



REIMAGINING URBAN TRANSFORMATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LAND POOLING POLICIES IN DELHI, HARYANA, AND PUNJAB

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Abstract

India's path toward urbanization is intersected by the complex challenge of bringing together land for urban development without resorting to coercive land acquisition. Land pooling has surfaced as a participatory mechanism that positions landowners as stakeholders, blending private interest with public purpose. This review provides a comparative analysis of land pooling policies as currently structured in Delhi, Haryana, and Punjab, examining their institutional architecture, implementation nuances, perceived benefits, and underlying limitations. The analysis then extends to relevant global frameworks, identifying actionable best practices that can be contextualized within India's evolving urban landscape.

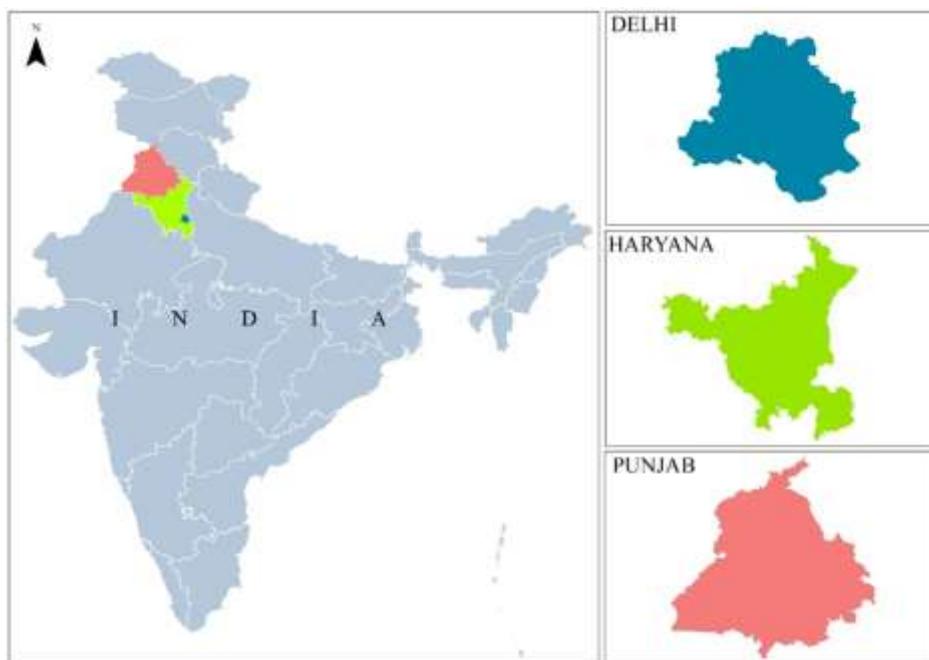
Key Words

1. DDA – Delhi Development Authority
2. LPP – Land Pooling Policy
3. JV – Joint Venture
4. TPS – Town Planning Scheme (Gujarat model)
5. LR – Land Readjustment (Japan model)
6. GMADA – Greater Mohali Area Development Authority
7. SAS Nagar – Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar (New Chandigarh)

1. Introduction

Rising populations in metropolitan regions demand rethinking how urban expansion is realized, especially in rapidly growing cities. Land pooling mechanisms have gained traction as pragmatic alternatives to compulsory acquisition, aiming to create collaborative development by providing landowners with developed portions of their original holdings, thus embedding consensus into the

Figure 1 Study Area





urbanization process. This model holds the potential to reduce conflict, facilitate investment, and support inclusive growth.

2. Structural Dissection of State Policies

2.1 Delhi: Emphasis on Facilitation

Official Name: Delhi Land Pooling Policy (DDA Land Pooling Policy)

Notified: 2013 by Ministry of Urban Development (GoI); major regulatory amendments in 2018; various operational notifications especially for eligibility and process in 2023 and 2024.

Amendment Focus: Increasing mandatory pooling thresholds, single-window systems, FAR incentives for group housing, and clarity to EWS provision.

Delhi's approach, orchestrated through the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), reframes public agencies as facilitators. Here, land pooling allows both groups of landowners and developer entities to aggregate holdings. Notably:

- For contributions exceeding 20 hectares, 60% is returned as developed land; for smaller parcels (2–20 ha), 48% is returned.
- Allocation prioritizes planned residential districts, integrated with designated commercial and public utilities.
- Infrastructure, main roads, and affordable housing quotas are ensured by the portion retained by DDA.
- Stakeholder participation is encouraged; project timelines are intended to be streamlined through a single-window system, though strict deadlines remain undefined.

