

# Every scheme a mirage

The benefits of government-run welfare schemes don't reach the city's Muslims. The community is also denied adequate public services

Maria Akram | TNN

Whenever a welfare scheme is announced for Muslims, there is much carping about vote-bank politics, populism and 'favouritism', although the supposed benefits hardly reach the community. Forget benefiting, most poor Muslims are unaware of the

## MINORITY REPORT

schemes inaugurated in their name. For instance, only 49% of the eligible Muslim population avails of the 'secular' Midday Meal Scheme.

"People do not benefit from these schemes as they lack awareness and local leaders are not interested in informing them of their rights," said Zafar Mehmood, a school teacher and resident of Jaffrabad. That's indeed the case in Seelampur, where TOI found people unaware of entitlements under National Maternity and Laadli schemes.

"Most of us do not have enough documents to avail of the schemes. Government officials demand one identity proof or another," said Shahjahan Begum. She claims to have lived in the same shanty in New Seelampur for more than 40 years but does not have a domicile certificate. "They turn us away although we have Aadhaar and voter cards and get electric-

### FEELING LEFT OUT

Not many Muslims benefit from welfare schemes and civic facilities

13% of Muslim population in city below poverty line

9% of Muslim population in city entitled to Anganwadi/Balwadi schemes



#### WELFARE SCHEMES

□ Aware □ Availing

Midday Meal Scheme

49 77

National Old-Age Pension Scheme

19 68

Laadli Scheme

11 56

National Maternity Scheme

14 31



#### PUBLIC FACILITIES

■ Yes ■ No ■ Can't say

Community centre

22 69 9

Public library

9 87 4

Sports complex

4 88 8

Public park

11 72 17



Bus routes

Sufficient | 23

Insufficient | 48

Can't say | 29



Banks

Very few | 68

Nil | 19

Not sufficient | 8

Sufficient | 5



Fire station

Yes | Nil

No | 61%

Very far | 39%

All figures in %

ity bills in our name. My husband is out of work and we want a BPL card but can't get one without a domicile certificate."

**Only 49% of the eligible Muslim population avails of the 'secular' midday meal scheme, while only 19% of the city's eligible Muslims receive the National Old-Age Pension**

Fehmida, who does Zard- ozi embroidery, earns only Rs 900 a month for complet- ing three pieces in a week, each one of which sells for around Rs 10,000. "We work daily and sometimes all night," said Fehmida. Her

daughters work with her but aren't paid separately. "Women in the unorganized sector get no benefits and only a few hundred rupees for working 17 hours daily, on average," said Mehmoo- na who works with All India Democratic Women's Asso- ciation (AIDWA).

Only 19% of the city's eligible Muslim population receives the National Old- Age Pension. "If Muslims become confident enough to avail of these benefits, they will no more be the 'vote- bank' for some political par- ties," said Mehmood.

A study by Civil Society Network for the Institute of Objective Studies shows that other civic amenities, such as community centres, play- grounds and fire stations

aren't sufficient or situated very far. "The government's development engines seem to have stalled on the border of Muslim-majority areas. How come there are few fa- cilities near our houses as compared to other parts of Delhi? People say a lot of development took place in Sandeep Dikshit's East Delhi constituency. True, but the Okhla area was completely neglected," said Akhlaq Ah- mad of Jamia Nagar.

Residents of the North East constituency say they were left out of development plans. "Except for a foot overbridge, no other project was taken up in the area during Commonwealth Games," said Mohd Shiraz of Seemapuri.

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## Feeling thirsty and powerless

Most Muslim-majority areas in Delhi continue to be plagued by water and power woes

Maria Akram | TNN

**W**ater shortage affects everyone in Delhi, but Muslims, many of whom live in unplanned areas, are especially hard hit. A survey by the Institute of Objective Studies shows 44% of the community in the capital does not have access to piped



supply and has to buy water. Even the rest have to contend with erratic timings, with a two-hour supply being considered a luxury.

"All the areas neighbouring Jamia Nagar, such as New Friends Colony, get water from the Sonia Vihar pipeline, but we need to buy water from tankers," said Nida Hasan, a resident of Jauhri Farm and student of Jamia Milia Islamia University.

