

HOUSING PROBLEMS IN RURAL UTTAR PRADESH

Manjari Shukla¹

¹Research Scholar, Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India

ABSTRACT

Uttar Pradesh with more than three-quarters of its population living in rural areas must trigger the question of housing condition in the villages. While the Government has over the years focussed immensely on availability of housing for all in both rural and urban areas, what still remains largely conspicuously missing is the decent standard of basic housing amenities like water, electricity and sanitation. The problem becomes even more grave in case of a state as diverse and vast as Uttar Pradesh and therefore it becomes all the more important to solve these problems. The importance of these basic housing amenities lies in the fact that they form the key towards a holistic, all-round development of the state.

Keyword: Housing amenities, Uttar Pradesh, Rural development, electricity, census

1. INTRODUCTION

“The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people’s choices. In principle these choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods.....”

- Mahbub-ul-Haq, founder of the Human Development Report

‘Roti, Kapda, Makan’ (food, cloth and shelter) are the three most important and basic necessities and are universally recognised as the fundamental human rights of all human beings. This ensures a decent standard of living which maximizes the well-being of people. The problem of rural housing is very crucial in India and needs a keen peep especially since rural areas have more than 70% of our population resides. It has seen a great deal of neglect on part of the government and faced a number of set-backs mainly in the form of development disparities, neglecting the housing problems led to a compartmentalized development scenario where the housing sector faced. Reforms introduced in the sector during the 1990s turned the situation where the sector saw a refurbished shelter policy, the organisation of housing finance market, monetary incentives, public investment, legal reforms and other initiatives which changed the face of housing sector. These reforms focussed on reducing the housing shortage and enhancing the quality of houses by ensuring the accessibility of the masses to various housing amenities like safe drinking water, good sanitation and household electricity. There still remains a lot to be done in the housing sector as the assurance of a shelter is not enough for development, it needs to be coupled with enhanced accessibility of masses to the basic household amenities is a more significant measure of development. The Government thus needs to make policies that include both the generation of liveable houses along with increased assurance of household amenities.

The realization that housing is a basic requirement for well-being and also a prominent element of social security led to a massive shift in the housing sector which consequently laid the foundation for the greater emphasis on increasing the stock of housing. India also realized the need of housing development and started paying an increased attention to the sector and its development (Mahadeva, 2006; Hirway, 1987). Some of the important changes brought about in this regard during the period of economic reforms included privatization of production of housing units in the owner- and rental-sectors, housing amenities, organization of the market-led housing finance system.

The government's approach to rural housing has been based on four considerations: (1) highly subsidised housing should be provided for the poor; (2) the poor should use their own labour to construct their houses; (3)

low-cost houses should use local materials and local skills; and (4) the public, the co-operative and the household sectors should be involved in housing activity (Hirway, 1987). But there has been practically no effort on part of the government to fulfil the above considerations as there has been no intense survey to assess the nature and extent of housing in rural areas, nor has it ever allocated adequate funds for rural housing. Though villages do not have a large cluster of people overcrowding the roads like urban areas but it still has a serious problem of housing. This problem may not always be in the form of houselessness but rather in other such forms like in the form of lack of good quality housing (Rajaraman and Mukhopadhyay, 2012), sanitation, access to potable water, lighting, and also the social accessibility as there are various caste based disparities to access to these amenities as well (Pal, Aneja and Nagpal, 2015; Mahadeva, 2006). There are also disparities in housing development affecting the backward regions and depriving them of the basic requirement of good housing. Urban areas have garnered all the benefits through Government interventions in housing development leaving rural areas neglected in the whole procedure when the situation of rural areas have been miserable.

India, as opposed to integrated development approach followed the compartmentalized approach where the development of housing and household amenities has been taken up at different points of time and with separate budgets. This is the reason precisely why there has been limited success in the objective good basic household amenities.

