

Surjyatapa Ray Choudhury (she/her)

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Summary

Urban Development Expert with over 7 years of technical experience including 4 years of end-to-end project management experience, driving sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient urban transformation. Led high-impact projects and secured over USD 820K (INR 6.75 crores) in research funding to pioneer policies on city decarbonization, sustainable public space design, and nature-based solutions for small water bodies rejuvenation across Indian cities. Contributed to landmark national and international projects, including the Pune River Rejuvenation Project in India, and the Rizhsky Freight Yard Mixed-Use Development in Russia. Recent work focuses on policy drafting, government advocacy, and research at the intersection of urban design and planning, climate resilience, gender equity, and social inclusion. Recipient of the prestigious Norman Foster Foundation Scholarship. Committed to advancing inclusive, sustainable urban development aligned with SDG 5, 10, and 11 and global climate action goals.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Jan 2022 - Present | **Jana Urban Space Foundation** | *Non-profit working on Quality of Life in Indian cities* | Bengaluru, India

Associate Manager | Urban Policy | 2025 - Present

Sustainable Planning & Infrastructure Development

- Conceptualized and managed a USD 350K Low Carbon Neighbourhoods program, developing planning and regulatory frameworks for decentralized, place-based decarbonization. Convened multi-stakeholder coalitions across government, industry, and civil society.

Advocacy and Partnerships

- Developed blueprint and led advocacy with union and state leadership for a National Mission on Urban Roads, Karnataka State Mission and a Walkable Bengaluru Mission, building on the organization's success in designing and implementing roads in 35 cities across 6 Indian states.

Advanced Associate | Urban Policy | 2023 - 2025

- Published India's first landscape study on net-zero adoption in EWS and LIG housing, surfacing barriers and opportunities for affordable low-carbon materials and energy efficiency.
- Developed a Schedule of Rates for green construction techniques under Uttar Pradesh's Green Roads Infrastructure Development Scheme, embedding climate resilience into procurement frameworks.
- Authored a policy report on the impact of mobility infrastructure on women's workforce participation across four cities, shaping gender-responsive planning and design frameworks.
- Secured and managed over USD 820K in competitive grants, delivering multi-city research, policy frameworks, and pilot projects.
- Secured Jana's designation as Project Management Unit for the "Doh Shaher Ek Rupayan" program in Assam, supporting urban reforms across 10 cities.
- Built and mentored the Policy Research & Insights team, strengthening organizational capacity for climate and sustainability policy.

Associate | Urban Policy | 2022 - 2023

- Led a USD 250K research program on sustainable public spaces, producing national guidelines on rejuvenation of small urban waterbodies (Nature-Based Solutions) and inclusive crematoria design.
- Authored a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning report on Tender S.U.R.E. roads in Bengaluru, informing future urban street design frameworks.

Jan 2021 - **Independent consulting** | *Urban Governance / Smart Cities* Guwahati, India
Dec 2021

Research | Urban Governance

- Co-authored archival publication on governance framework of Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) in Japan, and its applicability in India.

Consultancy | Smart Cities Mission

- Prepared Detailed Project Report, including stakeholder surveys, site reports, design, and financial feasibility of an Eco-tourism project in Deepor Beel wetland in Guwahati, Assam.

Nov 2019 - **Nikken Sekkei Ltd.** | *Leader in architecture, planning, and engineering* Tokyo, Japan
Aug 2020

Urban Designer | Overseas development team

- Prepared technical design drawings and detailed project reports as part of the team working on Rizhsky Freight Yard mixed-used development (7 million sqm) and New Jeddah Downtown Development Project (5 million sqm).
- Conducted research and prepared early draft of urban design guidelines for New Jeddah Downtown Development Project.

Jan 2017 - **HCP Design Planning and Management Ltd.** | *Leader in architecture and urban design* Ahmedabad, India
Apr 2018

Junior Architect | Urban Design studio

- Prepared technical designs, client presentations, construction drawings, and the Detailed Project Report for the Pune River Rejuvenation Project, a 44 km riverfront development with a project cost of USD 315 million, including the detailed design for a 2 km pilot stretch.
- Contributed to riverfront development projects, across various project stages, in Ranchi and Daman, India, and Ammochu, Bhutan.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

2018 - 2020 **The University of Tokyo** | School of Engineering Tokyo, Japan
Master's in engineering | Focus: Digital Fabrication; human computer systems for informal incremental construction

2011 - 2016 **Chandigarh College of Architecture** Chandigarh, India
Bachelor of Architecture | Focus: Architecture of informal settlements

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Skills:** Policy Research & Writing, Systems Thinking, Urban Design & Planning Guidelines, Technical Research, Procurement & Policy Reform Design, Stakeholder Engagement & Advocacy, Project Management, Talent Development, Philanthropic & CSR Funding, Report Writing & Knowledge Products, Grant Writing & Fundraising.
- **Fluent** in English, Bengali, Assamese, and Hindi.
- **Community Leadership:** UN volunteer for Ann Foundation (2018-2021), Country Ambassador – for Cities Initiative.
- **Hobbies:** Visharad II in Indian Classical Music, sketching and digital illustrations, photography, reading.

PUBLICATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

Invited Presentations & Talks	[1] Dialogue of Increasing Women's Workforce Participation for Viksit Bharat. 26 July 2025, India Habitat Centre. [Invited to launch report and present findings on research on infrastructure and women's workforce participation]
	[2] Lifecycle Lens on Building Sector: A Dialogue on Decarbonisation Gaps and Stakeholder Roles. 23 July 2025. CSTEP Bengaluru. [Invited as Expert]
	[3] Cooling Karnataka - An Expert Roundtable on Sustainable Space Cooling for the State. 18 Mar 2025, Bangalore International Centre (BIC). WRI India. [Invited as Expert]

	<p>[4] Planning Resilient and Sustainable Future Cities: The Critical Role of Public-Private Collaboration in Energy Systems. <i>Future Cities Summit 2025</i>. 5 Jan 2025, IIT Madras. [Invited as Panelist]</p> <p>[5] Transitioning Urban Transport for Low Carbon Mobility. <i>Talking About Transitions Series</i>. 9 October 2024. https://transitionsresearch.org/talking-about-transitions-transitioning-urban-transport-for-low-carbon-mobility/. [Invited as Speaker and Panelist]</p> <p>[6] Brainstorming Session for Ama Pokhari Initiative, Bhubaneswar. <i>Waterbody Rejuvenation Unit of the Housing & Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha</i>. 15 May 2024. [Invited as Expert]</p> <p>[7] How YOU design cities; and what happens when you don't. <i>The Goa Project Sessions</i>. 7 April 2024. https://thegoaproject.wordpress.com/2024/04/04/how-you-design-cities-surjyatapa-ray/. [Invited as Speaker]</p>
Opinion pieces	<p>[1] Viswanathan, S and Ray Choudhury, S. (2025, Oct.). India needs a national mission for urban roads. <i>Indian Express</i>. https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-needs-a-national-mission-for-urban-roads-10296866/</p> <p>[2] Ray Choudhury, S. (2025, May). Bengaluru's SWDs need an upgrade. And now. <i>Deccan Herald</i>. https://www.deccanherald.com/amp/story/opinion/bengaluru-swds-need-an-upgrade-and-now-3563394</p>
Archival Publications	<p>[1] Bugalia, N., Ray Choudhury, S., Maemura, Y., & Seetharam, K. E. (2022). A systems theoretic process analysis (STPA) approach for analyzing the governance structure of fecal sludge management in Japan. <i>Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science</i>, 239980832210756. https://doi.org/10.1177/23998083221075639</p>
Conference Proceedings	<p>[1] Ray Choudhury, S., Ramesh, N., & Subramanya, V. (2025). Review of net zero pathways for healthy affordable housing in India. <i>Healthy Buildings 2025. An ISIAQ Flagship Conference</i>.</p> <p>[2] Ray Choudhury, S., Ramesh, N., & Subramanya, V. (2025). Critical Analysis of Net Zero Pathways for Affordable Housing in India. In M. Schrenk, T. Popovich, P. Zeile, P. Elisei, C. Beyer, J. Ryser, & U. Trattinig (Eds.), <i>REAL CORP 2025: URBAN INNOVATION TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO CITIES HAVE GONE BEFORE. Proceedings of 30th International Conference on Urban Planning, Regional Development and Information Society</i> (pp. 249–260). https://doi.org/10.48494/REALCORP2025.4153</p> <p>[3] Ray Choudhury, S., Subramanya, V., & Ramesh, N. (2024, November). Enhancing Urban Stormwater Management with Tender S.U.R.E. system. <i>Building Climate Resilient WASH Systems in India</i>. http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.19897.48488</p> <p>[4] Ray Choudhury, S., Ramesh, N., & Pranab, P. (2023). Roadmap to implementation of thermal comfort policies in affordable housing. <i>Comfort at The Extremes 2023: The Book of Proceedings</i>. https://doi.org/10.62744/CATE.45273.1152-472-480</p> <p>[5] Ray Choudhury, S. (2021). PUCCA 5.0 A framework for a digital system to aid informal self-construction. <i>PROJECTIONS, Proceedings of the 26th International Conference of the Association for Computer-Aided Architectural Design Research in Asia (CAADRIA) 2021, Volume 1</i>, 703–712.</p>
Technical Reports	<p>[1] Ray Choudhury, S., & Pyle, K. (2025). <i>Net-Zero Built Environment – Critical pathways for a sustainable future</i>. https://www.janausp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/jusf-netzerobuiltenvironment-landscapereport-final.pdf</p> <p>[2] Ray Choudhury, S., & Pyle, K. (2025). <i>Gender Intentional Infrastructure – Investigating the linkages between infrastructure and women's workforce participation in Indian cities</i>. https://www.janausp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/jusf-infrastructure-and-workforce-participation-final-spreads.pdf</p> <p>[3] Ray Choudhury, S., & Pyle, K. (2023). <i>The Tender S.U.R.E. Impact, Bengaluru</i>. https://www.janausp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/JUSF_TheTenderSUREImpactBengaluru.pdf</p> <p>[4] Ray Choudhury, S., Husain, A., & Ramesh, N. (2023). <i>Water S.U.R.E. (Specifications for Urban Rejuvenation and Execution) – Sustainable Urban Design Guidelines for Nallah Rejuvenation</i>.</p> <p>[5] Ray Choudhury, S., Pranab, P., & Ramesh, N. (2023). <i>Project Dignity – Sustainable Urban Design Guidelines for Crematoria as Public Spaces</i>.</p>
Scholarships and Awards	<p>[1] Norman Foster Foundation Scholar. 2019. <i>Scholar for the 'On Cities' workshop focused on new opportunities in Informal Settlements that integrate emerging technologies</i>.</p> <p>[2] JASSO Monbukagakusho Scholarship. 2018 – 2020. <i>Honors scholarship for graduate studies at The University of Tokyo</i>.</p> <p>[3] Nihon Chozai SEUT Scholarship. 2018 – 2020. <i>Honors scholarship for graduate studies at The University of Tokyo</i>.</p> <p>[4] Kailash Sodhi Scholarship. 2016. <i>Thesis award for best Mass Housing/ Low-cost Housing research</i>.</p>

Note: References available upon request.