Some wards like Abul Fazal Enclave that have existed for 25 years still don't



Photo: Anindya Chattopadhyay

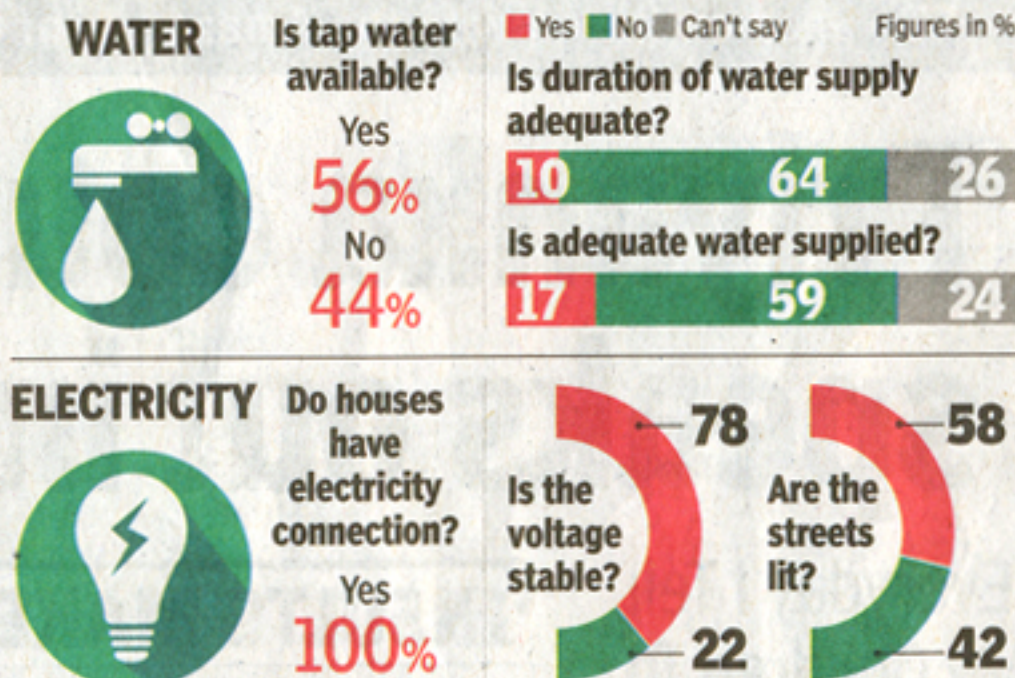
**LONG WAIT:** Many colonies haven't got pipelines after 25 years

have piped supply. "Requests to our MLA and councillors for getting pipelines have gone unheeded," said Mohd Shoaib, a resident.

In New Seelampur, which gets piped supply, drinking water gets contaminated from open drains. "The project (to cover drains) started way back

in 2008. However, after the Commonwealth Games, the work never resumed. While covering the drain, they had blocked water and sewer pipelines. Now, our taps remain dry," said Najma Begum, a resident. In the Jama Masjid area, water wasn't an issue till a few years ago but with in-

### SERVICES PROVIDED ONLY IN NAME



creasing population and scarcity, people have started boring wells illegally.

Unlike water, the supply of power is largely satisfactory in these areas. All houses have a connection and 78% of the people say the voltage is steady and outages rare. But in Seemapuri, many residents said power theft is rampant. "Without this kind of theft, many would be living in the dark," said Shehzad Ahmad, a resident of Mustafabad.

"Power theft is a major issue in areas like Seelampur, Seemapuri and Jama Masjid. But Okhla is relatively better. However, 22% of the people are unhappy with the electricity supply, and most of them live in this area," said a researcher of Civil Network Society, the group that conducted the study for Institute of Objective Studies.

*Tomorrow: Welfare schemes and civic facilities*



# Failed by govt and schools

Schools are in short supply in the city's Muslim-majority areas. Not only has the govt let them down, private schools turn away eligible Muslim children on the flimsiest of grounds

Maria Akram | TNN

Education is the key to leadership, and the backwardness of Muslims demonstrates a lack of it. The enrolment of Muslim girls in schools has declined, but backwardness alone is not to blame as the availability and accessibility of both public and private schools are inadequate. Many Muslim parents have reported facing discrimination and visible hostility from teachers and school authorities while trying to seek admission for children.

The dismal condition of government and municipal schools is no secret, so some Muslim parents opt for madrassas over schools. "The teachers remain absent and the quality of education is poor. It's better for children to attend madrassas as these days they also impart (modern) education and students can get placed as translators in Gulf countries," said Shariq Khan, a resident of Seelampur. The Babul-Uloom Madrassa that has



**ACCESS DENIED:** Many Muslims are logging into the madrassa system for an education

more than 180 students is a few kilometres away from his residence.