1.1. Objective:

- To assess the housing situation of rural India with special attention to Uttar Pradesh
- To see the temporal pattern of growth of various household amenities and their spatial distribution in Uttar Pradesh

1.2. Data Source

Housing Tables; Census of India, 2001 & 2011

1.3. Methodology

Percentages have been calculated for all the variables and have been translated into graphs. On the basis of the same, an analysis has been made for temporal and spatial variation over the last decade for the state of Uttar Pradesh. The state of Uttar Pradesh, for the purpose of convenience, has been divided into four regions namely- Pashchim Pradesh, Oudh, Bundelkhand and Poorvanchal. This division is justified as these regions are very distinct in a lot of ways, from their geographical, climatic situation to their larger social and demographic constitution and thus need disparate analyses.

2. ANALYSIS

The housing scenario in India has been one of a very slow paced and lopsided in nature. Over the years there has no doubt been a steady improvement in the rural housing sector of Uttar Pradesh but this growth has been nominal at best. The aspects that need a more being the availability of various household amenities like water, sanitation, and electricity. The following graph shows the physical growth of houses as opposed to the rural population in Uttar Pradesh.

The above table shows that there has been a very steady increase in the houses. Though there are not much houseless population in the state

2.1 HOUSEHOLD AMENITIES

2.1.1. Water supply

Water, the life line of every civilization, is one of the basic services for people that is fundamental towards the enhancement of the quality of life of people in rural India. The crucial nature of water in terms of its source, potability, accessibility, and adequacy has always been a matter of concern and challenge for the nation. Moreover, the issue of drinking water and its supply in rural areas, in a country like India where a large population lives in rural areas, is one of the most germane issue that needs attention from the policy makers and from the people.

The provision of quality and adequate drinking water in rural areas will certainly help us achieve high degree of improved health attain desired social goals.

As per the census data drinking water from three sources- tap, well and hand pump/tubewell is considered as safe drinking water. The following graph shows the percentage of Households having access to tap water in the country and in the state of Uttar Pradesh

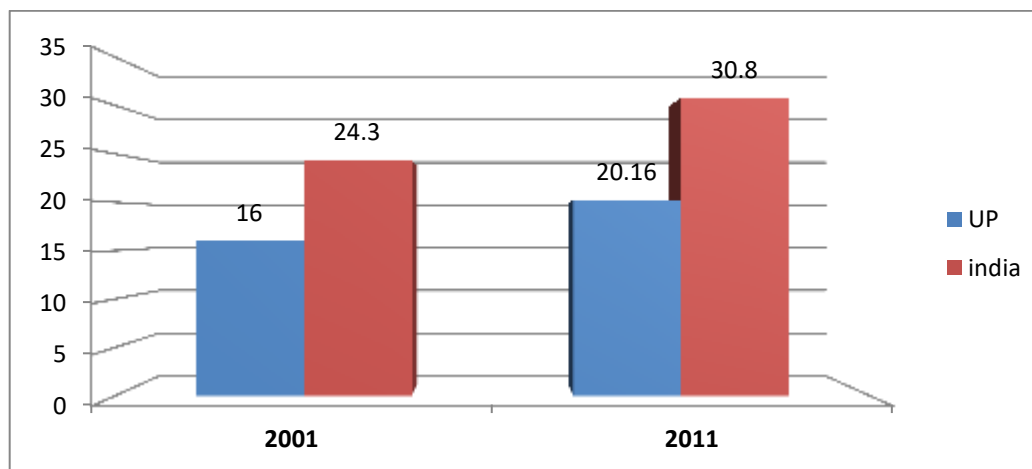


Chart-1: Households with Access to Tap Water in the Country and in Uttar Pradesh

From the above graph it becomes clear that the access of rural households to tap water is less than the national average in Uttar Pradesh. Although there has been a marginal increase between 2001 and 2011 but the increase is not much significant. It should also be noted that providing water through tap or handpump/tubewell may not always be safe for there are still issues of chemical pollutants. Census 2011 provides us with the data whether the tap water is from treated or untreated source. The previous census does not give this information.

