



DEVELOPMENT OF GULSHAN CHOWK AT BANDIPORA

Location: Bandipora, UT of Jammu and Kashmir

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

2024

PROJECT SUMMARY

CSR PROJECT NAME	Development of Gulshan Chowk at Bandipora
EXECUTED BY	District Development Commissioner, Bandipora and Wular Manasbal Development Authority
SUPPORTED BY	NHPC LIMITED
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	101.78 Lakhs
DURATION	2018 to 2022
LOCATION	Bandipora, Jammu and Kashmir
BENEFICIARIES	4,00,000 approximately



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IIT Jammu extends its heartfelt gratitude to NHPC for entrusting it with the Impact Assessment of its CSR activity related to Development of Gulshan Chowk and Gulshan Park at Bandipora. We also thank all the individuals and the organizations, whose tireless efforts and unwavering support have been fundamental to the successful completion of the Assessment.

We offer our profound appreciation to District Administration Bandipora and Wular Manasbal Development Authority for their support to this extensive study. Their help was crucial in ensuring the effective execution of the assessment activities, which enabled the collection of critical data that shaped the findings of this report.

Our thanks also extend to the trade associations, civil society organisations and the local people of Bandipora, whose collaboration and support were instrumental in facilitating the smooth progress of our assessment operations and understanding the developmental outcomes of Gulshan Chowk and Gulshan Park.

Moreover, we recognize the diligent work of the assessment team members, whose commitment and professionalism in conducting thorough research and comprehensive analysis have resulted in a detailed report that highlights the impact of development of Gulshan Chowk and Gulshan Park at Bandipora including its social fabric, economic climate and infrastructure.



PREFACE

This is an Impact Assessment Report of Corporate Social Responsibility activity related to “Development of Gulshan Chowk at Bandipora”, supported by NHPC Limited, and implemented by Wular - Manasbal Development Authority through district administration of Bandipora.

The project aims to improve aesthetics in the areas of Gulshan Chowk and Gulshan Park situated in the center of Bandipora town with an intent to make these community spaces more lively and attractive to the residents and the visitors alike.

This report briefly covers NHPC, its CSR policy, and its objectives. Further, the extent to which the aims and objectives of this CSR project have been met, is detailed by giving information about the beneficiaries impacted.

The conclusions are specific to this intervention and encompass learnings, which may be embraced in the future endeavours.

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List of Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DBT	Department of Biotechnology
DPR	Detailed Project Report
DSIR	Department of Scientific & Industrial Research
DST	Department of Science & Technology
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
MGNF	Mahatama Gandhi National Fellowship
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIRF	National Institutional Ranking Framework
OECD DAC	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
VIP	Very Important Person
WMDA	Wular – Manasbal Development Authority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NHPC Limited undertook a significant Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of supporting an initiative from FY 2017-18 to FY 2021-22 to develop 'Gulshan Chowk' and its adjacent 'Gulshan Park' in 'Bandipora', Jammu and Kashmir. The initiative was undertaken at a cost of INR 101.78 Lakh plus applicable taxes. The initiative benefits a population of approximately 4,00,000 people living in the area and a large number of others transiting through the area. The initiative was implemented through District Development Commissioner Bandipora through Wular – Manasbal Development Authority (WMDA). The scope of the initiative included:

- Construction of fountain in the park at Gulshan Chowk (Civil Part), Improvement/ reconstruction of fountain at Gulshan Chowk (Civil Part).
- Upgradation/ re-construction of existing Gulshan Park by way of grill fencing and chisel dressed stones/ devri gate pillars, construction of path and providing and laying good earth and turfing at Gulshan Park and Construction of path around fountain in Gulshan park.
- Up-gradation/ reconstruction of existing Nag Masjid by way of Grill fencing, chisel dressed stones etc.
- Supply, Installation, Testing and commissioning of Fountain at Gulshan Chowk and Gulshan Park.

The initiative aimed at enhancing aesthetics of the area, promoting vibrant community spaces, and fostering environmental sustainability. This aligns well with NHPC Limited's broader vision of balancing infrastructure development with the preservation of natural beauty.

The impact assessment of the initiative has been carried out using OECD DAC framework using a mixed methods approach using both qualitative as well as quantitative measures. The instruments deployed were surveys, in depth interviews, focus group discussions as well as stakeholder interactions including vox populi. The social return on investment measures include community events in the area, impact on business, founding of new businesses in the area etc., whereas aggregate community satisfaction indicators included natural beauty enhancement, environment sustainability etc.