A study by the Institute of Objective Studies shows how Muslim children whose parents meet criteria of income, proximity and educa-

tional background were denied admission on flimsy grounds in formal schools.

In 2012, social activist Abdul Khaliq used RTI to collect information about the number of Muslim children enrolled in nursery in Del-

hi's private schools. "The bias was clear. Of the 92 schools that provided information, 17 admitted only one Muslim child each and around 20 had no Muslim student that year. The other schools had only five or six students each," he said.

The study claims that one reason for the high college dropout rate among Muslims is that they study in nearby areas, and don't get to mix with children from other communities at the school level. College delivers a culture shock. However, enthusiasm for good English-medium secular education is strong in the middle-class Muslim residents of these areas.

Kachchi Khajuri that lies along the Pushta Road linking Delhi with Uttar Pradesh demonstrates the plight of Muslim children. Across the

road from it is Pucci Khajuri, a Gujar-dominated colony. Kachchi Khajuri is almost entirely a Muslim area and does not have a Delhi government school. Its children attend school on the other side where, besides schools, there are roads and covered drains.

In Okhla and Zakir Nagar



wards, people allege their children are asked whether they have seen a terrorist, live next door to one, or if their father knows a member of Indian Mujahideen. "It's really disturbing when parents come complaining about such questions, but with whom can they take it up when profiling of children from this area is so common," said Amanatullah Khan, AAP worker and a resident of Batla House.

There are some success stories too. For instance, after the amazing transformation of Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya-2, Zeenat Mahal, a century-old Urdu-medium school for girls, parents no longer need to look for schools outside their area. Until a few years ago, the school ranked among the 200 worst-performing government schools in Delhi with its pass percentage around 50%. But in 2008, its pass rate was 100% and it topped among non-Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas (RPVV), standing fifth among all government schools. The good work continues.

*Tomorrow: Water & electricity*

## STUDIED INDIFFERENCE

Educational facilities for Muslims remain inadequate in the city

PERCENTAGE OF MUSLIM STUDENTS ENROLLED IN GOVT SCHOOLS			
	Primary level*	Upper-primary level**	Elementary level#
2010-11	15.7	13	—
2011-12	13.2	11.3	12.5
2012-13	16.1	14.6	15.5
Enrolment of girls			
2010-11	49.5	49.1	49.4
2011-12	49.9	51.5	50.4
2012-13	48.8	49	48.9

\*Classes I-V, \*\*Classes VI-VIII, #Classes I-VIII

### Availability of government schools up to senior-secondary level



### Availability of private schools





# Minority at major disadvantage

Muslim-majority areas in Delhi are getting stepmotherly treatment from the civic agencies. They figure low down in development plans and the budgets allocated for them are minimal

Maria Akram | TNN

Anindya Chattopadhyay

What is common between Jama Masjid, Batla House, Hauz Rani, Seemapuri and Khajuri, apart from a predominantly Muslim population? They lack civic facilities, are congested and development has always been slow in coming to them. The density of population is usually very high,



pushing up real estate prices. Still, many Muslims continue to settle in them as they find it difficult to rent or buy a house in other parts of the city. Since horizontal expansion of the localities is no longer possible, they are going vertical.

Because of the space constraint, the number of schools, water supply and sanitation are all inadequate in these areas. Add to it civic apathy, and the localities fare poorly in terms of most development indicators. Still, more than 59% of the people interviewed in these areas said they chose to live there despite the poor infra-



**NEGLECTED:** Many bus stops connecting Muslim-majority areas lie more than 1km away

structure as they "feel protected" living within the community, while 23% chose the areas for affordability.

A study by the Institute of Objective Studies in seven wards—Chauhan Bangar, Jaffrabad, Mustafabad, Jama Masjid, Qasabpura, Zakir Nagar and Okhla (all with a Muslim councillor)—and four other localities, in mixed wards, looked at the

pattern of fund allocation and actual expenditure by various government agencies. While banks, ration shops, Mother Dairy outlets and healthcare should be available within the neighbourhood, in 72% of cases they lie at a distance of 5km. No new government school has been established in these wards in the past five years.

There is a water crisis

across Delhi but it is acute in the areas surveyed where 44% of the people do not have access to tap water. Those who have water connections complain that the water is unfit for drinking.