The proximity and availability of water is divided into three categories namely, within premises, near the premises (within 500 metres in rural areas), and away from the premises (beyond 500 metres in rural areas). This would give us the true picture of accessibility and availability of water which will tell us about the quality of life in rural areas and also the development of rural infrastructure.

The following table shows the water availability and location of the source in the four major regions of Uttar Pradesh over the years- Pashchim Pradesh, Oudh, Bundelkhand and Poorvanchal. From the graph below it is apparent that off all the four regions Pashchim Pradesh is faring better than the rest in terms of water availability within the premises and near premises with 57% and 33% respectively while on the other hand Bundelkhand and Poorvanchal are faring worst among the lot with 22% of the households in the Bundelkhand region with water source away from their homes.

Table-1: Availability of Sources of Drinking Water in Rural Areas in regions of Uttar Pradesh (As % of households)

	Pashchim nagar 2001	Pashchim nagar 2011	Oudh 2001	Oudh 2011	Bundelkhand 2001	Bundelkhand 2011	Poorvanchal 2001	Poorvanchal 2011
Within Premises	55.78	59.23	23.48	30.45	10.47	12.73	31.45	38.21
Near Premises	34.57	29.72	61.68	52.05	57.90	52.67	54.71	44.24
Away	8.44	10.07	14.83	17.49	19.12	22.09	10.50	14.20

Source: Housing Tables on distance of source of water Census of India, 2001 & 2011

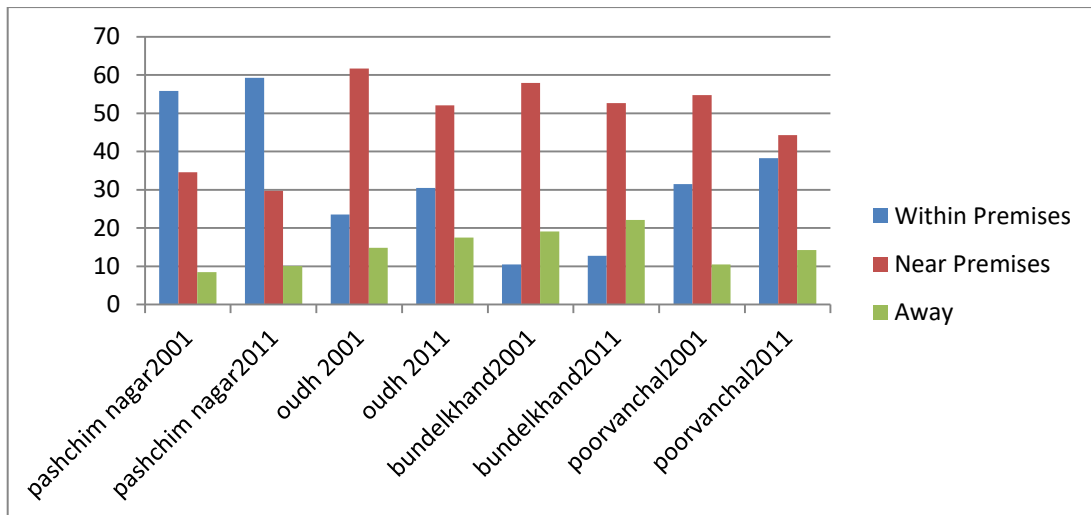


Chart-2: Availability of Sources of Drinking Water in Rural Areas in Regions of Uttar Pradesh (% of Households)

This shows that though there undoubtedly has been betterment in the water availability but the pace of it is very slow especially in the areas- Bundelkhand and Poorvanchal. There has been very less increase in the generation of water source within the premises in Bundelkhand and most of the water source lies near the premises usually in the form of Public Hand pumps or taps or wells etc.