The project has been well-received for its enhancement effort, which has improved the aesthetics of the area and has the potential to boost tourism. The initiative has been acknowledged for its positive impact on enhancing the overall appeal of 'Gulshan Chowk' and Gulshan Park. The project has stimulated community discussion and raised awareness about the importance of preserving public spaces and enhancing community well-being.

Some concerns however have been noted related to increased traffic congestion, and maintenance challenges. These concerns reflect the need for enhanced enrollment of the community in leveraging the best outcomes from such a community infrastructure initiative. These concerns can effectively be managed through extensive stakeholder consultation and subsequent ameliorative measures such as provisioning of parking space, making some of the area vehicle free and provisioning of a maintenance budget in collaboration with local administration and other stakeholders such as local self-government institutions in the area. Recommendations accordingly include effective stakeholder mobilization and active engagement with the community and local authorities.

This initiative by NHPC aligns well with several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It contributes to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by improving public spaces and making them more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. It also touches on SDG 15 (Life on Land) by emphasizing the preservation of natural beauty and environmental sustainability. Additionally, the engagement with local communities and stakeholders aligns with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), highlighting the collaborative efforts needed to achieve these objectives.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ABOUT IIT JAMMU



IIT Jammu, was established in 2016 and is located in Jammu and Kashmir, India. It is recognized as an Institute of National Importance and offers a variety of programmes at the undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels. IIT Jammu provides Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) degrees in several engineering disciplines such as Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering. It also offers Master of Technology (M.Tech) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) programmes across various specializations.

IIT Jammu was ranked 67th in the engineering category by the NIRF in 2023. This places it among the top performers of the third generation IITs. IIT Jammu has undertaken various collaborative projects with other agencies to enhance research and development in key technological areas. IIT Jammu is actively involved in collaborations with national agencies like the DST, the DBT, and the DSIR, and with the Government of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. These partnerships focus on advancing research and development across multiple disciplines and leveraging opportunities for funding and expertise from different sectors.

IIT Jammu is engaged in significant collaborative efforts with industrial partners. These collaborations aim to align academic research with industry needs, facilitating practical applications and innovations that can be commercialized for greater good. Through these partnerships, IIT Jammu aims to enhance its research capabilities and provides its students and faculty with direct exposure to industry-specific challenges and solutions.

1.2 ABOUT NHPC LIMITED



NHPC Limited is the largest hydropower development organization in India, with capabilities to undertake all the activities from conceptualization to commissioning of hydro projects. NHPC has also diversified in the field of Solar & Wind energy development etc.

NHPC Ltd. (Formerly known as National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Ltd.) was incorporated in 1975 under the Companies Act, 1956. The company is mandated to plan, promote and organize an integrated and efficient development of power in all its aspects through Conventional and Non-Conventional Sources in India and abroad. NHPC is a listed company on NSE and BSE after successfully concluding its IPO in 2009.

NHPC's total installed capacity as on 31 March, 2024 is 7144.20 MW including 1593 MW in Joint Venture, comprising 6971.20 MW from 22 Hydro Power Stations, 123 MW from three Solar Power Project and 50 MW from a Wind Power Project. NHPC's hydro power share of 6971.20 MW comes to about 14.85% of the country's total installed Hydro Power capacity of 46928.17 MW.

NHPC including its JVs/ Subsidiaries is presently engaged in the construction of 15 projects aggregating to a total installed capacity of 10442.70 MW.

In addition, twelve projects aggregating to a total installed capacity of 4707 MW are Under Clearance Stage.

Other initiative by NHPC in Renewable Energy :-

> Under MNRE scheme, NHPC has been nominated as Renewable Energy Implementing Agency (REIA)/Intermediary Procurer. Under this 700 MW Solar Project (320MW in Bikaner and 380 MW in Jaisalmer) has been developed and 5360 MW are under development by different agencies.

>NHPC has installed 4.08 MW Roof top Solar (RTS) capacity across 25 locations. Further, addition on Roof top capacity at NHPC locations as available and identified from time to time is also being carried out through respective Projects/Units.

>NHPC has also taken initiatives for development of Green Hydrogen Technology, wherein one 25 KW capacity Pilot Green Hydrogen Project at Leh and 2 Pilot green hydrogen-based e-mobility projects (one at Kargil) and one at Chamba, Himachal Pradesh) are under implementation. These projects are anticipated to be commissioned by F.Y 2024-25.

NHPC's Vision

- To be a global leading organization for sustainable development of clean power through competent, responsible and innovative values.