Gaps:

- Ambiguity in the location/allotment of returned plots.
- Single-window system lacks enforceable deadlines, causing potential delays.
- Fiscal strain falls to local agencies, whose ability to undertake large-scale infrastructure is not always assured.

2.2 Haryana: Aggregator Flexibility and Financial Incentives

Official Name: Haryana Land Pooling Policy 2022

Notified: 22 August 2022 (Haryana Government Gazette)

Scope: Applies to all residential, commercial, institutional, and infrastructure urban expansion under HSV and HSIIDC.

Amendment Focus: Online application and valuation, minimum threshold for returns, annual interim support, and streamlined aggregator roles and project reversion if incomplete.

Haryana's most recent policy pivots on aggregator-led and individual voluntary contributions.

- Landowners can participate directly or via registered aggregators, with transparent incentives for aggregators.
- After assessment by empanelled government valuers, up to 60% of saleable developed land (minimum 30%) is returned, based on valuation relative to overall project cost.
- Annual interim monetary support of ₹1 lakh/acre (for three years) is provided, addressing economic displacement during project implementation.
- Commercial plots may substitute part of the residential allocation if desired.

Gaps:

- Disputes may emerge over land valuation and the equitable division of high-value parcels.
- Administrative processes, though detailed, are sometimes burdensome, with viability hinging on sufficient aggregation and coordinated approvals.

2.3 Punjab: Pooling and Profit-Sharing Hybrid

Official Name: Punjab Land Pooling Policy (Amended 2025)

Originally Notified: June 2013, Housing & Urban Development Department; recast and expanded in July 2025 following farmer protests and High Court scrutiny.

Major 2025 Amendments:



- ‘Sahuliyat Certificate’ for stamp duty and transaction benefit.
- Proportionate commercial entitlement for smallholders (as low as 1 kanal).
- Higher annual subsistence.
- Opt-in commercial compensation.
- Streamlined administration for projects >50 acres.

Punjab offers a dual framework: classic land pooling as well as options for landowners to become profit-sharing partners.

- In the pooling model, half of developed residential and commercial area is returned; smaller holdings (under 3 Kanals) are not entitled to commercial plots.
- Subsistence allowances ensure some immediate relief for those awaiting allotment.
- Aggregators receive a 2% commission, incentivizing consolidation.
- Alternatively, landowners may join as joint venture partners: the authority executes development, and net profits are split 80:20 in favor of landowners, after accounting for all associated development and administrative costs.

Gaps:

- Commercial entitlements may exclude smaller landowners.
- Risk and financial burdens in the joint-development option largely revert to landowners, who may lack the expertise or capacity.
- Operational complexity and transparency in accounting are potential vulnerabilities.

3. Structural Comparison of Land Pooling Policies

Table 1 Structural Comparison of Land Pooling Policies

Parameter	Delhi (DDA Policy)	Haryana (LPP 2022)	Punjab (Amended LPP 2025)
Voluntary Participation	Yes, by threshold aggregation	Yes, by owner or aggregator	Yes, JV model also allowed
Land Pooling Return	48–60% to landowner (by holding size)	30–60% to landowner (by value)	50% by area (proportional, now all sizes)
Commercial Entitlement	Fixed % of returned land; only for large holdings	Optional; conversion ratios allowed	Commercial plots now for smallholders too
Interim Support	None	Annual allowance (min ₹30K–1.25L/acre)	Subsistence to ₹1,00,000/year up to 3 years
Allotment Method	By area, often without guaranteed location	Proportionate, random draw	Draw of lots + possible plot aggregation
Key Gaps	Timelines unclear, plot allocation opaque	Value disputes, fragmented process	Smallholders’ role (now improved); complexity
Withdrawal/Exit	N/A	Return land after 5 years if unfinished	Scheme revision follows withdrawal window
Dispute Mechanism	Varied, more by DDA discretion	Appeals per market value policy	Litigation path only no special panels

Notable Features in Each Policy

- **Delhi:** DDA as facilitator, high FAR for group housing, consolidated agency, single-window clearance execution lags behind promise.
- **Haryana:** Annual support, digital processes, aggregator remuneration, structured reversion, flexibility to monetize commercial/residential returns.



- **Punjab:** ‘Sahuliyat Certificate’ for transaction support, annual compensation, plot return for smallest contributors, and retention of up to 25% of plots (if >1 acre holding).

