

# NEWSLETTER

November 2018



COMMON MAN  
INITIATIVE

POLICY. GOVERNANCE. PROGRESS.

## About the Common Man Initiative

Common Man Initiative is a non-profit organization which aims to highlight the issues of the common man. Our goal is to understand why and how the needs of the common man are not being catered to due to a lack of efficient governance, policy implementation and a sound legal and judicial system.

The organization aims to provide a platform to the common man where they can voice the issues that they face; issues which are often dismissed by the State, amidst personal political and social motives. Issues which need to be brought forward, voices which need to

be incorporated in the governance and policy dialogue of the State and, the common man, who needs representation in order to reshape the relevant public policy narrative.

CMI's overarching goal is to present policy alternatives for a secure and prosperous Pakistan. To this end, CMI shall identify and highlight fundamental governance issues affecting the common man, in order to restructure pertinent State policies. Particularly, through a series of publications, outreach programs, academic collaborations and institutional alliances, CMI intends to present actionable ideas for implementation

## Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Over the past seven months CMI has attempted to highlight the problems of the common man. Together, we have stepped in the 'Naya Pakistan' with hopes of establishing a system of accountability, democracy, justice, equality and prosperity; simultaneously witnessing our nation getting jolted by violence against religious minorities. We have detailed stories of the unsung heroes of Pakistan, who are often sidelined or dismissed. We have given voice to the common man and published accounts of poverty, hunger, injustices and so many other issues that form the narrative of the 'common man' of Pakistan.

In this edition, although a little apprehensive, we are excited to discuss an initiative that directly affects the common man of Pakistan.

The government has announced the establishment of five homeless shelters in Lahore, the foundation of the first one has already been laid by Prime Minister Imran Khan near the Lahore railway station. The government's efforts towards the welfare of people and alleviation of poverty are commendable. However, these do trigger some questions and one can't help but wonder how well thought out these projects are and if they will be sufficient to help diminish the sufferings of the common man. In this issue, we have highlighted some of the problems that can arise and discussed strategies that can be undertaken to tackle them. I hope that this newsletter is engaging and thought provoking; we would love to hear your ideas and feedback. If you have any questions, please free to contact us.

*Falak Akhtar Wahla*

## Contact Us

### Contact us:

Phone: +92 42 3891 1962

Email: [info@commonman.org](mailto:info@commonman.org)

Address: 222 Garden Block, Garden Town, Lahore

Timings: 0900 – 17:00

### Website:

[www.commonman.org](http://www.commonman.org)

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## “Pannah Gah: A step forward towards transforming Pakistan into a Welfare State?”

In light of the proposed homeless shelters to be set-up in various cities by the Prime Minister, details of the project “Panah Gah” were collected through an in-depth interview with Ms. Ambreen Raza, Secretary Social Welfare Department.

The idea of a homeless shelter evolved from launching a “Musafir khana” for travelers, to provide an over-night stay to cater to the needs of the homeless, sleeping on footpaths. It was later decided that homeless shelters across the country would be launched. So far, five sites in Lahore and one in Rawalpindi have been shortlisted for the project. The project for the first homeless shelter “Panah Gah” has been launched by the Prime Minister, Imran Khan, however the site for the other shelters is yet to be confirmed.

According to Ms. Ambreen Raza, *“This is a very fluid concept to date, and the locations are still in the process for being finalized. Essentially, these shelters were to be constructed in various locations, one in Rawalpindi and five in Lahore and two other areas which are yet to be confirmed. Larri Ada was taken up as an option, but was dropped on account of unavailability. One of the shelters was relocated from Shahdara to Thokar Niaz Baig in Lahore. These locations are subject to logistical issues and therefore can be changed in the future as well.”*

Locations are chosen on the basis of availability, but the thought process going in to the selection of these locations is still a little unclear. Are these shelters being constructed because there just happens to be a vacant space that could be taken up, or are these selected because there are a number of homeless individuals in these areas?