NHPC's Mission

- To achieve excellence in development of clean power at international standards.
- To execute & operate projects through efficient and competent contract management and innovative R&D in environment friendly and socio-economically responsive manner.
- To develop, nurture and empower the human capital to leverage its full potential.
- To practice the best corporate governance and competent value based management for a strong corporate identity and showing concern for employees, customer, environment and society.
- To adopt & innovate state-of-the-art technologies and optimize use of natural resources through effective management.

1.3 ABOUT CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



As per the Companies (CSR Policy) Rules, CSR means the activities undertaken by a Company in pursuance of its statutory obligation laid down in Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 in accordance with the provisions contained in these rules. As per sub-section (1) of Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, every company having net worth of rupees five hundred crore or more, or turnover of rupees one thousand Crore or more or a net profit of rupees five crore or more during the immediately preceding financial year shall constitute a CSR Committee of the Board consisting of three or more Directors, out of which at least one Director shall be an Independent Director, provided that where a company is not required to appoint an independent director under sub-section (4) of section 149, it shall have in its CSR Committee two or more directors.

The CSR Committee shall:

1. formulate and recommend to the Board, a CSR Policy which shall indicate the activities to be undertaken by the company in areas or subject, specified in Schedule VII;
2. recommend the amount of expenditure to be incurred on the activities referred to in clause (a); and
3. monitor the CSR Policy of the company from time to time.

The Board of every company referred to in sub-section (1) of Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 shall:

- after taking into account the recommendations made by the CSR Committee, approve the Corporate Social Responsibility Policy for the company and disclose contents of such Policy in its report and also place it on the company's website, if any, in such manner as may be prescribed; and
- ensure that the activities as are included in CSR Policy of the company are undertaken by the company.

The Board of every company referred to in sub-section (1), shall ensure that the company spends, in every financial year, at least two percent of the average net profits of the company made during the three immediately preceding financial years or where the company has not completed the period of three financial years since its incorporation, during such immediately preceding financial years in pursuance of its CSR Policy:

Provided that the company shall give preference to the local area and areas around it where it operates, for spending the amount earmarked for Corporate Social Responsibility activities;

Provided further that if the company fails to spend such amount, the Board shall, in its report made under clause (o) of sub-section (3) of section 134, specify the reasons for not spending the amount and, unless the unspent amount relates to any ongoing project referred to in sub-section (6), transfer such unspent amount to a Fund specified in Schedule VII, within a period of six months of the expiry of the financial year.

Provided also that if the company spends an amount in excess of the requirements provided under this sub-section, such company may set off such excess amount against the requirement to spend under this sub-section for such number of succeeding financial years and in such manner, as may be prescribed.

Thus, CSR provisions outlined in Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Companies (CSR Policy) Rules emphasize the significance of not just adhering to regulations, but also promoting transparency and accountability in the ways that the companies contribute to the improvement of society and the environment.

1.4 ABOUT NHPC CSR POLICY



CSR has been an integral part of NHPC's business philosophy. NHPC Limited is conducting its business in a socially responsible way by maintaining high level of organizational integrity and ethical behaviour, in conformity with expected standards of transparency in reporting and disclosing the performance in all spheres of its activities, demonstration of concern for social welfare, adoption of best management practices and effective operational methods to win the trust and confidence of all stakeholders. NHPC is committed to making significant contributions to the community, environment, and society through well-planned CSR interventions.

NHPC has strengthened its commitment to CSR in line with Statutory Provisions. The CSR Policy of NHPC has been revised in accordance with Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Companies (CSR Policy) Rules. NHPC also adheres to the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) guidelines on CSR. The CSR activities undertaken by NHPC Limited align with the areas or subjects specified in Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013.

NHPC Limited has undertaken a number of CSR initiatives for the communities living in and around its Projects/ Power Stations / Units in the areas of Education, Health, Sanitation, Rural Development, Skill Development, Environment, Women Empowerment, Promotion of sports, etc.

NHPC has been assigned three Aspirational Districts, namely Baramulla in the UT of J&K, Chamba in Himachal Pradesh, and West Sikkim (now renamed as Gyalshing) in Sikkim, for focused development through CSR.

NHPC's CSR VISION

- To contribute to sustainable development and inclusive growth while taking care of People, Planet and organizational goals / growth.