The following shows the picture of the source of water in the four regions. It is clear that hand pumps are the most preferred source of water in rural areas for invariably all the regions. All the regions have shown a tendency of shift towards tap water, although minimally. Bundelkhand has shown a massive decline in the preference of well as the source of water and a rapid increase in hand pump as the source of drinking water. Thus the risk of water borne diseases in the region has declined for the fact that most of the wells used to be uncovered/open wells.

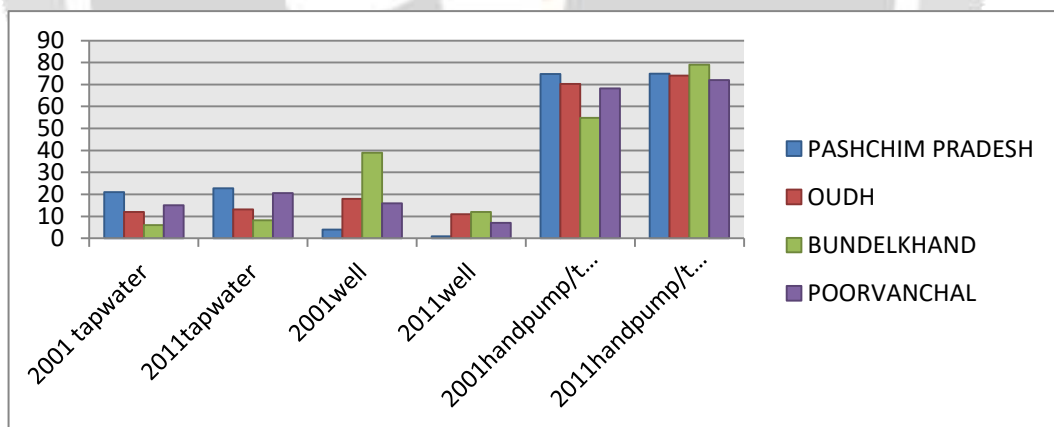


Chart-3: Source of Water in the Regions

This improvement must be seen in the light of the fact that providing water through tap or handpump may not always be safe, for not only the availability of water but also the quality of water matters, for around 37.7 million people in the country is suffering from one or the other type of water borne diseases. The following table shows the source of water according to the safety they ensure.