Of course, the primary concern with Panah Gah, as with other homeless shelters, is the safety of its residents. Panah Gah's administration is resolute on ensuring that necessary steps are taken for the protection of the residents, *“We are wary of the security concern and will make sure that there are no arms or drugs within the premises of Panah Gah. It will be also ensured that individuals with contagious diseases are kept separate from other residents. The halls for men and women are segregated, with the female hall in an upper portion and the hall for men in the lower portion. Each hall has five toilets; beds and mattresses for each of the residents will be provided. Each shelter also has a public hall for facilities, and landscaping services are*

*provided to these shelters to make them appear more welcoming. The basic facilities provided by Panah Gah do not include food, but we will partner with others to encourage soup kitchens and provision of medical facilities”.*

There is also a reception area for proper identification of those coming in to stay in the shelters. However, there is no clear policy regarding what happens to those who seek shelter but do not have the necessary identification documents. We are also wondering how the residents will be selected, given the limited space of the shelter. Would shelter be provided on a first come-first served bases? Will there be a preference for adults, elderly, women or children?

One thing that the administration is determined about is ensuring that the shelters are not turned into permanent residence, *“Residents will only be allowed to stay from 6pm to 9am and there will be a restriction of the amount of luggage that can be brought in. We will also be partnering with external organizations to provide guidance to our residents, we want to link them to relevant facilities which can help them become self-sufficient. We will partner with public and private organizations and NGOs for the rehabilitation and recovery of our residents.”*

Panah Gah has a board of governors, made up of people from private and public sectors. The administration will consist of a warden/caretaker, security and janitorial staff and attendants for residents with special needs. Panah Gah is also adamant on ensuring and encouraging community participation.

This project is in a very fluid state as far as its administration and governance are concerned. Responsibility for the operations of the program, budgets for the operation, salaries of the staff, costs of the utilities and provision of those utilities are still to be finalized.

Although the shelter itself will require some time before it becomes operational, Government has set up temporary tents to cater to the homeless, these tents have been set up at various location with proper administration and security. Basic facilities such as bedding and food are also provided at these ‘makeshift shelters’ which according to the Prime Minister, Imran Khan, *“is the first step towards transforming Pakistan into a welfare State”.*



# Homeless Shelters Governance Models

In keeping with their theme of securing the rights and protecting the interests of people; Prime Minister Imran Khan's government aims to adopt a project to alleviate poverty in the country. To that end, on Saturday 10th November, 2018, the premier addressed a launching ceremony for the establishment of five homeless shelters in Pakistan, beginning with Lahore and Rawalpindi. While the efforts of the government are laudable, apprehensions regarding the difficulties in the implementation of such a project is inevitable.

Certain predominant issues that the government would have to address when setting up these shelters would primarily be: the security and governance of the shelters, methods to curb crime and drug abuse amongst the shelter residents, provision of health care facilities, and segregation of the residents in terms of gender, age or special needs of certain residents. While the list itself isn't comprehensive, it serves to provide an overview of what's in store for the government when they begin working on, what can now be termed, as one of the most highly-anticipated projects of this government.

It is not clear (yet) how the authorities will cater to these problems, but existing models of shelter homes can be studied to determine the best practices and standards that Pakistan can strive to achieve.

## Model 1: New York City Department of Homeless Services

The NYC Department is a state-mandated initiative, tasked with providing services to homeless individuals within the city, with the ultimate goal to alleviate poverty. Its purpose, as outlined at the 1992 NYC "Commission on the Homeless" is three-fold: to operate as an emergency shelter, provide rehabilitation services to re-introduce these individuals into independent houses and to partner with NGO's or other local agencies to provide these services consistently. The activities of this department are governed by the New York Code, Rules and Regulations.

The shelter system is designed as a temporary and emergency housing system for individuals who have no other options available to them. The shelter is segregated according to single adults, adult families, families with children, domestic violence victims and senior citizens shelters. For each category, there is a particular screening process in place; for instance, a family seeking shelter through the department will have to provide information regarding family and housing history to determine eligibility for emergency shelter. Accommodations in a shelter are available as a last resort and the same has to be proven by those seeking shelter.

The entire premise of the system is that it is supposed to be a temporary abode and therefore, the shelters work actively to provide rental assistance to its inhabitants, allowing them to maintain permanent and stable housing. Aftercare services are also a prominent feature of these shelters with the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) operating a "Homebase Program" which helps with the relocation of shelter

inhabitants to their own homes. The Homebase develops a service plan with the family or individual, incorporating long-term and short-term goals and links them to relevant services and facilities.