NHPC's CSR MISSION

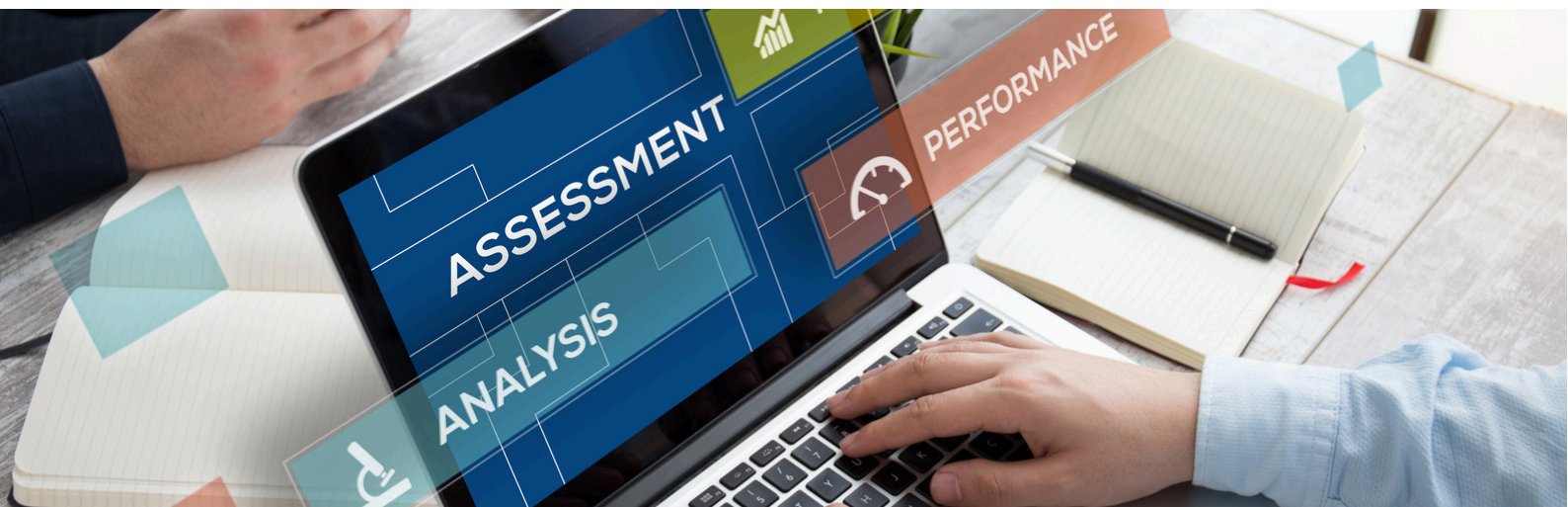
- To become socially responsible corporate entity committed to improving the quality of life of the society at large.
- To create and develop facilities for the communities it engages with.
- To balance social, economic and environmental development objectives through collective and unified efforts of all stakeholders.

The CSR Policy of NHPC is committed to the guideline of localizing its efforts, with the concentration being given to the communities located in and around its power stations and projects. It is this close proximity that enables the company to respond directly to the specific needs of those communities by intervening in ways that are relevant, timely, and directly beneficial to the residents. Accordingly, this approach of holistic community involvement gives priority to education, health care, environmental conservation, and rural development-related projects. NHPC collaborates with the government, local administrations, and NGOs, including community leaders, in such a way that their proposed projects be in line with national priorities and recommendations of the local populations.

The company has strong monitoring and reporting mechanisms of each CSR initiative built into place that would enable checking on the progress of these initiatives at regular intervals. These include the preparation of comprehensive reports outlining what is spent, achieved, and the efficiency of initiatives undertaken, put in the public domain. This not only enhances transparency of the exercise but also makes room for adjustments and improvements in strategy based on empirical evidence and stakeholder feedback.

CSR Policy of NHPC exemplifies the company's commitment to being a responsible corporate citizen by its strategic and localized community engagements. It is completing all statutory requirements, where the perceptible result is being seen in its contribution to the welfare of the people at large. The policy exemplifies the commitment of NHPC towards sustainable development and makes it one among the leaders in corporate social responsibility among energy companies in India.

1.5 ABOUT IMPACT ASSESSMENT



The Ministry of Corporate Affairs in India mandates impact assessments for CSR activities through amended rules. Every company having average CSR obligation of ₹10 crores or more in pursuance of sub-section (5) of Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, in the three immediately preceding financial years, shall undertake impact assessment, through an independent agency, of their CSR projects having outlays of Rs. One Crore or more, and which have been completed not less than one year before undertaking the impact study. A company undertaking impact assessment may book the expenditure towards CSR for that financial year, which shall not exceed two percent of the total CSR expenditure for that financial year or fifty lakh rupees, whichever is higher.

An Impact Assessment in CSR is the critical evaluation tool that seeks to measure effectiveness and sustainability of initiatives taken by companies under their CSR obligations. This benchmark reflects not only the work being done but also the strategic alignment as to which CSR projects are aligned along with the long-term vision of the company and, more importantly, the genuine community needs. Therefore, the crux of the impact assessment of the CSR projects lies in its ability to give clear and measurable understanding of how the CSR projects are, in fact, creating value for society and the implementing organization.