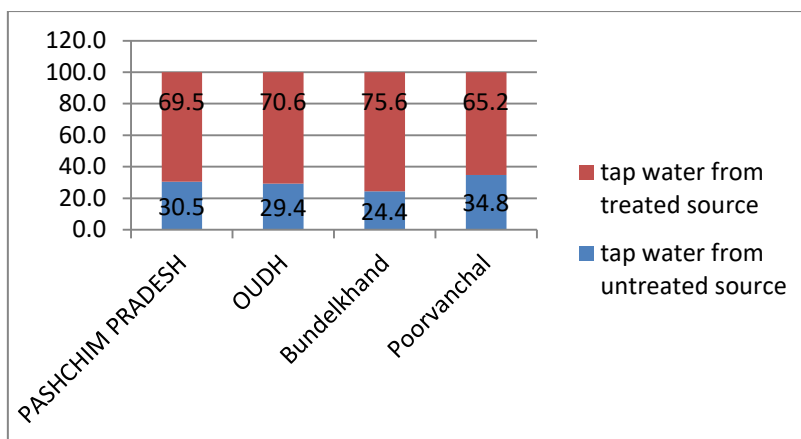


Chart-4: Tap Water from Treated and Untreated Source

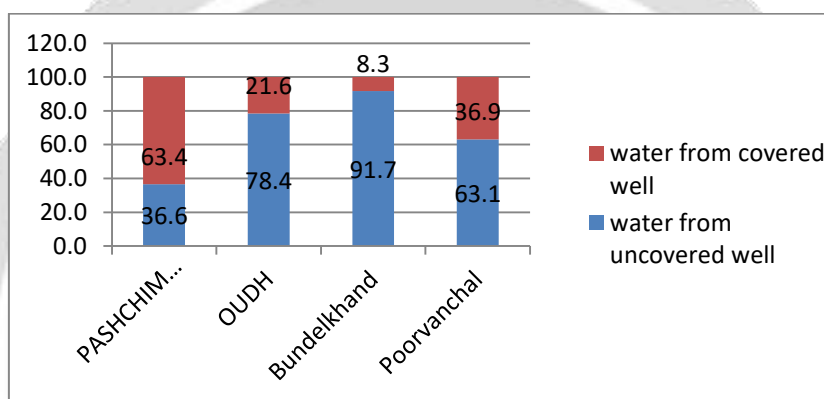


Chart-5: Water from Covered and Uncovered Wells

The graveness of the situation lies here, where almost such a large number of households consume water taken from an unsafe source. Although more than 65% of households drink tap water brought from a treated source there are still around 30% of households using tap water from an untreated source. Bundelkhand has fared better than the rest in this field where more than 75% of the households use tap water brought from treated source.

The case becomes graver when we come to the use of well as a source of drinking water. In almost all the regions (except Paschim Pradesh) there are more than 60% of households using water from uncovered wells. The situation becomes worse in Bundelkhand where 92% of households use water from uncovered well. This increases the risk of water borne diseases in the area which can adversely affect the health and efficiency of people.

2.1.2. Lighting

The source of lighting in the rural areas of our country is mostly kerosene and there has been a very gradual shift towards electricity over the decade (see the graph below). The reason behind the dependence on Kerosene is the lack of reach of grid based electricity to the villages even though the Government has been working towards electrification of villages through various programmes. Their dependence on kerosene lamps is also because of the government subsidised availability of kerosene for poor households.

Table-2: Lighting Scenario in Uttar Pradesh in the Last Decade

	2001	2011
Households using kerosene for lighting	80%	75%
Households using electricity for lighting	20%	24%

