti India Foundation. The data collection teams included volunteers from Navjyoti and students from O.P. Jindal Global University, who were trained earlier in workshop mode. A total of 378 households and 2002 individuals constitute the final sample. The survey collected information ranging from demographic and socio-economic characteristics, occupational details, and educational status including enrolment, completion and absenteeism.

The report launch event opened with a message from the Dean, followed by a comprehensive presentation of the report by the GAP team. Special guest Dr. Kiran Bhatti, Senior Policy Advisor, Centre for Economic and Social Progress offered insights on data and ethics in community research and offered her critical suggestions, and comments on studying educational transitions among urban youth.

This was followed by a discussion by the panelists Dr. Anandini Dar, Associate Professor, School of Liberal Studies, BML Munjal University, Ms. Neetu Sharma, Urban Programs, Navjyoti India Foundation, Dr. Smriti Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, IIITD and Dr. Namesh Killemsetty, Associate Professor, Jindal School of Government and Public Policy and Associate Director, IDEAS, O.P. Jindal Global University. GAP student associates as well as teachers, volunteers, and field enumerators from Navjyoti who participated in the data collection, shared their reflections about field experiences, challenges, and learnings.

The dialogue emphasized the importance of feedback and raised pressing questions around methodology, ethics, and community impact. The GAP team is finalising the 1st Phase Report on Bawana, based on the insights and discussions from the panelists.

Glimpses of from the Report Release Day



Study Circle

Displacement, Marginalization & the Right to City

In keeping with our commitment to critical scholarship, we hosted a reading circle exploring literature on displacement, marginalization, and the role of the state in education. The discussion involved student associates and faculty members and drew on theoretical perspectives from diverse scholarship in legal research, urban sociology, and anthropology to understand the context of displacement-related dispossession in the city.



Through selected readings and dialogue, we reflected on how resettlement, stigma, and state policies together shape the educational aspirations in urban peripheries, how law intersects with the lives of the dispossessed communities, and the methods to make sense of the journey of the people through evidence-based research.



In keeping with our commitment towards the community, we organised an event in collaboration with Navjyoti India Foundation, in the Bawana JJ Colony to share our findings from the data collected in Phase 1 of the Project. The event also marked the release of the Assessment Report 2025 titled **“Margins and Pathways: Mapping Educational Trajectories and the Role of Navjyoti in Bawana JJ colony”** on **17th June 2025**. The event marked a significant moment in our ongoing collaboration and brought together a wide range of voices from the community, the Foundation, and the IDEAS team.

As part of the program, a presentation and sharing of the assessment report was conducted by **Divya Gupta, Manika Bora, and Tahiba Banu**. The report highlighted key findings from our study in the community and was met with thoughtful engagement.

This was followed by an open discussion with community members, members from IDEAS Office (Najam Us Saquib, Nasima Choudhury and Nirmal Lather) as well as teachers, volunteers, students from Navjyoti India Foundation. We are grateful for the active participation and the valuable suggestions that emerged from everyone involved.

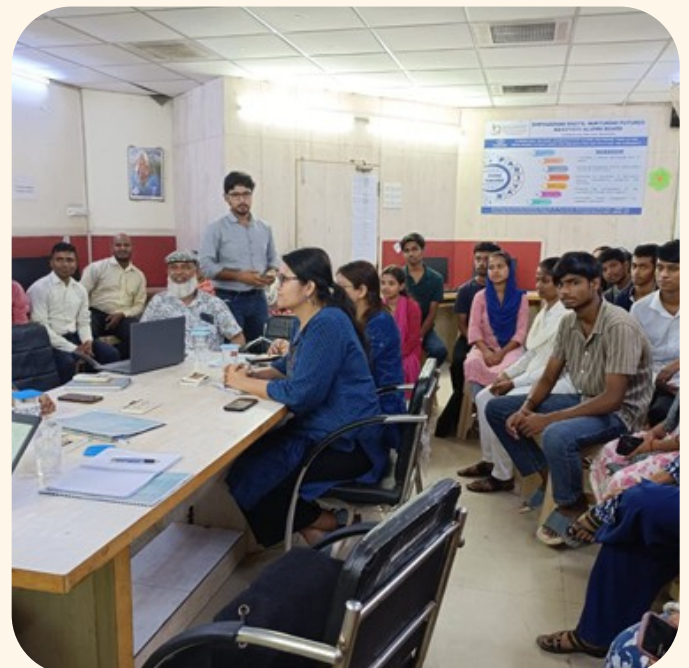
Following the group discussion, GAP had a fruitful and detailed interaction with core members of the Navjyoti India Foundation, where future engagement and new interventions were discussed.

The report focused on the educational trajectories of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of Navjyoti’s programs in the colony.

This event became a space of mutual learning, as parents, youth, teachers, and local leaders responded to the findings and reflected on the role of education in shaping futures.

The event reaffirmed how non-state actors like Navjyoti can foster educational mobility and create meaningful change, especially in under-resourced urban spaces.

Glimpses of the Community Event



What's Coming Up?

- Final version of the Bawana Report Phase 1 to be published in August 2025
- Events on Urban Youth and Education
- New field study planning underway
- More collaboration, more engagement and partnership

Looking Ahead

We are grateful to all collaborators, participants, and communities who have engaged with us. The road ahead will continue to center participatory research, grassroots knowledge, and shared responsibility in co-producing social change.

Stay tuned for our next edition with updates on fieldwork, upcoming workshops, and new collaborations.

Reports can be accessed upon request from the authors.

Want to volunteer, collaborate, or learn more?

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