Impact assessment is the method applied in systematic evaluation towards finding outcomes and benefits of social responsibility initiatives of a firm in relation to the invested resources. Data collection on the key indicators is done before and after the implementation of a project to capture the direct and indirect effects that the project has on the target community and other stakeholders.

Among the added value that come with an impact assessment made by an independent third-party agency, is that it ensures objectivity to the evaluation and brings credibility to the findings. This is crucial for better corporate transparency and trust among stakeholders. Furthermore, these recommendations for improvement in future help companies refine their strategies and practices of CSR for increased impact on the society.

From an operational point of view, impact assessment includes a number of steps viz. the definition of aims and scope of the assessment, methods to be chosen, data collection, and analysis etc. Further, an effective impact assessment should include, in the context of each CSR project, the level of intervention, geographical, and cultural setting of beneficiary community needs.

1.6 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Bandipora Town is the administrative headquarter of District Bandipora, a township with splendid scenic beauty located in the foothills of the snow clad peaks of Harmukh overlooking the shores of Wular Lake. It also has a rich cultural history and has produced hundreds of scholars since the time immemorial. The district was carved out from erstwhile Baramulla District in 2007. The district is bounded by Kupwara District in the west, Baramulla district in the south and Kargil, Srinagar and Ganderbal Districts on the east. Bandipora is famous for three A's Alim (Knowledge), Adab (good habits or literature) and Aab (Water).

The district, known for its scenic beauty and intellectual contributions, required attention to specifically enhance its public spaces. Gulshan Chowk, situated in the heart of the main market, had fallen into disrepair, affecting aesthetics and community well-being. The associated park also had fallen into a state of neglect over the years.



NHPC Limited, a prominent hydroelectric power company in India, initiated a significant Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project in Bandipora to rejuvenate and revitalize Gulshan Chowk and its adjoining park. This initiative is geared towards not only enhancing the area's visual appeal but also fostering a sense of community, encouraging community interactions and promoting sustainability. NHPC's commitment to sustainable development and societal welfare is epitomized through this endeavour, highlighting the company's proactive approach to improving public spaces and enriching community life in Bandipora.

The Development of Gulshan Chowk and Gulshan Park in Bandipora, Jammu & Kashmir, represents a significant endeavour aimed at revitalizing a central and significant public space. With increasing pressure on urban spaces, preservation of public spaces is increasingly recognized as vital for community well-being, NHPC's support of this project highlights its commitment to sustainable development in Bandipora. By investing in the restoration of Gulshan Chowk and its park, NHPC endeavoured to create lasting positive impacts that contribute to the overall enhancement of community life.

This report provides an in-depth assessment of the project's impact, considering both particularly positive outcomes and critical perspectives. The primary objective of this project was restoration of the lost glory of Gulshan Chowk by repairing damaged pathways, boundary walls, and infrastructure in a major way. Also the project sought to upgrade the small park associated with Gulshan Chowk, providing greenery, landscaping, and amenities for community use. The idea was to create a welcoming and vibrant space for residents and visitors, fostering social interactions and leisure pursuits.

Through this Impact Assessment, we aim to evaluate the efficacy of NHPC's CSR project in Bandipora, specifically in revitalizing Gulshan Chowk and its park. Our analysis seeks to quantify tangible benefits such as increased community engagement, expanded recreational opportunities, and improved environmental stewardship. The assessment could serve to inform the company's future strategies and contribute to the broader discourse on corporate involvement in urban renewal and sustainable development initiatives.

2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

IIT Jammu team conducted a comprehensive field study of Gulshan Chowk and its associated park in Bandipora. Our approach involved meticulous observation of existing conditions, infrastructure, and community dynamics. Structured interviews were conducted with a diverse range of stakeholders to gather insights into the project's impact, usability, and challenges. Additionally, we collected audio testimonials from residents to document their perspectives and suggestions, supplemented by visual documentation through photography. This provides a visual account of the Chowk, park, and surrounding areas.



- ✓ To assess the project's impact, we employed a qualitative analysis framework, drawing on stakeholder feedback and comparing before-and-after conditions. This comparative analysis revealed significant improvements. Furthermore, we analyzed traffic patterns, footfall, and community engagement both pre- development and post-development. This was supplemented by thematic analysis of audio recordings and interviews to identify recurring themes. Visual changes were evaluated through the examination of photographs.
- ✓ It is important to note that stakeholders in infrastructure projects like this are diverse and their individual perspective may vary. We did notice certain challenges related to long term maintenance aspects and these require extensive engagement with the stakeholders to evolve sustainable solutions. Some traffic concerns were considered and it might be important to initiate a dialogue with the stakeholders to resolve this.