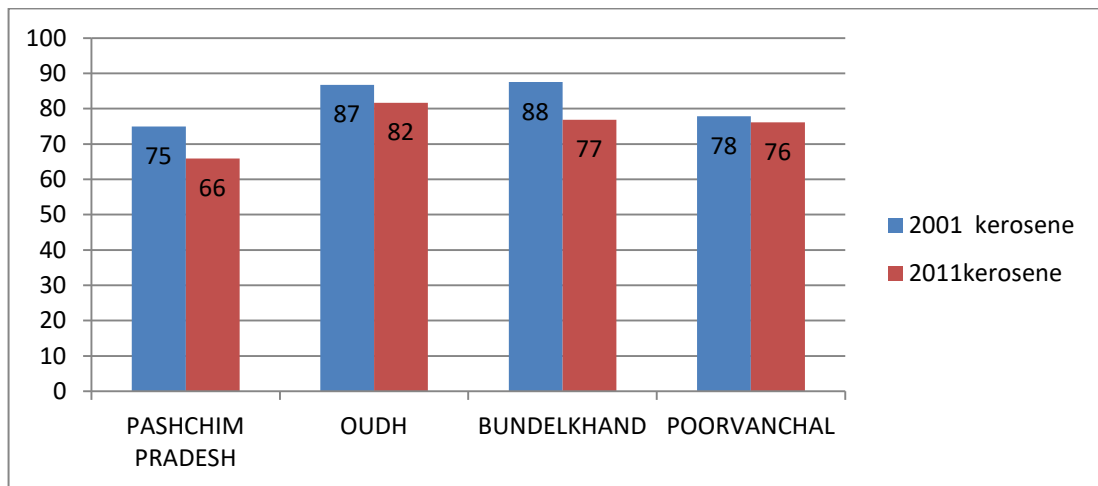


Chart-6: Households using Kerosene as the Source of Lighting

This shows that the effort of government towards lighting up the villages through various schemes (Gram Vidyutikaran Yojna etc.) is working but has been very slow and erratic. There has been a very gradual shift towards electricity and still a large population uses kerosene as a major source of lighting. But if one looks at the following graph the picture that comes out is that of a well bargaining state. Almost all the regions have marginally increased the usage of electricity as the major source of lighting except for Poorvanchal which has shown just 1% increase. The share of electricity as the main source of lighting has improved over the last decade in all the regions. It has increased tremendously in Pashchim Pradesh and Bundelkhand, from 24 to 33% and from 12 to 22% respectively while it has not increased much for Poorvanchal and Oudh. But what remains the fact is that still the total households using electricity in the state as a whole is less than 25%.

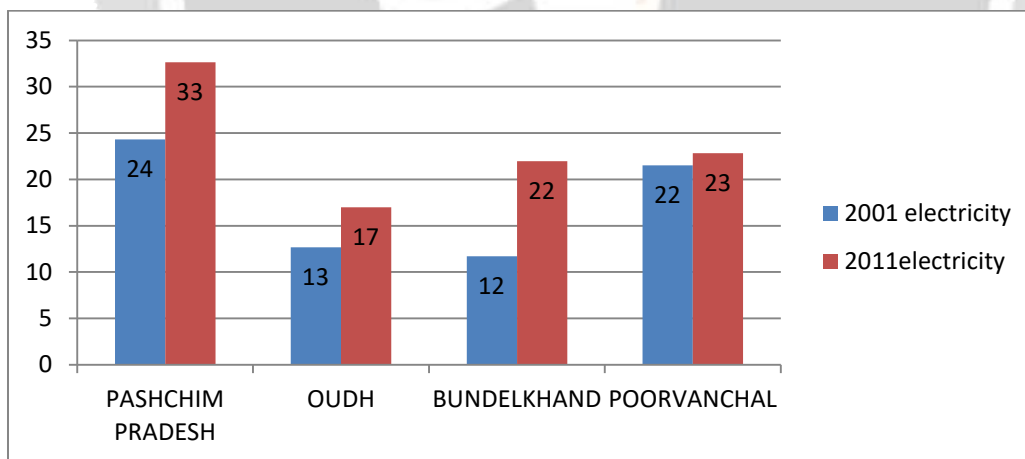


Chart-7: Households using Electricity as the Main Source of Lighting in the Region

2.1.3. **Sanitation**

Sanitation is an important marker closely related to the health and hygiene of people. Studies have shown the impact of diseases on the cognitive development of children caused by poor sanitation (UNICEF, 2009; Dillingham & Guerrant, 2004). Moreover girls are often forced to miss school or even drop out of the school due to lack of proper sanitation facilities in the school (Adukia, 2013; Shahidul and Karim, 2015).