4. Major Gaps Identified

Timeliness

- Approval and implementation deadlines in policies are seldom binding. Delhi’s single-window promise often fails without hard timelines; Haryana offers some in review but with leeway on extension.

Transparency

- The location and size of returned plots, especially for the smallest landowners, is regularly unclear or subject to post-hoc negotiation leading to disputes and reduced trust.

Inclusion of Smallholders

- Punjab’s original (2013) and Delhi’s policies previously prevented those with <3–4 kanal/acre from accessing any meaningful commercial entitlement; this has only recently been addressed in Punjab’s 2025 reforms.

Valuation Disputes

- Haryana’s “value-based” return (by market valuation, not just area) is theoretically fair but produces disputes over how land prices are calculated.

Funding and Escrow

- Unlike Gujarat TPS, these states have rarely institutionalized value capture (escrow of plot sale proceeds, sale of part of reconstituted land to fund infrastructure).

Weak Dispute Resolution

- The absence of fast-track, binding arbitration bodies means that litigation can block projects, aggregate landholding for long periods, and impede replotting.

5. Detailed Comparative: Gujarat and Japan Models

Gujarat Town Planning Scheme (TPS)

- **Legislative Backing:** Bombay Town Planning Act 1915, Gujarat Urban Development Act 1976.
- **How It Works:** Landowners pool property; 5–15% is monetized by the planning authority, 70–75% returned post-development as smaller but serviced/resalable plots.
- **Timeline Enforcement:** Completion deadlines enforced by law. Ownership, boundary, valuation disputes are resolved AFTER physical development.
- **Financing:** The 10–15% share sold at market rates funds all works, reducing fiscal burden on authorities.
- **Conflict Mitigation:** Disputes over legacy land ownership do not stop the project; they are resolved in the reallocation process.

Japanese Land Readjustment (LR)

- **Framework:** Strictly consensus-based (>70% owner consent required); strongly participatory.
- **Process:** All land pooled, infrastructure built; owners receive new (sometimes smaller) serviced plots.
- **Community Integration:** Extensive negotiations, trust-building; institutional structures ensure compensation and protect the vulnerable; grievances are resolved through community and local government.
- **Efficiency:** LR has delivered one-third of urban Japan through consensus and transparency; timelines are upheld through legal mandates and robust institutional frameworks.

Key Differences vs North India:

- Enforceable time limits and legal pathways to address disputes do not stall projects.
- Value capture finances are built in, not an afterthought.



- Community trust, not just legal compliance, is central.

Global Comparison Table

Table 2 Global Comparison Table

Practice/Region	Inclusion	Dispute Handling	Financing	Timeliness
Gujarat TPS	All owners	Post-dev, legal replot	Sale of pooled, escrow	10–15% Statutory deadlines
Japan LR	70%+ consent	Consensus, mediation	Gov/escrow/loans	Statutory, milestone-based
Delhi/Haryana/Punjab	Uneven	Litigation, slow panels	Weak, little value capture	Weak & patchy

6. Revised Success Factors

- Mandatory, Transparent Timelines:** Approval, allotment, and infrastructure milestones must have binding deadlines with penal clauses.
- Third-Party Valuation Panels:** Land/plot value to be determined by fully independent agencies; instant appellate process for disputes.
- Smallholder Parity:** All contributors, even 1 kanal, should be entitled proportionally to commercial and residential returns, as in latest Punjab rules.
- Escrow and Value-Capture Mechanisms:** Mandate a portion of returned land is auctioned to fund public works and infrastructure (as in Gujarat, Netherlands) through escrow accounts with public audits.
- Digital and Single-Window Tracking:** Zero paper lag, public dashboards for every application, allotment, and phase.
- Participatory and Legal Recourse:** Proactive forums for redressal and feedback at each stage; accessible legal appeals process.
- Community Consensus:** Borrowing from Japan, strong local engagement and consent-building reduces future litigation.
- Scale, Pilot, Adapt:** Begin with a few high-visibility, peri-urban projects; take lessons forward as policy is refined.
- Annual Public Disclosure:** Mandatory transparent reporting on financing, allottees, project progress, and bottlenecks.