2.1 MEASURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

To measure the sustainability of the CSR Activity, IIT Jammu has used the OECD DAC framework. Each criteria used in the Impact Assessment Project acts as a lens giving a different perspectives on the intervention - both implementation and the results. The union of all these criteria provides a complete picture of the intervention. All criteria carries equal weightage with grading A (90-100), B (75-90), C (50-74), D (40-50) and F (<40). All Score are on a scale of 100.



Fig. 1: OECD DAC Framework

3. CSR ACTIVITY DETAILS

District Administration Bandipora requested NHPC to provide CSR funding for the development of Gulshan Chowk. Gulshan Chowk is at the centre of the main market of Bandipora town. The main objective of the CSR Project was to develop better environment and facilitate the local community by developing of Gulshan Chowk by provisioning a fountain, illumination of chowk and development of the park. The project was conceived with enhancing environmental, aesthetic, and recreation value for the local people.

The project encompassed improving the quality of life for society, considering the well-being of people and the planet that aligned with NHPC's CSR Vision/Mission of creating facilities that benefit local communities while balancing economic, environmental, and sustainability. In pursuit of these objectives, NHPC provided CSR support towards environmental enhancement and community development in the area.



The initiative encompassed multifarious interventions, including the installation of a water fountain and comprehensive restoration efforts within Gulshan Park. These endeavours aimed to significantly elevate the functionality of the area, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike. It is important to highlight that the execution of these development activities was facilitated by the District Administration in collaboration with WMDA.





This collaborative approach showed the NHPC's collective commitment towards fostering sustainable community development. Its steadfast support and proactive engagement in this CSR initiative exemplifies its steadfast dedication to making a meaningful difference in the lives of the communities they serve. Through such endeavours, NHPC strives to uphold its corporate social responsibility and contribute towards building a more prosperous and inclusive society.





The Project also involved the development of Park nearby Gulshan Chowk beside Nag Masjid in Bandipora.



4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The goal of this study is to assess the impact and sustainability of the project, as well as to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and shortcomings in project implementation and the benefits received by the intended beneficiaries, so that the impact can be measured and learnings can be applied to future CSR projects.

a) Number of New Businesses Established

Impact Assessment team tried to obtain the data for number of new business created around the Gulshan Chowk but the data was not available with the administration. It was informed by the local vendors that the number of shops around the market is more or less the same as that of before. The aesthetics of the shops around the Chowk has improved and there is an increase in the number of street vendors.

b) Foot Traffic Volume

After discussion with various stakeholders around the Chowk, Impact Assessment team noted that Foot Traffic Volume has reduced around the Chowk due to heavy traffic situation around the Chowk. The resulting unruly traffic discourages tourist from stopping around the area. This is something that requires mitigating measures in consultation with the stakeholders.



c) Community Events Hosted

The data for community events was not available. It was informed that after the development of the park and Chowk, the infrastructure has been handed over to the Municipal Council, Bandipora. However, the park gate is locked frequently and the fountain is currently non-functional. Community events frequency has also reduced. The area is a good venue for the community events and initiative from municipal office, district administration and civil society organisations can go a long way in stimulating this.



d) Green Space Area

It was verified by all the stakeholders that Green Space Area around the Chowk and Park has increased. This can go a long way in reduction of pollution levels. However, a point of concern with increase in the built space is that with the increase in vehicular traffic, there is an increase in traffic jams.



e) Traffic Flow

The traffic flow in the area needs active management by introducing innovative practices and giving priority to pedestrians. Excessive and unorganized parking near the fountain needs to be curbed. This is something that will require identifying and organizing appropriate parking spaces around the area.

Table 1: Impact Metrics

Parameter	Increase/Decrease/Same
New Businesses Established	Some increase in street vendors
Foot Traffic Volume	Decrease
Community Events Hosted	Decrease
Green Space Area	Increase
Traffic Flow	Increase
Traffic Jam	Increase
Public Transport Accessibility	Same



5. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The development of Gulshan Chowk, including the construction of a large fountain and the redesign of the adjacent park, is a significant effort in reviving urban spaces. An initiative of this nature will effectively boost an effort to reclaim public spaces from haphazard commercial development. The fountain is an element that can become the center piece of this development effort by adding to the aesthetic appeal of the Chowk. Currently it is a point of dissatisfaction owing to its influence on traffic flow. This situation needs remediation by ensuring regular functioning of the fountain and active traffic management in the area.