The data also shows that these areas were left out of the various development and recreation projects taken up in the year 2012-13. Works were started in 214 unau-

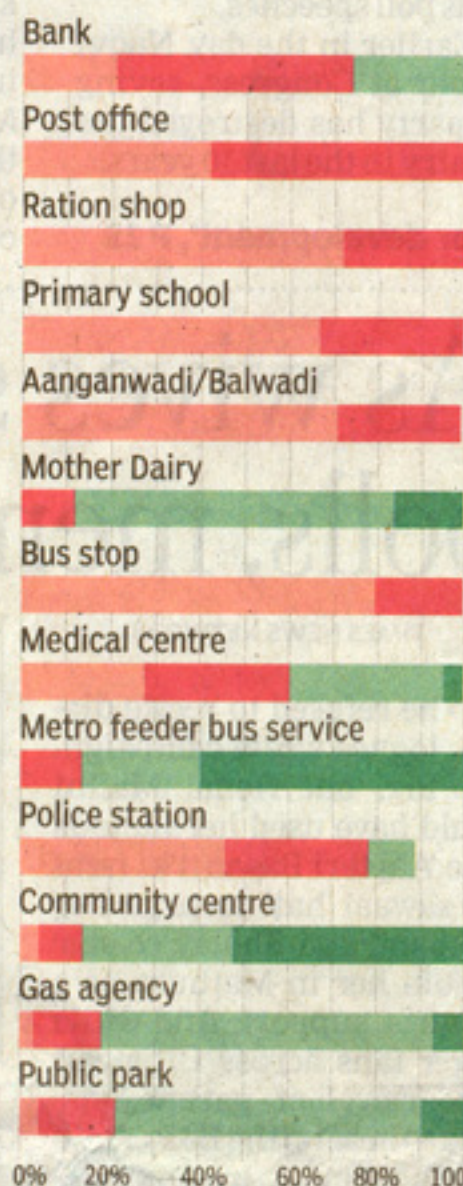


thorized colonies—none of them from the Muslim-majority list. MLAs and councillors, however, say there are many restrictions on carrying out work in slums and unauthorized colonies. But even a service like sanitation, on which there is no restriction, is crumbling.

*Tomorrow: Sanitation*

## DISTANCE TO FACILITIES FROM HOME

Less than 1km > 1km  
> 3km > 5km

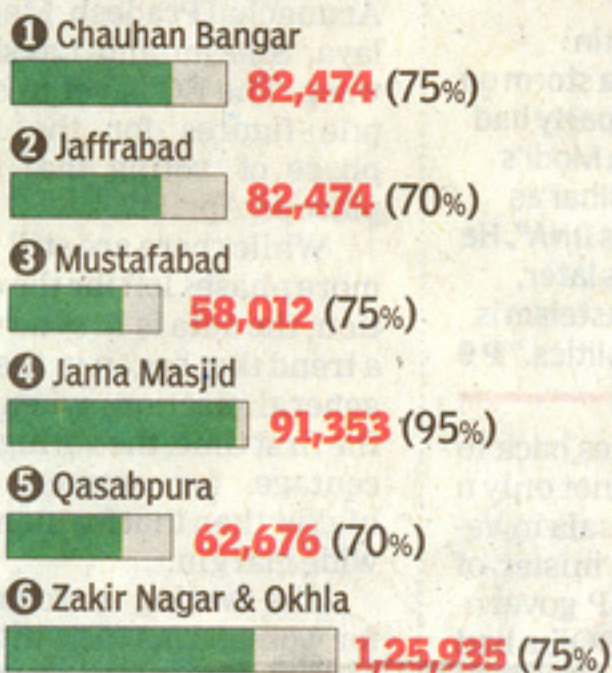


## A STORY OF CIVIC NEGLECT

The city's Muslim-majority areas remain underdeveloped and the civic bodies are not doing enough to change the picture

### LOCALITIES

Population %Muslim



Other Muslim-majority areas included in the survey are Kardampuri, Babu Nagar, Kanti Nagar and Sriram Colony. Approximately 5.7 lakh Muslims live in these areas

0.4%  
of corporation  
funds spent  
on them

The three municipal corporations spent ₹933.4 crore on development works in Delhi, in 2012-13. Of this, only ₹3.8 crore was spent in Muslim-majority areas—₹3.6 crore around Escorts Hospital and ₹20.8 lakh in Ballimaran

### REASONS FOR LIVING IN THESE AREAS



### MAJOR CONCERNS





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# Trapped in filth, disease & neglect

There is hardly any sanitation infrastructure in Muslim-majority areas, and even that is poorly maintained. Most areas have overflowing drains, some have even started burning garbage

Maria Akram | TNN

For four years, the space behind Hoor Bano's shanty in New Seelampur has not been cleared. Time has inured her to the filth and stench from the spread of garbage, and experience has taught her not to expect anything better. Residents say their representatives, from the councillor to the MP, only pass the buck. "Our councillor, Shakila Begum, chooses to stay in purdah," a resident told TOI with more than a trace of sarcasm.