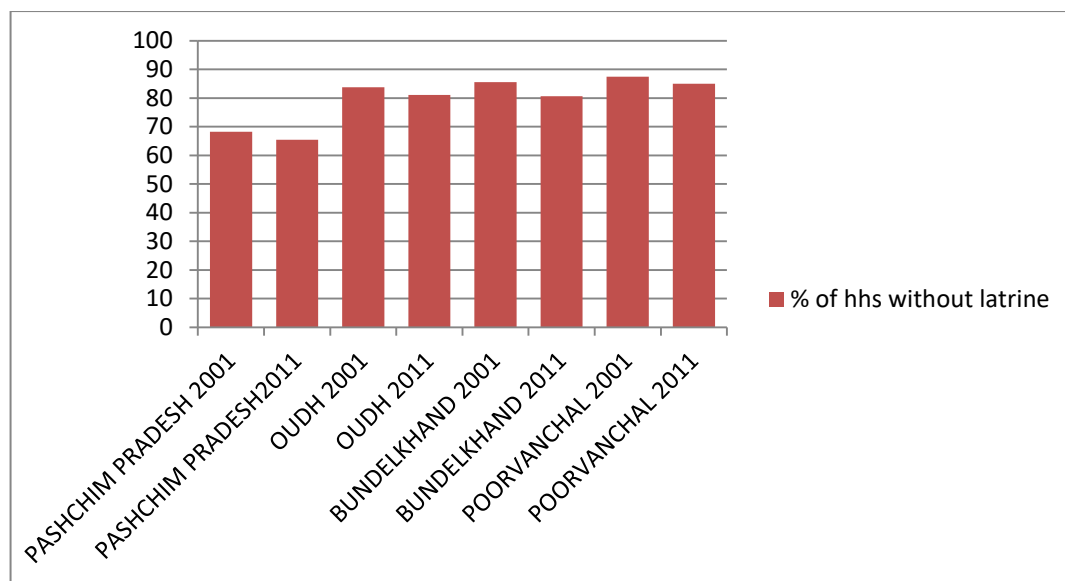


Chart-8: Percentage of Households without Latrine

Although there has been some improvement in terms of access to toilets in rural areas in 2011 over 2001, there are still 78% rural households in Uttar Pradesh that do not have any toilet facility within their house. The above graph shows the absence of latrine among the households in the four major regions of Uttar Pradesh and the picture is very bleak. However it is notable that the Government in the past few years has, with its sanitation drive, achieved the feat of making India open defecation free, though what remains to be seen is the sustenance of this sanitation trend, since mere availability of latrine doesn't cover proper sanitation, it also needs to have a basic water source, underground pit etc.

3. CONCLUSION

Undermining the Importance of Housing Amenities: Answering a wrong Question?

The government has focussed extensively on providing shelter to the houseless population in the past few decades, without ensuring the basic minimum amenities that are deficient in the houses. The houseless households in the state in question, Uttar Pradesh, stands at less than 1% in the state and less than 0.2% in the rural areas while the rural households devoid of basic amenities like toilets is 81%, the rural households without electricity is around 75% and those without proper access to drinking water (safe or unsafe) is 61%. Lack of such basic amenities not only lead to tangible deprivations but also affect the overall quality of life of the population.

This is not to undermine the need of shelter for the houseless population but rather to ensure that houses are generated by keeping in mind the importance of these basic minimum amenities. The generation of houses in Uttar Pradesh have been very efficiently done under the Indira Awas Yojna which aims at providing shelter to the houseless SC/ST families that are below poverty line. But at the same time there is an utter neglect on part of the government when it comes to ensuring these household amenities. It has been very recently realized that there is an equally grave need for these amenities as in absence of these the quality of life has gone from bad to worse. Under the same scheme there is now a provision of monetary help for construction of toilets. But there are still no provisions for water connections, or ensuring increased accessibility of every household to water source. Moreover the shift to electricity as the source of lighting has been minimal in almost all the regions.

The implications of the lack of basic household amenities have been very grave in rural areas. Since water, sanitation and health are interlinked issues and these are required to be dealt with in an integrated and holistic manner. Improved water, sanitation and drainage facilities help to prevent water borne diseases and make possible for the people to lead a healthy and decent life. Contaminated water, open defecation etc are key factors responsible for morbidity. Since, most of the water borne diseases are communicable in nature and have negative externalities; these can be effectively controlled only if all the rural people are provided with these basic minimum necessities. There has been a lot of probe over the problem of homelessness in the rural areas

giving least attention to the importance of housing amenities which is graver. In the paper I have focussed on the state of UP and this is precisely the situation that I came across. There is not much scarcity of houses in the rural UP but there is a huge scarcity of basic household amenities in the state. The Government has realized the starkness of the situation only recently and has initiated schemes that have provisions for these basic amenities. For instance, Gram Vidyutikaran Yojna, Nirmal Gram Yojna, NRDWP (National Rural Drinking Water Programme), ARWSP (Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme) etc. but they still are not able to address the problem of household amenities.