Local stakeholders, such as business owners and vendors, need to be engaged in an active and ongoing dialogue regarding the maintenance and utilization of the built infrastructure. Critical facilities such as sufficient parking, effective lighting, accessible restrooms, and spaces for community events is a priority that needs to be addressed by the local authorities.

Further, the upkeep of these newly established structures needs focused attention. This highlights the need for extensive consultation with the stakeholders as well as the need for creating robust mechanisms for effective maintenance and sustainable operations of the assets.



5.1 Testimonials



**Rayees Ahmed,
Ex-Vice President,
Traders Federation Bandipora**

I have lived in Bandipora all my life, and Gulshan Park near Gulshan Chowk has always been a significant landmark since its establishment in 1947. This park, once a place of greenery and relaxation, underwent a renovation in 2021. New walls, grills, and a foundation were installed, and a fountain was added.

The renovated park was handed over to the District Administration for maintenance and operation. However the maintenance of this cherished asset has been less than effective. Despite NHPC supporting the project for Gulshan Chowk, the area has seen limited improvements. Specifically, Traffic Management in the area is a cause of concern and it needs a pro-active action plan from the local administration and other stakeholders such as civil society organizations.

Similarly, the lights installed in the park need to be operated regularly, and for longer hours, to add to the ambience of the area with consequent benefit to local businesses. The empty space of Gulshan Park also needs to be made accessible to public, especially during day time, so that, they could benefit from the open space and also use it as a waiting area for public transport.

Similarly, the utilization of the space for community events can be an attraction for the locals and the tourists alike. It will be worthwhile if the local stakeholders came together to create community events in the area.



Shopkeeper, near Nag Masjid

The construction of this park began two years ago, with the initial efforts involving the building of a wall and a grill, along with planting grass. The park has always had two chinar trees, which remain unchanged. Dustbins were installed by us independently and not as part of any project.

Although the work faced interruptions and delays, it eventually resumed. Other stakeholders like, local shopkeepers also came forward to purchase essential maintenance equipment like grass cutters as part of our commitment to the initiative. However once the initial work was finished, the maintenance has suffered. Further, the park remains locked for most of the time, making it unavailable to the public. This is something that can be changed. Active maintenance of the area by the stakeholders can make it a vibrant community space at the heart of the town.

The lack of maintenance and accessibility renders the park unusable. All stakeholders need to come forward for maintaining the area actively ensuring that children can play and old people can exercise.



Mr. Mohd Ahsan
Businessman, Gulshan Chowk

Gulshan Chowk has been a landmark in our town since before 2021, and I have known it since my childhood. Recently, a fountain was added to the Chowk, that occupies about 20-25% of the Chowk's area limiting the traffic carrying capacity of the road around it. Indiscriminate parking in the area further compounds the problem. This requires a comprehensive strategy to manage traffic in the area including finding an appropriate parking place as well as possibly making some part of the area vehicle free.

During the project's execution, we expressed our concerns to the district administration and Wular Manasbal Development Authority that a fountain was unnecessary. We suggested constructing something smaller and aesthetically pleasing that wouldn't occupy so much space. Even back in 2021, when vehicle ownership was lower, the fountain was not a suitable choice. Increased traffic and vehicle ownership since then has increased the congestion in the area and appropriate traffic management strategies need to be evolved.

As traffic has gradually increased, footfall has also risen, yet the number of shops around the Chowk remains the same. Before these developments, traffic conditions were better managed. The park developed alongside the Chowk was originally constructed in the 1950s-60s, addressing the public's need for a waiting area for buses and also a space for children to play in or enable older people to soak in the sun.. The park accordingly, needs to be open to the public, especially during daytime so that it continues to serve that function.