Overflowing drains in the area breed mosquitoes, and dengue and ma-



## MINORITY REPORT

laria are widespread. Mohd Saood, who lost his three-year-old son to dengue in 2010, is resigned to his fate. "People die here and the 'dirty' tag attached to Muslims is right, as most of us live in such unhygienic conditions."

Conditions are even more insatiable in Seemapuri, which has a high concentration of Muslim residents. There, people have started burning garbage to get rid of it. Even the main road is divided by a ribbon of garbage. "We lead a dirty, dangerous and degraded

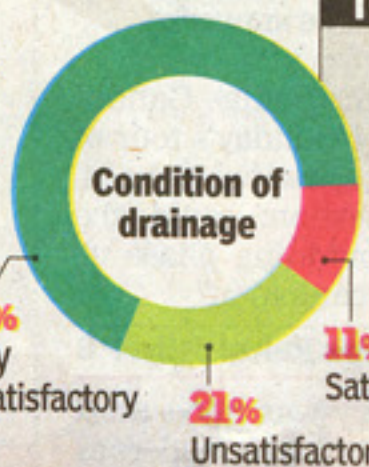
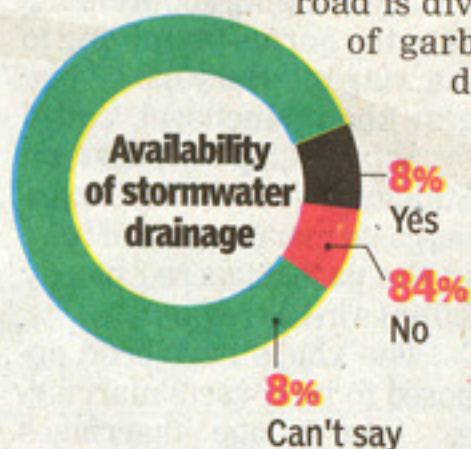
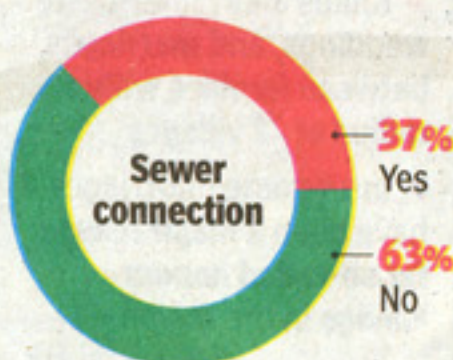
life. By inhaling this toxic air, many of us die very young," said Mohd Bilal, a ragpicker. There is just one mobile toilet on the main road for the hundreds of people who live nearby, and even it is brimming. Now people sleep on the iron planks.

In the Jama Masjid area, where Muslims make up 95% of the population, there is only one dhalao which is seldom cleared out. The sewage system is inadequate, and it backflows during the rains. A tourist magnet and street food hub, the Jama Masjid area has more than 380 eateries, none of which has a proper waste disposal system. "Recently, one pipe-

Photos: Anindya Chattopadhyay



**NOTHING HEALTHY:** Overflowing drains in most areas breed mosquitoes, and dengue and malaria are widespread



## NOT A CLEAN PICTURE

The city's Muslim-majority areas lack sanitation infrastructure and services



line was replaced but even that isn't helping as the load is too much. Buildings are going vertical and sanitation remains a huge problem," said Jalaluddin. A study by the Institute of Objective Studies shows that 63% of the area does not have a sewerage.

While Old Delhi isn't planned, Okhla, considered the new Old Delhi, is hardly better. Its unauthorized colonies on the Yamuna riverbed face the same problems. Their drainage and sewerage are poor, and garbage dumped on the streets compounds the problem. While public toilets don't exist, the study shows that 88% of the households have toilet facilities, thanks to the efforts of residents.

But since the area has been developed in a haphazard manner by residents themselves, some colony roads are flooded with sewage even in peak summer. "We pay water bills that include sewage charges. But there is no sewage system in the area. The system is collapsing but nobody raises a voice against it as our own leaders have stopped looking after us," said Jibran Ahmad, a resident.

Tomorrow: Education