Crime control is a major concern for every homeless shelter, regardless of its location. Hence, the NYC Department of Homeless Services has a specialized law enforcement agency, tasked with providing on-site security services to the shelters.

The shelters partner with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and various other clinics. The staff undergoes regular training to provide first-aid assistance whenever required. There's specially trained staff to cater to inhabitants who are drug addicts and are trained to respond to drug-overdoses within the shelters.

## Model 2: The Salvation Army in Canada

Canada's model serves as an excellent example of the thought process that goes into setting up an emergency shelter. The Salvation Army conducted extensive consultations with staff, clients, researchers and community leaders to highlight the best practices for ending homelessness, which led to the development of their "Operating Principles", developed and published by the Homelessness Task Team of the National Advisory Board and the Territorial Social Services Department of the Salvation Army in Canada, emphasizing on:

- The need for shelters to have a person-centered, holistic approach to support people with particular vulnerabilities.
- Rehabilitation of homeless people and helping them get access to stable, positive housing and appropriate support.
- Ensuring that people with special needs receive appropriate accompaniment and follow-up services.
- Making every discharge from the shelter an organized one.
- Tracking and analyzing outcomes to inform planning and policy decisions and to continually improve services.

The shelters managed by 'The Salvation Army' provides an active job training and job-search assistance, hence leading to a complete rehabilitation. Just as the New York model, these shelter homes also work as transitional housing programs, which are not meant to house these individuals permanently but are focused towards re-introducing them to a stable life.

Each shelter home has sufficient residential services including nursing, medical, pharmacy, and recreational and legal aid facilities. Additionally, there are regular education programs, mental health and addiction referrals.

## Adopting the Best Practices:

While the models highlighted clearly belong to states with very sophisticated, developed and progressive legal, economic and political systems, and adoption of



such models in their entirety is certainly difficult for a state like Pakistan, there is nothing wrong in aspiring to reach that level. Although these models are not perfect and are subject to various problems that are inherent in such establishments, these do serve as an example of some of the practices that Pakistan can adopt to effectively run the shelters, and make the most out of them.

It will be very helpful if initially a census is conducted to estimate how many individuals are homeless in areas where the shelters have been planned. Moving forward, using the idea postulated by the Canadian Salvation Army, the appropriate authorities could initiate an in-depth consultation program to highlight key stakeholders in the program, the potential pitfalls and

the kind of services that will be expected from these homeless shelters.

The government should also consider all possible options to ensure that these shelters do not become a place of permanent residence for the inhabitants. Rather, as proven and discussed above, the homeless shelters should aim to rehabilitate the individuals who find themselves in them. This is an aspect that cannot be stressed enough, if the government does not plan on creating opportunities for the people living in homeless shelters, then this entire plan to alleviate poverty crumbles. It will, in essence, be a Band-Aid solution to the real problem, which will serve only to cultivate new difficulties and the cycle of poverty will keep rolling as usual.



# Homeless Shelter Interviews



**Hameed (Worker at site)**

## What do you expect from this shelter? After it is completed?

The outcome will be very beneficial once the project is completed.

It is located right beside the Railway Station, so the travelers that cannot afford a decent hotel would have a shelter overhead. Right now these people sleep on the road, at night the park is full of homeless people. All these homeless people will have a place to stay. These people will not be seen sleeping in parks or footpaths.

## What problems might arise due to the project?

A place like this can cause a lot of problems, it could act as a safe haven for terrorists and criminals.

There should be an office built for entrance into the shelter, once a homeless person or a traveler comes to the shelter he should not be granted entry without his/her bio-data. People should submit their ID cards to be granted entry into the shelter.



**Rafique Chacha (homeless person)**

## The government is making shelter homes for the poor, how do you feel about this initiative?

We do not know anything about this news, you are the first person who has told me this. You are the computer generation that's why you know this. You people are growing with the computer.

You asked me how I feel about the government making homes for the poor, why don't you show me the homes first before you ask me the questions. This is what these politicians do; they boast about things before they even start.

## But work has started on this project, the site is nearby and you can see for yourself.

Let me ask you a question, if you start walking towards Wagha border and keep on walking you'll reach what country?

You will reach India, but have you ever walked to India before?

## No, I have not.

See that is my point, you talk of the destination and ignore the journey. The government might have started something but I cannot believe anything until they have built these so called shelter homes. Right now these are just words, but if these words are turned into walls and a roof then I'll believe that there is a savior who is dedicated to the betterment of Pakistan and its people.