6.OECD DAC FRAMEWORK MEASURE

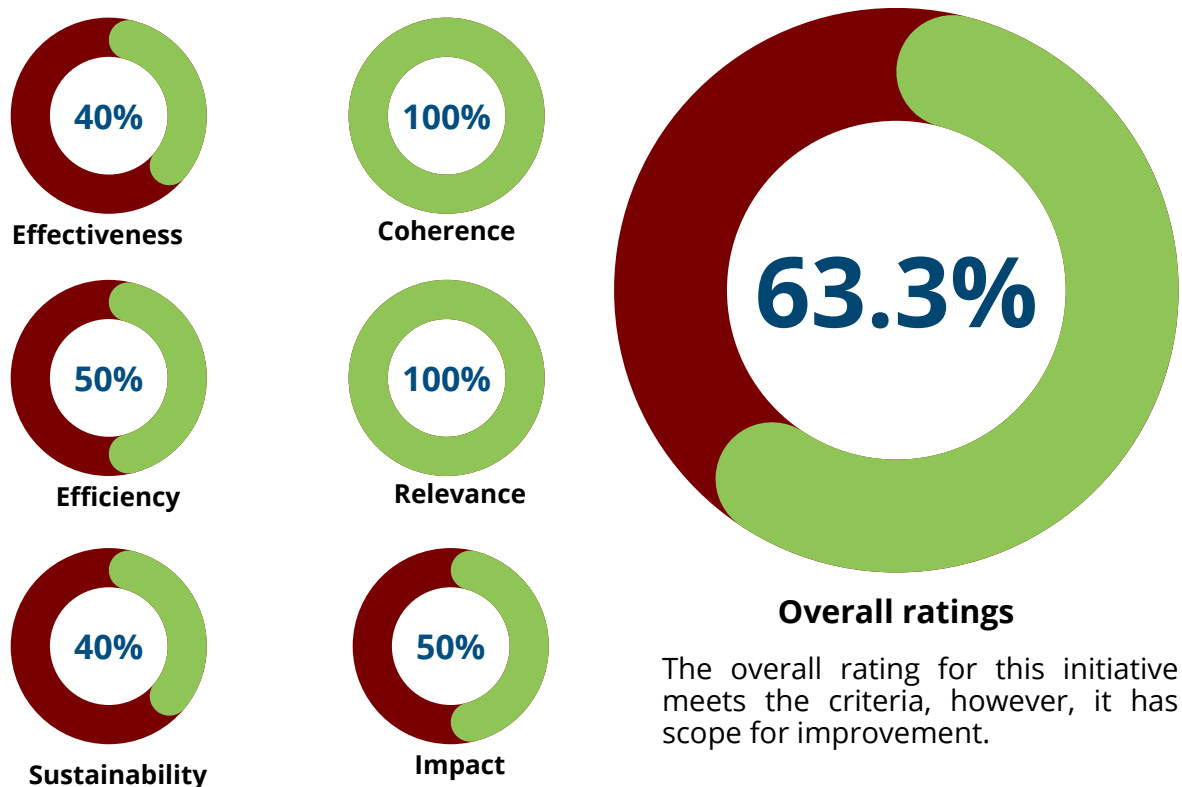


Fig. 2: OECD DAC Measure

Relevance:

- The project is relevant to the needs of the society where NHPC is operational.

Coherence:

- Strong coherence is observed, with the project adhering to NHPC's CSR policy and integrating effectively with other community development initiatives.

Effectiveness:

- The project scores less on effectiveness as observed through stakeholder discussions.

Efficiency:

- The project's efficiency receives a setback as stakeholders discussion reveal that no one is looking after the maintenance of the developed structure.

Sustainability:

- The project scores low on sustainability as no one is looking after the maintenance of the developed structure.

Impact:

- The project has positively impacted the target communities positively but with time negative impact has been observed with the worsening traffic condition.

7. ALIGNMENT WITH THE SDGs



This initiative directly contributes to several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities):

By improving public spaces and making them more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

SDG 15 (Life on Land): by emphasizing the preservation of natural beauty and environmental sustainability.

SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): By Partnering with the District Administration of Bandipora to execute the project



8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following our comprehensive assessment of the development of Gulshan Chowk, several recommendations emerge to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of this initiative. Firstly, it is evident that the transformation of Gulshan Chowk has significantly improved the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the area. However, to ensure the long-term viability of these enhancements, it is crucial to prioritize maintenance and upkeep. Implementing a regular maintenance schedule and engaging local authorities or community groups in the upkeep efforts would help preserve the improvements and prevent deterioration over time.

Community engagement programs, such as cultural events can be organized which could foster a sense of ownership and pride among residents, further enriching the social fabric of the area.

The appearance of the Chowk can be enhanced by incorporating local paintings and natural beauty elements. Elements of the region's cultural heritage can be integrated into the Chowk's design, such as traditional architecture or artwork. This will not only celebrate the area's cultural identity but also foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents.

Other local improvements can be appropriately located bus shelter or sunshade, ensuring passenger comfort during inclement weather conditions such as rain, snowfall, and extreme sunlight/heat. Some junction improvement strategies can be considered. These could include vehicle free area, alternative parking arrangements and such others in collaboration with local administrative and municipal authorities. However these need to be planned carefully and scientifically.

DEVELOPMENT OF GULSHAN CHOWK AT BANDIPORA

Location: Bandipora, Jammu and Kashmir



**CSR IMPACT ASSESSMENT
REPORT**



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2024