One of the factors behind the utter negligence of the importance of household amenities has been the compartmentalized approach of Government towards solving the problem. The problem of homelessness and that of housing amenities were always treated as two separate problems and even received separate funds. This problem needs to be addressed in an integrated manner which was realized by the policy makers very late and now there are provisions for housing amenities along with providing shelters. Thus it is apparent from the above analysis that the question of household amenities is graver than the question of homelessness and our policy makers need to make policies keeping this in mind.

4. REFERENCES

1. Adukia, A. (2013). Sanitation and education. *Cambridge, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education.*
2. Alkire, S., & Deneulin, S. (2009). Introducing the human development and capability approach. *An introduction to the human development and capability approach. London: Earthscan.*
3. Bredenoord, J & Lindert P.V, 2010, 'Pro-poor housing policies: Rethinking the potential of assisted self-help housing', *Habitat International* 34, 278-287
4. Dillingham, R., & Guerrant, R. L. (2004). Childhood stunting: measuring and stemming the staggering costs of inadequate water and sanitation. *The Lancet*, 363(9403), 94-94.
5. Hirway, Indira, (1987) 'Housing for the Rural Poor', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 22, No. 34, pp. 1455-1460
6. Jain, S.K, (2004) 'Identification of the Poor: Flaws in Government Surveys', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39, No. 46/47, 4981-4984
7. Jones, G.A & Datta, K.A, (2001), 'Housing and finance in developing countries: invisible issues
8. Kumar, A. (2014). Estimating rural housing shortage. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 74-79.
9. Kumar, A. (2015). Discrepancies in sanitation statistics of rural India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(2), 13-15.
10. Kumar, A. (2015). Rural Households' Access to Basic Amenities in India: Deprivation and Socio-economic Exclusions. *Social Change*, 45(4), 561-586.
11. Kumar, A., & Das, K. C. (2014). Drinking water and sanitation facility in India and its linkages with diarrhoea among children under five: evidences from recent data. *Int J Humanit Soc Sci Invent*, 3(4), 50-60.
12. Mahadeva, M. (2006). Reforms in housing sector in India: impact on housing development and housing amenities. *Habitat International*, 30(3), 412-433.
13. Mahadeva, M., (2006), 'Reforms in housing sector in India: impact on housing development and housing amenities', *Habitat International* 30, 412-433
14. Motkuri, V., & Joe, W. (2005). On the Deprivation of Basic Amenities in Rural India: An Analysis of Census 2001.
15. Mukhopadhyay, A., & Rajaraman, I. (2012). Rural housing quality as an indicator of consumption sustainability. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 63-67.
16. Nayar, K. R. (1997). Housing amenities and health improvement: Some findings. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1275-1279.
- on research and policy agendas', *Habitat International* 25 333-357
17. Pal, R., Aneja, N., & Nagpal, D. (2015). Inequality in Housing and Basic Amenities in India.
18. Shahidul, S. M., & Karim, Z. (2015). Factors contributing to school dropout among the girls: A review of literature. *European Journal of research and reflection in educational sciences*, 3(2).
19. Shukla, P. R. (1992). *Strategies for Rural Development* (No. 16). Akashdeep Publishing House.
20. Singh, R. N., & Satheesh, C. (2016). Rural Housing in India: An Analysis of Regional Distribution Patterns and Policy Responses. *Indian Journal of Regional Science*, 48(2), 125-138.
21. Singh, S., Swaminathan, M., & Ramachandran, V. K. (2013). Housing shortages in rural India. *Review of Agrarian Studies*, 3(2), 54-72.
22. Tiwari, P., (2001), 'Housing and development objectives in India', *Habitat International* 25
23. UNICEF. Division of Communication. (2009). *Tracking progress on child and maternal nutrition: a survival and development priority*. Unicef.