**Muhammed Nabi (Overseeing Officer)**

## How beneficial is this project for the common man?

This is a very important step that will benefit a large amount of population. This country is home for everyone who lives in it; even the homeless. They should not be neglected by the society. I think our Prime Minister is doing the right thing by building this shelter and providing a home for them.

## Can this shelter cause any problems?

If there's no check and balance of this shelter than most certainly it will become a hub for criminal activity.

## How can this problem be tackled?

There should be at least 6 or 7 security guards that keep this place in check, the police should regularly check the people for any criminal activity. People should be asked for their ID cards before they are let in.



**Shafi Mohammed (Homeless person)**

## The government is making shelter homes for the poor, how do you feel about this initiative?

I am very happy that the government has recognized the poor as a citizen of this country. We have been dying on the road before this. Look at me, I have been living like this for a week now. This is where I sleep, this is where I eat, the footpath is my home, at night I don't have anything to keep me warm. This is the country we live in, where the government dismisses the poor.

## How do you think the project will help you? What do you expect from this project?

It is a matter of life and death for me, if someone asks me would you like a house, I would not wait a second to say yes. Having a roof overhead will help me tremendously, there are many homeless people here, you can see them sleeping out in the open at night. All these people will have a shelter, they will be warm at night. I only expect a roof over my head and some warmth at night. I hope this project gets built soon and nothing comes in the way of this. At last I see a person who truly cares about people like us and considers us a part of this country, and that is Imran Khan. These shelters that he is building for the down trodden will get him a palace in paradise.



**Rashid (Traffic Warden)**

## What benefits or problems does the police expect from this project?

The police have nothing to do with this. If you ask me personally, I expect drug addicts, prostitutes, and other criminals to find shelter here and this will cause the crime to increase. People will sell drugs here, I am sure of that, most of the people that sleep on the streets sell drugs. It is also possible for the police to find dead bodies in the shelter once it is inhabited.

It can become a hub for criminals where they can hide and it can make their job very easy for them.

## How can these problems be dealt with before hand?

If the people that are allowed to stay at the shelter are properly checked for drugs or weapons and the security is in responsible hands then these problems can be avoided. For example if you come to the shelter looking for a home, you should be asked for your ID card and the details should be entered into the computer system, your CNIC number, your phone number all these details should be noted down.



**Bilqees Bibi (homeless person)**

## The government is making shelter homes for the poor, how do you think this project will help you?

This shelter will solve most of our problems if we can live in the shelter and sleep in it and perform our daily activities. So yes it will be very helpful for us.

## Where are you from?

I am from Kasur, I used to have a home there but I don't anymore so I came to Lahore. I don't have anyone anymore, everyone I used to know are either dead or they don't care.

## What do you expect from this shelter?

I expect that they let us live there, they provide food for us, so we don't have to beg or turn towards crime. I expect them to act humane and don't treat us like outcasts, or some disease.





# CALL FOR PAPERS: Quarterly Publication

Common Man Initiative is a non-partisan and not for profit organization, dedicated to identifying and highlighting fundamental governance issues affecting the common man. CMI collaborates with intellectuals, policy makers, academics, public officials and members of the legal fraternity to reshape relevant public policy narrative.

The core of the research at CMI results in quarterly publications of academic papers. These papers include an in-depth understanding of the issues at hand, with dynamic policy alternatives that benefit the common man.

CMI invites you to contribute towards the change that we envision, and become part of our upcoming publication. The objective of the publication is to identify and evaluate policies that directly affect the common man.

## Topics of interest include (but are not restricted to):

- PTI's first 100 days: Evaluation and Analysis
- Health Care Policies
- Public Education
- Water Conservation
- Law and Order
- Environment
- Social Sector Development
- Economic Policies
- Regional and Foreign Relations
- Governance

## Guidelines:

1. Each submitted paper should include a title, an abstract, methodology, literature review and references (APA format).
2. Papers should be saved in an MS Word Format.
3. Font should be Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spaced.
4. All pages should be numbered.

The deadline for submission is December 20th, 2018.

## **For inquiries, please contact:**

[info@commonman.org](mailto:info@commonman.org)

Phone: +92-42-38911962