7. Implementation Roadmap

- Pilot Projects:** Launch in areas with supportive demographics and prior consent; use digital IT platforms for transparency.
- Stakeholder Capacity Building:** Regular workshops for officials, aggregators, landowners.
- Public Awareness Campaigns:** Clear explainers (digital, radio, print) on policy entitlements and procedures.
- Digitalized Application and Tracking:** Every stage (application, approval, drawing of lots, and land return) is tracked and visible.
- Integrated Nodal Units:** Multi-agency teams (urban planning, revenue, municipal, legal) for one-stop clearance.
- Robust Financing Channel:** Escrow system for every project with annual third-party audits.
- Inclusive Monitoring Forums:** Landowner representatives, community leaders must be part of monitoring and grievance bodies.
- Adaptive Policy Feedback Loop:** Annual review, targeted amendments, and swift issue resolution.



8. Major Projects Underway - Listing by State

Delhi

Land pooling in Delhi is taking place primarily in the **urban extension zones on the city's fringes** under the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) Master Plan 2021. The main locations are:

- **Zones under the DDA Land Pooling Policy:**
 - **Zone L** (Dwarka Sub-city, Najafgarh area): Includes villages such as Kharkhari, Najafgarh, Goela Khurd, Paprawat, Dabar, Amber Heri, Tajpur Khurd, Qutabpur, Sherpur, Togapur, and others.
 - **Zone N** (Bawana, northwest Delhi): Focuses on villages like Bawana and adjoining areas.
 - **Zone P-I and P-II** (north and northwest Delhi): Contains villages around Narela and adjacent rural belts.
 - **Zone J, K-I**: Additional urban extension zones included as per DDA notifications.
- In total, **the policy covers 95–104 urbanized villages** spread across 109 sectors in these zones. Lists and maps of ongoing projects and the associated villages can be found on the DDA's official land pooling portal.

Haryana

Haryana's land pooling policy is primarily targeted to support new urban sectors and industrial clusters in high-growth districts:

- **Key Locations:**
 - **Gurugram district:** Sectors in Pataudi (Sectors 2, 3, 4 643 acres), Farrukhnagar (Sector 3 263 acres), **Sohna (Sectors 32 and 34 463 acres)**, **Gurugram (Sectors 68–70 150 acres)**, **Sectors 36A and 37 326 acres**.
 - **Industrial Model Townships (IMTs):** Haryana is planning to set up 10 new IMTs through land pooling or the e-Bhoomi portal, with the exact sites to be notified based on pooled land availability.
- Targeted cities and sites are identified by Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP) and Town & Country Planning Department, with regular updates on project status.

Punjab

Punjab's land pooling projects are being rolled out in key urban centers and peri-urban areas as part of the Land Pooling Policy, 2025:

- **Major Cities Identified:**
 - **Ludhiana, Mohali (Greater Mohali Area Development Authority/GMADA)**, Amritsar, Bathinda, Patiala, Jalandhar, SAS Nagar (New Chandigarh), and others.
- **Specific Locations:**
 - **GMADA Aerotropolis (Mohali/SAS Nagar)**
 - **Eco City-III (New Chandigarh)**
 - Quotas for land pooling have been set for new residential and industrial estates in these cities, with precise sectors demarcated by the respective development authorities.
- **27 cities** have been notified for active land pooling implementation in the latest phase.

Table 3 Major Projects Underway

State	LOCATION & PROJECT DETAILS	AREA / SCALE	REMARKS
Delhi	Narela, Bawana, Najafgarh, other 105 villages, Sectors 7A/7B/7C/11	~40,000 acres	Urban expansion, DDA-led



	"Consortium clusters" eg. Sectors 17, 20, 21	7,000+ hectares	Multi-owner pooling
Haryana	Gurugram sectors (68-70, 36A-37, Pataudi, Sohna, Farrukhnagar)	1,845 acres (Gurugram); 5,000+ statewide	Urban/industrial expansion
Punjab	Mohali (GMADA: Sectors 84, 87, 101, 103, 120-124), state-wide push	6,284.89 acres Mohali; 40,000+ acres Punjab	Inclusive of 164+ villages
	Model townships (Lala Lajpat Rai Enclave, Muktsar; various)	Various	Demonstrates local divergence

Conclusion

Land pooling for urban transformation a uniquely Indian experiment has made important strides but faces operational, financial, and inclusion gaps. Punjab's 2025 amendment is notable for rectifying smallholder exclusion and introducing transactional facilitation. However, binding deadlines, independent valuation, robust monitoring, escrow-based financing, and participatory grievance mechanisms learned from Gujarat and Japan are essential for broad-based, scalable urban reform. Policy makers must balance legal certainty and market logic with empowerment of the smallest landowner, ensuring trust and timely execution while fueling India's next urban revolution.

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